

QuestBusters™

The Adventurer's Journal

Number 109

Special Tonya Harding Issue

Not sold in Olympic Villages

SHADOWS OF DARKNESS

The *Quest for Glory* games are unique because they're replayable, adventure/role-playing hybrids that are thoroughly challenging and entertaining. *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness*, the fourth in the series, continues that fine tradition.

Sierra removed the number from the title this time, so I can only hope that means that there are more than the originally scheduled five games on the way. It would not be difficult for co-designers/husband-and-wife team Lori and Corey Cole to continue the series in a variety of settings, but for now players can enjoy the equally funny and spooky *Shadows of Darkness*.

Shadows takes place in a strange European Land called Mordavia — the kind of place that you don't hear about except during the Olympics. You arrive and are virtually stuck in the town, surrounding forest and swamp. People are at first wary of you because you appeared in a cave believed to be

the site of a strange cult's practices to bring back the Dark Ones, a group of ancient creatures akin to the Old Ones of H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. In fact, much of that wacky designer Corey

Cole's groan-inducing humor revolves around horror clichés and H. P. Lovecraft stories in particular. The people begin to accept you as you prove your heroism in various circumstances, but that doesn't solve the mysteries in the town. You must

prevent the influx of evil influences in Mordavia and get to the heart of the disappearances and other strange occurrences in the game.

The *Quest for Glory* game system lets you choose from three character types at the start of the game. You may also import a character from a previous *Quest for Glory* game if you saved it, but no previous experience is necessary.

Your quest varies significantly for each type of character, so it is certain that *Shadows* warrants replay. The three characters are: Fighter, Magic User and Thief. [You may also use a Paladin if you have a saved game from the previous programs; at least one puzzle can be solved only by a Paladin.]

You must use your brawn to play the game as a Fighter, magic powers and intelligence to succeed as a Magic-User, and cunning and stealth to win as a Thief. In all three versions, you build up your characters throughout the quest until you can stand among the

best of your character type.

Shadows uses the standard Sierra interface, with some enhancements for each character type. An additional icon on the control panel at the top of the screen brings up special options such as sleeping, time of day and moving

stealthily. These options are the meat of the game's variety. You can use certain Thief skills to solve a particular puzzle, but as a Magic User you might use a spell. Fighters mostly use their strength to solve the game's puzzles.

An Adventurer's Guild in the town helps you develop your skills and will have different training help based on character types. Fighters have weight equipment, while Thieves have



locks to pick.

In addition to the typical object-oriented puzzles you would expect in a Sierra game, *Shadows* also features some arcade-like combat, graphic puzzles and conversation trees.

You get a lot of information about events

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by Russ Ceccola

Type Animated adventure
System IBM Required 386+ (486 recommended), four megs RAM, hard disk, mouse, 256-color VGA, DOS 5.0+.
Supports Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Pro Audio & 16, Roland MT-32 & LAPC, Microsoft Sound, General MIDI
Planned ports IBM CD

ADVENTURE ROAD



Recent releases

Warriors of Legend is the latest of Virgin's Conan role-playing games. This time you have a multiple-character party instead of just a lone warrior, and get to use magic for the first time in these games. In a few months, look for Sierra's *Inca 2* and *Goblin's Quest* (AKA *Goblins 3*). See page eight for Sierra's upcoming CD releases.

Dynamix "delays" *Kronidor*

Or did they? *Thief of Dreams*, the sequel to *Betrayal at Kronidor*, was initially killed in January. Dynamix also let Jon Cutter, the game's designer, go at the same time. It simply didn't return as much money as a simulation would have, the reasoning reportedly went.

But after a few weeks — and a tidal wave of negative reaction on CompuServe and other networks — a mysterious news release announced the sequel was being "delayed" while the "...development team is reassigned to other projects that are due for release in 1994." They expect the same team to develop other novel-based games, which "...could include the sequel to *Betrayal at Kronidor*, in 1995." Final decision is expected in a month or so.

Industry news

MCA just bought a "significant minority share" of Interplay's stock, giving Interplay access to MCA's vast library of books, films, records and theme parks, not to mention Matsushita's technology. The plan is for Interplay to develop MCA properties in conjunction with Universal Interactive Studios. About the same time, Interplay acquired Northstar Studios, founded by Ron Spitzer. Spitzer was one of New World Computing's

founders who later moved over to EA and Crystal Dynamics.

Imagination Network news

Sierra and AT&T's Imagination Network (formerly The Sierra Network) will open up the door to interactive gaming for Sega owners who get AT&T's new Edge 16 device this fall. They'll be able to participate in multiplayer games such as *The Shadow of Yserbius*, and even talk to each other simultaneously on the phone while playing. In addition to playing via the INN system, you can also call another person and play head-to-head games.

Bug report

If you can't get on the subway in *Innocent Until Caught*, you'll need a new game. Some of the disks in the first shipment had a bug that prevents you from doing so. The first shipment of *Quest for Glory IV* also had problems with a DOS extender; patches are available on CompuServe and direct from Sierra.

Where in the Underworld is Carmen Sandiego?

This will reportedly be the name of Electronic Arts' next game after their recent merger with Broderbund.

Interactive spooks

Activision is developing "interactive espionage thrillers" under the direction of former CIA chief William Colby. The first in this new line is scheduled for early 1995 for IBM and later that year for Mac.

Swap Shop & Clues

In case you missed the fine print last issue, we're now charging for Swap Shop ads. Not money, though — with your ad, just include a clue that hasn't appeared in *Keys to the Kingdoms*. Please type all ads and clues. Thanks, and have a nice quest.

I recently purchased a CD drive for my 486 and for all the "bigger and better" games that this new medium *should* allow. But now I have a new problem: *when* to buy a game. I find myself postponing game purchases, hoping a CD version will appear. When you review a new game, please let us know if the CD version will differ significantly.

Eldon Anderson

The specs box accompanying each review indicates if a CD version is planned and will usually provide the projected release date. And our new CD Central column will point out which CDs truly take advantage of the medium's potential. (Hopefully some marketing execs at the companies will read your letter and finally realize why some of their games aren't selling as well as expected - everyone with a CD drive is waiting for the CD version.)

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Gabriel Knight

If the result of designing a *King's Quest* adventure is a departure to the complete opposite end of the gaming spectrum, then let's hope *King's Quest VI*'s co-designers Jane Jensen and Roberta Williams design another one every year. Williams is off in production on Sierra's first CD-only game, a terrifying thriller called *Phantasmagoria*. Jensen just released *Gabriel Knight*, a supernatural game involving voodoo and ancient curses.

Both designers have shown incredible creativity with their products. (I've always thought that too much of King Graham and his royal family might backfire and send someone toward the "dark side" of entertainment.) But Jensen's game shows the effects of years of exposure to thrillers, horror novels and comic books. *Gabriel Knight* just may surprise a lot of gamers with its spooky atmosphere, story depth and strong characterization. And the CD version is an experience that's downright suspenseful.

Type Animated adventure

System IBM & IBM CD-ROM
Required: 386+ (486 recommended), 4 megs RAM, hard disk, mouse, VGA, DOS 5.0+.
Supports: Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Roland MT-32 & LAPC, Microsoft sound system, General Midi

Planned ports none

Down on the bayou

Gabriel Knight's story has such depth that it would ruin your discovery of

various plot elements to go into too much detail. It suffices to say that you control Knight, a New Orleans writer and book shop owner – the last member of a family of "Shadow-hunters" – as he confronts the horrific and seemingly prophetic images in his dreams. Frighteningly real to him, the dreams get worse each night.

In the midst of writing a book on

voodoo, Gabriel must decide whether to abandon the writing or continue, knowing full well the effect his enemies may have on him. *Gabriel Knight* is as much a race against time, as it is an adventure game of exploration and discovery.

Conversations and glimpses into past history hint at the true nature of the dreams and their dire implications.

Cinematics

Sierra fans will master the interface quickly, for it is nothing more complicated than any other Sierra game. It has the side-view perspective employed by most Sierra games, but there are many cinematic scenes and a few other interfaces that depart from the side view when necessary.

Mouse control is best for this game. Use the right mouse button to scroll through the major command icons, such as look, talk, walk and use, and the left icon to perform the action. You can also pop up an icon bar if that seems easier. Sierra wisely continued the process of placing a colored dot on each inventory object so you know exactly where its active spot is located. [A hi-res mouse makes this much easier to use.]

Jensen added a lot of style and depth to *Gabriel Knight*. In addition to simply talking to characters, you can interrogate them about other people, places and objects. Similar to the *Dagger of Amon Ra* interface, this set-up allows you to obtain a character's information by simply clicking on an entry from a list of available topics while in interrogation mode.

As an added bonus, you can access

the dialogue of any interrogation with a special recorder icon. Click on the recorder, and you will see a case of cassette tape icons, one for each character you've interrogated. Reviewing these tapes is important, because it will

be tough to remember every conversation and piece of information. You use these tapes in much the same way as *Return to Zork*: by playing them back to other



characters for their response.

There are many interesting and challenging puzzles. The game is as much a mystery as it is a thrill, for discovering the plot is as important a puzzle as the more obvious object-oriented ones. At certain times you will also have to write a message in a voodoo code and a drum beat code, as well as translate the drum beats you hear. Special interfaces make these functions easy. Puzzles like these expand the scope of a game and make it far more atmospheric.

Quest noir

The thriller's graphics are dark and brooding, like many of the characters and the area of New Orleans where the game takes place. The game has the look and feel of a *Blade Runner/Bram Stoker's Dracula* combination, which makes perfect sense once you know that these movies are among a list of Jensen's favorite influences.

The use of cinematic scenes is particularly important because the collection of images in some of the nightmares is sometimes terrifying. Comics fans will also enjoy the added bonus that comes in the package – a

Continued on page 15

by Russ Ceccola



Winter C.E.S.

Well, the weather outside is frightful...stop the snow, stop the snow, stop the snow!!! Yes, folks, this issue of *QuestBusters* was delayed because I took so long to send in my article. I was busy outside shoveling away the ice and snow that pelted the Philadelphia area from the day I left for CES in Las Vegas until the middle of February. If it's not ice skaters with truncheons or aging rock stars with jailbait tendencies, it's the weath-er. Brrrrrr....

Access

While *Amazon* was the culmination of Access's adventure game technology to that point in time, *Under A Killing Moon* leaps far beyond the triumphs of that South American episodic nightmare. This new Tex Murphy adventure will feature talent like Brian Keith, Margot Kidder and Russell Means in a cinematic sci-fi adventure with a simple point-and-click interface. Expect to see a lot of TV coverage because of the stars in the game. We know here that the game will be more exciting than the actresses and actors themselves because it continues the adventures of one of gaming's best-loved detectives. It will fill two CDs and could be out in the next month.

Activision

Activision did not have any new adventure games to see at the show, but the rumors are true that *Return to Zork*'s producer, Eddie Dombrower, will continue the revival of classic Infocom worlds and characters when he works on the next game in the *Planetfall/Stationfall* saga. Gonzo game developer Steve Meretzky will be involved, and Eddie confessed that Floyd may very well live again!

Capstone

If you overlook the incredible announcements that Capstone plans on

producing games based on *Rescue 911* and the upcoming *Zorro* movie (they've got me stumped), as well as a *Flintstones* vs. *Jetsons* chess game, you'll discover their hot new *Wolfenstein* 3D-type game, *Corridor 7*, which uses that system's engine.

Corridor 7 is a fast-paced exciting

adventure that will surely satisfy all of the fans of this type of game with tons of action/combat, exciting music and smooth-scrolling graphics.

Electronic Arts

Following the cue of *Gabriel Knight* and other "adult" adventure games, Electronic Arts planned a tense thriller called *Noctropolis*. It's a dark and moody game in which you get pulled into the comic book world of your favorite heroes — Darksheer and Stiletto.

You have to prevent the bad guys in that world from crossing over into our world, and then find your way back before it's too late. *Noctropolis* has an intuitive pop-up interface and lots of cinematic touches that highlight the adult situations and graphic horror scenes for which they enlisted a Hollywood makeup effects artist.

Interplay

Stonekeep will be here by summer, featuring a hologram on its box as a neat bonus. *Starfleet Academy* is the next *Star Trek* game on the burner, but there was nothing to see at this CES except a few rendered introduction screens. Interplay will distribute I-Motion's two hot new adventures I mentioned before: *Alone in the Dark 2* and *Call of Cthulhu* [based on

the H. P. Lovecraft classic]. Both of these will be exciting horror games with that European feel that makes them so special.



Interplay's *Stonekeep*

Legend Entertainment

Steve Meretzky's next project for Legend will be *Superhero League of Hoboken*, an adventure/RPG hybrid that will

be a new type of game for both Meretzky and Legend. This time he attacks the wonderful state of New Jersey (somebody *had* to!).

Hoboken is the center of this game's nuclear-blasted world, where you guide a bunch of weird superheroes against mutant monsters like Steroid Man and your arch-nemesis Dr. Entropy. *Superhero League* has elements of the *Xanth* interface and RPG combat interfaces, so players will have a completely new experience with laugh-out-loud humor.

LucasArts

LucasArts only had a CD-ROM talkie version of *Sam and Max Hit the Road* to show as far as new adventures go. *The Dig* is no further along since Brian Moriarty left LucasArts and the project, but the new designer, Sean Clark, will keep the ball rolling. *The Dig*, now planned as a CD-only title, will be LucasArts's big adventure for 1994 for sure.

Luminaria

A new company has a CD product on the way, *Wrath of the Gods*, that deals with the gods of old. You have to actively take part in many of the legends of the Greek gods in this photo-realistic

by Russ Ceccola

Quest Report



adventure that uses a simple interface. The CD features tons of digitized pictures, actors and actresses, sound effects and speech.

Merit

Gilbert Austin, formerly of Origin, has the most horrific, disturbing game ever. *Harvester* is a waking nightmare in a small town where

everything strange seems connected to the eerie lodge on the outskirts. This CD-ROM features graphic, bloody scenes, unsettling plot twists and a *Twin Peaks*-ish atmosphere that will keep players on the edge of their seats.

MicroProse

Dragon Sphere should be out soon [see preview in this issue], but MicroProse isn't doing any more adventure games. *Dragon Sphere* uses the *Rex Nebular* interface and new RPG controls in an epic game with a major plot twist right in the middle of the game.

Mindcraft

The Gryphon Masters is Mindcraft's RPG based on Celtic mythology, the first in the series that will replace *The Magic Candle* this Spring. It uses a 32-bit engine, isometric 3-D graphics and a unique "no hit points" damage system. Mindcraft's fantasy-based strategy game, *Dominion*, also looked challenging.

New World Computing

NWC's first graphic adventure is an original. *Inherit the Earth: Quest for the Orb*, is about a world populated with animals instead of people. It's due in April. They were also showing *Heroes of*

Might and Magic, which combines elements of *Might & Magic* and *King's Bounty* and is set for July. (New World was recently acquired by NTN Communications, which transmits interactive trivia and sports games via satellite to bars and hotels. Jon van Caneghem remains at the helm, and

now we can look forward to even more great products from New World.

Origin

Ultima VIII: Pagan is Origin's major contribution to the adventure game field this year. Set on the homeworld of the Guardian from *Ultima VII*, *Pagan* is the darkest of the *Ultima* adventures. Instead of the usual overhead view introduced in *Ultima VI*, *Pagan* uses an isometric view so players can have more exciting combat rounds and new puzzle perspectives. [Monsters were created with 3-D Studio, making *Pagan* the most impressive *Ultima* since *IV*.]

The new look really works well. Make sure you tell Origin how much you like the flaming pentagram on *Pagan*'s cover so they get more daring next time!

Readysoft

Robinson's Requiem is a new game from the French company that has produced some other recent Readysoft games. You play the role of an FBI agent in this game of intrigue. The plot is very deep and the graphics are gorgeous and extremely detailed. This is one of those imports that you might have to look for diligently, but it will be worth every effort.

Sierra On-line

Sierra only had the long-awaited September release *Phantasmagoria* to show, but it's worth every minute of wait. Roberta Williams will take players into a strange mansion in which the man of the house slowly goes insane and takes part in (?)/views horrific events. The graphics are fully rendered with video laid on top of the backgrounds. It will have a simple interface and a whole lot of story depth and surprises. [Strategy and science fiction fans should keep an eye out for *Outpost*, a CD-only game based on NASA technology — a real *Sim City* in space]

Software Toolworks

Dragon Tales is Software Toolworks' answer to *Myst* and *The Seventh Guest*. It is a first-person, fully-rendered CD-ROM game in which you must rid the land of evil in a three-chapter story. The simple interface not only controls the adventure interface, but also the strategy and action/arcade elements of the game. *Dragon Tales* has gorgeous graphics and backgrounds and a lot of smooth animation.

Spectrum Holobyte

Star Trek: The Next Generation (PC, PC CD-ROM, 3DO) will be a massive hit when it comes out this spring. The game features a variety of missions, all of the show's characters and both Enterprise and planet-based game play. The CD games will feature digitized speech and fully rendered backgrounds. The first batch of games will also come in a collector's edition box.

Strategic Simulations

SSI has three new games on the way to satisfy different types of players. *Dark Legions* has a lot of different types of game play and a dark, horrific edge to it. *Al-Qadim* is a single-character action-heavy game in which you move a



Star Trek: The Next Generation

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CES ... from 5

character around in an isometric view to conquer the evil in this AD&D land.

Ravenloft is SSI's turn to profit from TSR's popular world of horror. It is a party-based game in a real simulated world. The game uses a large window and doesn't contain as much blood as *Ravenloft* fans might expect.

Tsunami

Tsunami's next game will be a sequel, *Ringworld 2*, to their first two adventures. *Ringworld 2* shows how Tsunami listened to their customers. It has a longer story line and more game play than the original. *Ringworld 2* will also have a lot of science-based puzzles, crisper and cleaner graphics, control of three characters and a lot of time spent on the eight-deck space ship. (Though they were showing *Protostar 2* at CES,

Tsunami cancelled the project a few weeks later after changing distributors.)

Virgin

Virgin didn't have any new adventure games of their own in the works, but they will import *Beneath A Steel Sky* from the same design team who produced *Lure of the Temptress*. It is a futuristic sci-fi/mystery in which you control the main character who is chased by a number of people, but doesn't remember his identity.

The "virtual theater" interface is easy to control and features the gritty, realistic graphics backgrounds drawn by the 2000 AD comic book's Dave Gibbons. Also look for Westwood Studio's *Lands of Lore* on CD-ROM, completely narrated by Patrick Stewart and with other new features too!

Walt Disney

Wolf is one of the strangest and most

original ideas for an RPG in a long time. As a wolf in a number of scenarios/missions, you must take over territory, fight enemy wolves and mate when necessary. This is role-playing of the highest degree in a slick package with nice, digitized footage from Disney's *True-Life Adventures* TV show of the Fifties, an information data base to help out and lots of variety for nature fans.

Best Quests of CES

Because of its emphasis on story line, cinematics, simple interface and intelligent decision-making and puzzles, *Harvester* was my favorite NEW game of the show. The other winners from the Winter CES show in Las Vegas were: *Under A Killing Moon*, *Noctropolis*, *Superhero League of Hoboken*, *Pagan*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Beneath A Steel Sky* and *Wolf*. ✻

CES Party Report

There really weren't that many big parties this time around — more like cozy gatherings instead. Before I bore you, let's head to the main events!

Wednesday

No computer game company had a party tonight, but Capcom, Acclaim and Tradewest threw soirees at three different Las Vegas spots. First stop was the hard-to-find Tradewest party in the new Treasure Island casino. After wandering around for hours and finally stopping by Siegfried and Roy's dressing room next door at the Mirage to ask for directions, I managed to find the location — only to stay for 15 minutes! Tradewest had no games to show at this CES, but scenes from the upcoming *Double Dragon* movie festooned the ballroom.

It was a long way to Acclaim's suite at the Desert Inn, but as always they had great food, drinks and company. Plus, you could play all their games on setups throughout the room. Thanks to

Acclaim for the *Itchy & Scratchy* watch in the press kit — now my collection of watches quickly approaches 100! The MGM Grand was the last stop of the night and the hoppingest party of the show. People lingered long past closing time and danced to the tunes of the great band, got photos with the *Street Fighter* gals and popped *Mega Man* balloons! This giant lion out front acted as the bouncer!

Thursday

There were so many parties Thursday night, it was impossible to attend them all. I missed the Aura Interactor hardware audio feedback device party at the Luxor (who use their product in one of their rides) and the Baker & Taylor party at Caesar's Palace. But I did stop by the Alexis Park Hotel for Sony/ImageSoft's small get-together to pick up my Sony glass.

Next came Spectrum Holobyte's wonderful *Star Trek: The Next Generation* party in the MGM Grand celebrating the

release of their ST:TNG game. Brent Spiner (Data) was there for a while for pictures and autographs, but then split to commune with the electronics system in the basement. [The open bar was so generous with the Chivas, the QB editor cracked up his rental car on the way to the next party!]

I dropped by Casio's dinner down the hall and received a calculator that also contains a clock. That didn't help me to be on time for Namco's party at Caesar's Palace's Forum Shops arcade. Namco owns the arcade and opened it to the press for free for three hours. And who said arcades aren't fun!?

Friday

Friday was the last party night — and a slow one too! I started the night off at the Hard Rock Cafe. Compton's New Media plan a *Tommy: The Musical* CD-ROM this year and set up a live hookup with Pete Townshend (middle of the night for him) from his house in England. I got to ask Pete about his plans for using CD-ROMs, and left with

DRAGONSHERE

When your father, the king, dies, you, his heir, become king of the realm. As the new king, you find you have inherited the twenty-year legacy of the Dragonsphere.

The sphere contains a dragon, representing the imprisonment of an evil sorcerer named Sanwe, who was trapped by the court wizard Ner-Tom's shield spell — which encases an entire mountain, upon which Sanwe's tower now stands. Lengthening cracks in the sphere represent the weakening spell that imprisons Sanwe. You awaken to undertake an adventure to rid the kingdom of Sanwe's evil which ravages the land.

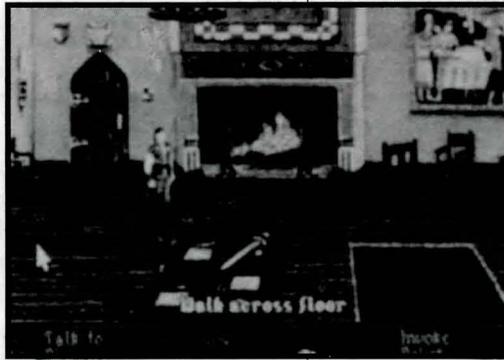
Your quest to destroy Sanwe will take you from the land of the fair to the lands of the fairies, the shapeshifters and the desert people. Along the way the rulers of these lands will give you artifacts and gifts that will help you in your quest.

After you slay Sanwe, in the persona of the new king, you will take the persona of Pid, a shapeshifter and set out on another quest. This time you must rescue the kingdom once again from the influence of your evil mother and brother, who covet the throne, and to start the kingdom on a new road of peace and acceptance among the four divergent races of the realm.

Dragonsphere is the last animated graphic adventure from the MicroProse

a cool Tommy shirt and press kit. EduQuest had an event at Alexis Park down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe, but I could hardly call it a party because people just sat there playing with computers. I quickly consulted my Casio clock/calculator and realized that Treasure Island was about to blow up some ships out front again, so I hopped a cab to the casino and saw Vegas at their best. Is it any coincidence that the British ship they sink six times every night is named the Britannia? Watch out, Richard Garriott! Vegas is out to get you! Chicago, here I come... ✻

AGA group, which has been disbanded in phases since the release of the Gothic horror thriller, *Return of the Phantom*, and this latest release. Thus the new and innovative MicroProse technology that was born with AGA's *Rex Nebular* and *the Cosmic Gender Bender* may regrettably never again see the light of day. And following their release by Spectrum Holobyte's most recent acquisition, MicroProse AGA group producers Matt Gruson and Raymond Benson must quest for gainful employment at other software companies.



The graphics spring from a unique video-capture technique that employs live actors to give the characters life-like animation, even when they are very small. Colors used for the background and characters meld together, eliminating the pasted-on look seen in many other graphic adventures. The MicroProse graphics process integrates the animated character and background so they appear as an integral part of the same world or landscape.

Thankfully, *Dragon-sphere* is devoid of the arcade sequences that seem to plague Sierra games. The game progresses through the exploration of the realm and subsequent accumulation of objects that, when used appropriately, move the story forward. These treasure hunt puzzles are complemented by word puzzles that, with a little

logic (for the occasional logic puzzle) and some avid note-taking, the main character can use to bring most encounters to a successful conclusion by answering the right questions and correctly using artifacts.

The inventory is large enough to accommodate all the objects in the quest, eliminating confusion over which objects to keep and which to throw away. Gameplay is further simplified by limiting object acquisition to items that can be used in the game. Non-essential game artifacts cannot be acquired. The use of some puzzle items is obscure, but for the most

part the puzzle solutions are obvious if you follow the story carefully.

Two modes are available: novice and challenging, to give new players and experienced players an enjoyable gaming experience. In the novice mode, you still survive even if you're not as precise in adhering to the game's challenges.

Many word puzzles are set up so that you can't tell where your answers were incorrect, since they wait until the entire narrative exchange sequence is ended before killing off your alter ego. This added challenge requires you to repeat the

more obscure areas of the quest many times before being successful. The

Type Animated Adventure

System IBM Required: 286/12+/DOS 3+ (386/16 & DOS 5 recommended), 2 megs RAM, 12 megs hard disk, MCGA or VGA
Supports: Ad Lib, Roland, Sound Blaster, Pro Audio, Spectrum, Covox, mouse (recommended)

Planned ports none

by Al C. Giovetti

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CD CENTRAL

We're consolidating all CD news in this column, effective immediately, and making every effort to sort out what's different – if anything – about CD versions of recent games.

CD Hits

Activision says *Return to Zork* sold 300,000 games in two months.

LucasArts projected shipping over 200,000 *Rebel Assaults* by Christmas. If these aren't a sign that the CD has arrived, maybe you'd better go back out in the yard and stare into the sun for a few minutes.

Fantasy Empires CD

SSI's CD *Fantasy Empires* has quite a few new features. There are six new combat spells and three strategy spells. Timestop looks particularly useful. You also get three new kinds of terrain, twice as many digitized voice samples for the Dungeon Master (who now moves and speaks in the intro), and your choice of designs for your shield markers.

Conspiracy?

Virgin's "new" *Conspiracy* looks suspiciously like their *KGB* with Donald Sutherland video pumped in. It wouldn't be the first time Virgin recycled a game without mentioning it on the cover.

Westwood's CD *Hand of Fate*, set for April, will not offer any major enhancements, so you may as well get the

floppy. *Lands of Lore*, however, has a "History of the Lands" feature that is a significant addition.

Natasha & the Chief

Sierra is beginning to do more with CDs than in the past. The CD *Lary VI* is in production and due out in a few months. Al Lowe was in the studio taping voices as we closed this issue.

Sierra's upcoming CD of *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness* will use the voice of Natasha from the *Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*.

Police Quest IV will feature a "chat with the chief," if you really want Darryl Gates on your monitor. It will also include voices. Look for it around May, when their other CD conversions and new releases (*Inca 3* and *Goblin Quest*) will hit the stores.

New World Computing

In May, look for a CD version of *Inherit the Earth* with full speech support. By June, the 3-D hovertank sim *Zephyr* will be out (CD-only).

Interplaying for keeps

Brian Fargo was recently quoted in a national publication as saying that he was putting all of Interplay's resources into CDs (though he may have been referring to bank

CDs). Work just on Interplay's CD *Star Trek: Judgement Rites*. Featuring digitized voices of the original cast, it should be out in around six months. *Star Trek 4* (no working title yet) is scheduled for early next year.

Though the games are all straight ports from the floppy originals, Interplay's *Tenth Anniversary Anthology* is a real bargain for anyone who missed out on Interplay's earlier adventures and RPGs. You get a wide mix of game styles, from *Tass Times in Tonetown* to *Wasteland* and more recent releases such as *Castles* and *Star Trek 25th Anniversary*. You also get *Bard's Tale I*, *Dragon Wars*, *Battle Chess*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Mindshadow* and *Out of the World*.

Not adventures but still CD

We have now officially run out of things to say about CD adventures and role-playing games. So let's take a quick look at some other new CD offerings. *Buzz Aldrin's Race into Space* introduces modern play and a play-by-mail option. There is also an easier "beginner level" game.

Strike Commander CD, Origin's first game that is actually enhanced for CD, eats up less than ten megs on your hard disk, and the frame rate may be up to twice as fast. It also includes full digitized speech, a General Midi soundtrack, and the 24 missions from the *Tactical Operations* mission disk. And it now supports rudder pedals, has better enemy AI, and a host of other new features and improvements that make it Origin's best-selling CD yet.

Nova Logic's CD *Maximum Overkill* includes all the original missions and many new ones – for a total of 100. Reflective water, falling snow and other new terrain features are included in the dozen different environments. It also now supports the vastly superior CH *Flightstick Pro*. ❧



Interplay's 10th Anniversary CD

IRON HELIX

While MS-DOS has dominated the entertainment software industry for several years, it's surprising to see so many CD titles become available for the Mac. *Iron Helix* is one such title that's had high ratings as a Mac game and is now available as an MPC (Windows only) game for the PC. To be honest, I haven't had much luck running most MPC games off of Windows without memory problems or sound conflicts. So I expected problems when I loaded *Iron Helix* — but didn't get any.

The plot is simple but clever. A starship's programming has gone wild and, instead of doing a practice mission, is headed off to destroy a habitable world and precipitate an intergalactic war. Part of the weapon's make-up is a viral disease that mutates human DNA structure until death occurs — so the starship's own crewmembers cannot enter the proper codes to stop the ship, because the ship no longer recognizes their DNA patterns.

You are closest to the runaway ship, so you're asked to stop it by using a robot probe.

You have three probes, therefore three chances, to stop the ship by hunting through its corridors to find the proper codes. Except that the corridors aren't so empty after

all. Yes, the crew's all dead now, but it's not just due to the virus. A defender robot is actively eradicating anything that doesn't have the proper DNA code, and your probe is at the top of its hit list.

There are four phases to the game. In the first, you must find three top-ranking

DNA codes that your probe's computer can use to gain access to security rooms and data files. After you've got the DNA patterns, you must find the codes hidden in different data files needed to destroy the defender robot and get the code for the ship's destruct sequence.

In the third phase, you must use the proper code in the correct place to either trap or destroy the defender robot. And finally, you have to use the proper code in the right place to activate the ship's self-destruct sequence. After destroying the defender, you have five minutes to activate self-destruct; fail to do so, and another defender is dispatched and prevents the self-destruct from engaging.

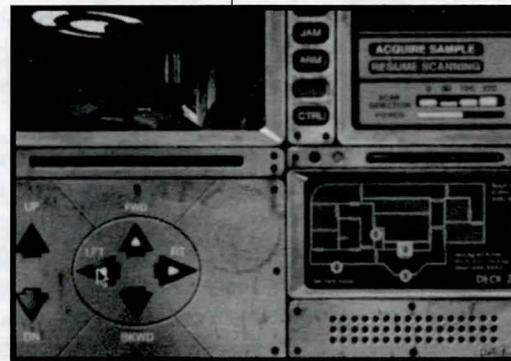
An interesting replay option is provided by the game's three difficulty levels: beginner, intermediate and expert. With each harder level, the defender becomes more aggressive in tracking you down, the DNA patterns and data file codes get harder to find, and the methods for trapping or destroying the defender and activating the self-destruct are more elaborate. There are also more rooms, some hidden, to search.

Helix's interface is very easy to use. The upper left-hand quarter of the screen is reserved for the hi-res SVGA graphics window that shows the corridors and rooms going by as your

probe moves along. Below this, a horizontal bar indicates a yellow or red alert when the defender is near, six directional keys for maneuvering your probe, and four buttons for saving, quitting, pausing, or examining any notes you've collected while searching the data files.

The upper right-hand portion of the screen has four buttons. One allows you to scan for stray DNA samples, another

to momentarily jam the defender's signal and incapacitate it long enough to escape (though this costs you some of your



probe's energy).

Another button arms the activator that collects DNA samples; it also activates data pads. The fourth button lets you check your inventory, turn off the scan function to save energy, or reboot to a back-up probe if you're about to lose all data in a damaged one.

The lower right-hand screen consists of three maps that you can toggle between. One shows a schematic of your location, another the same for the defender's surroundings, and the third illustrates your location in reference to the defender.

The game plays well. Overlaid with SVGA graphics, an intro depicts the initial mishap of the starship going renegade. A log entry from the ship's commander tells what happened to the crew.

As you watch your own probe entering the ship, the intro smoothly segues into the start of the game as you look down your first series of corridors

Type : Multimedia graphic adventure

System IBM CD-ROM

Required 381/16+, 2 megs XMS, VGA, DOS 3.3+, CD drive, mouse
Supports Sound Blaster, SVGA VESA
Recommended double-spin CD drive

Planned ports Macintosh CD-ROM

by Paul Shaffer

Continued on page 14

WALKTHROUGH

Sam and Max

Office

Look at mouse hole and get the cash from inside it. Get the black light bulb from the closet that is on the far right side of your office.

Leave the office and head toward the stairs going down. Use man on the railing, and Max will push him off. Go downstairs. Outside, talk to the cat. Use Max on the cat to get your orders. Use the car and go to the carnival.

Carnival

Show your orders to the fire-breathing man. Talk to the Kushman brothers inside the tent. They will tell you more about your assignment. Get the swatch of hair in front of the melted ice block.

Walk to the left and get the jar that contains Jesse James' severed hand. Leave the tent and talk to fire breather. Walk into the carnival between the two tents and then go north past the tunnel of love.

Get the magnifying lens in the Wak-a-Rat booth. Use the mallet to play Wak-a-Rat until you win. You need to hit 20 rats to win the prize, which is a flashlight. Use the black light bulb on the flashlight.

Cone of Tragedy

Walk to the left and talk to the Cone of Tragedy operator. Ask about all and you will then ride the cone. After the ride is over, look at your inventory. It will all be gone.

Talk to the cone operator and ask about your inventory. He will give you a claim ticket for the Lost and Found, which is just to the right of the fire breather. Enter tent and you will get your inventory back plus one extra item, a fish magnet. Look at it,

and the world of Fish will appear on your travel map. Walk left three screens to the car. Go to any Snuckey's.

Snuckey's

Walk inside. Get pecan candy from top of the left rack. You can buy a different toy at the end rack of each Snuckey's. These are for your enjoyment and can be played at any time. They have no bearing on the game. The Snuckey's in the North sells a car bomb game, the South sells paint by number books, and the West branch sells dress up books.

After Max complains about having to use the bathroom talk to the soda jerk. Ask about can buy a different toy game and candy to buy them. Ask about can buy a different toy toilet so Max can get restroom key. When Max uses the key, quickly end the conversation.

Rush outside and talk to Max before he can return the key. Ask Max about the key, and you will get to keep the rasp. Get the Snuckey's cup that is on the ground. Go back inside and can buy a different toy give jar with Jesse James' hand to the soda jerk so he can open it for you. Return to the carnival.

Tunnel of Love

Go to the tunnel of love ride. Use the boat. Once inside, use the flashlight. Left-click to turn it on, then look at the wall. After the second display — "Revenge of the Gill Guy" — is a fuse box. Right-click on the flashlight to leave it on. Use Max on the fusebox. It will get shorted out, the boat will come to a stop, and you will get out. Look at the man with the beard. Sam will pull on it. The executioner chops off the man's head which causes the door to open. Enter.

Talk to Doug the Mole Man. Ask about Bruno. He goes on forever and

eventually mentions his Uncle Shuv-Oohl and the Ball of Twine where he was last seen (it now appears on your map). Give Doug the pecan candy, and he will give you a "key" to Trixie's trailer, which is a crowbar and tell you a long story. Use the lever to get the ride running again. Exit.

Trixie

Walk right two screens to Trixie's trailer. Use the crowbar on the lock to enter the trailer. Use the hope chest to open it and get the stiltwalker's costume. Use the closet. Look at score card on the door. It will go into your inventory, and Gator Golf will appear on your map. Exit and return to car. Go to ball of twine.

Ball of Twine

Go to the building below the giant ball of twine. Inside, talk to the museum employee and ask about all. Exit and walk to the tram. Go upstairs. When the skycar approaches, walk in. After the skycar stops, go to the left. You will go up an elevator to the restaurant. To the right is a magician. Ask him about the bent tools and he will give you one. Use the elevator to leave and enter the skycar. Return to the car and go to World of Fish.

World of Fish

Get the bucket of fish that is under the sign marked "fish feed." Talk to fisherman and ask about helicopter. To the left is a large fiberglass fish. Use the bent tool on the fish. Use fish to enter it. Then use Max on the fish. The fish will get thrown on the net and picked up by the helicopter. You will be taken to the other side of the restaurant on top of the ball of Twine.

Use Max on the twine, and he will use his teeth to bite off a piece. After the cook comes back out, Sam and Max jump — but in the process, you get a 91-foot piece of twine that is automatically put

by Stacey Portnoy

into your inventory. Your car will show up. Go to Gator Golf.

Gator Golf

Walk left two screens. Get the broken golf ball retriever from trash can. Talk to the man about all. Walk toward the Gator Golf sign. After the run-in with Conroy Bumpus and Lee-Harvey, Max will trapped in the dunk tank.

Use the bucket of fish on the bucket of golf balls to replace them. Take a golf club. Using the dragon as a guide, position the golf flag in front of or behind the gators. You want the gators to be lined up in order to make a walkway. The program will let you know when you have succeeded.

Use the door to free Max, and a secret door will appear. Max gives you a piece of sasquatch hair. Open the secret door and look inside. You will see a sno-globe, and the Mystery Vortex will appear on your map. Walk south and return to the car. Go to the Mystery Vortex.

Mystery Vortex

Enter the building and walk all the way to the right. Go through the red curtains. You will be upside down. Get the sasquatch hair that is on the melting ice block. Talk to the woman about sno-globe. Exit.

Walk toward the mirror and use mirror to enter it. There are three magnets: red, blue and yellow. The yellow one is to the right of the second magnet. When you use a lever, Sam and Max will turn to the color of the lever(s) pulled, and the corresponding door(s) can be opened. This part of the game is all trial and error, as each time you enter the Vortex, the two doors to the right of the mirror change colors.

You need to go through one of these two doors. When you enter the correct door, the scene will change. Talk to Shuv-Oohl and ask about Bruno. He tells you about Frog Rock and its location. In order to help you more, he

asks you to find his mood ring he lost in the Ball of Twine. Exit and return to car. Go to Ball of Twine.

Twine: Mood Ring

Enter the museum. In your inventory, use the broken golf ball retriever with the severed hand and then the magnet. Once the three are combined, use the gadget on the ball. Sam will push it inside, and the magnet will pick up the ring. Exit and return to the Mystery Vortex.

Vortex: Shuv-Oohl

Enter the building and go in same door as before in order to speak to Shuv-Oohl. Ask about the mood ring. He tells you that at frog rock you will need to place three samples of bigfoot hair on the rock and sprinkle it with mole dust which he gives you. Exit and go to Ball of Twine.

Twine: Binoculars

Ride the sky car and go to the restaurant. Get the exposed wires to the left of the elevator and use them on the binoculars. Then use the lens on the binoculars. Use the binoculars.

When the needle is at dead center, the binoculars will stop moving and the name of the site you are looking at is mentioned. Look until you find Frog Rock recalling that Shuv-Oohl said it was between the Ethereal Plane of Acid Rain and the Enchanted Argyle Forest. Hit the "escape" key to leave the binoculars. Exit restaurant. Return to car and go to Frog Rock.

Frog Rock

Walk to the right. Put the three samples of bigfoot hair on the rock. Use the mole dust on the rock. A flying saucer appears and leaves you the message: Go to Bumpusville. Do as you were told.

Bumpusville

Enter the building. Go left and get

picture of John Muir. Walk to the far right room, which has a monster truck in it. Walk to the truck. Get the pillow with the hair tonic on it. Look at the bookshelf. Use retriever with the severed hand to get the book on top shelf, the one that deals with the operation of maintenance droids.

Leave and find droid. Use droid. Sam will open it up. Plug in the blue wire and make sure all the others are unplugged. The droid only goes into rooms that are green. Hit "escape," and the droid will do what is programmed. The droid will cause the alarm to go off, and Lee-Harvey will investigate.

Dragon in the Cave

Go right twice and up into the room with the green plaque above the door. Get the virtual reality helmet. Get the sword and **save the game**. Approach the cave to get the dragon to come out. Step backward and quickly change to the sword. Use sword on the dragon. After killing it, get the heart. Inside is a key that can go into your inventory.

Exit and go to the far left room. Bruno and Trixie are there. Use key on lock to turn off alarm, and Bruno and Trixie will come out of their trance. They mention they are late for a bigfoot party at the Jungle savage Inn that is only for bigfoots and their dates. Return to car and go to Jungle Inn (volcano on the map).

Jungle Inn

Enter the inn. Try to go through the door that the bigfoot is blocking. Talk to the bigfoot guard. He will mention his foot problem. Give him the rasp. Talk to the woman behind the desk and ask about all. After the conversation is over, she gives you some brochures. Look at them. Two new places will show up on your map: Mount Rushmore Dinosaur Tarpit and Bungee Jumping National Park (dinosaur on map) and the Celebrity Vegetable

Continued on page 13

Keys to the Kingdoms

Quest for Glory 4

Dark One's Cave (Magic-using character): look at creature and book. Cross rope. Cast Dazzle. Cast Fetch (at book). Exit right. Climb up on altar. Use Erana's staff on Ad Advis. Tell Ultimate Joke (learned from Gnome.) Use staff on Ad Advis again, then use staff on crystal. Watch scene.

Erana's Garden: Cast Detect Magic. Cast Fetch (at red spot on tree). Cast Trigger (at lake). Cast Open at tulip bud. Cast Fetch at scroll.

Domovi, night two: exit room when tired, ask Domovi about help. Enter bedroom. Sleep until morning. Eat. Exit hotel. Walk to monastery. Use Dark sign on door. Use rehydration solution (from Dr. Cranium on day 3, traded for flask of grue goo near bonsai bush) on dried-out object. Give hexapod garlic. Use fireplace. Cast Open at desk. Look thru desk. Drink wine. Burn Big Book.

Adventurer's Guild (Thief character only): Unlock door (get key from Burgeomeister by asking about Guild). Sign logbook. Read logbook. Get rope and grapnel. Look at bookcase. Read all books. Use stair-stepper. Use grapnel on ring on ceiling. Climb rope. Get grapnel. Look under desk (note pattern and numbers). Use hooks. Solve puzzle by moving hooks under desk. Climb bookcase.

Zachary Borovicka

Arcade sequence: use the game controls to slow down this sequence if you are having trouble with it. You can slow it down even more by punching your computer's "turbo" button to reduce the computer's speed from 33 to 25, or 25 to 16 MHz.

Al Giovetti

Gabriel Knight

Day 8: When you awake, take the key from the table at the bottom of the bed. It will open the large carved door and

lead you to the secret library. In the library, "look" at the center bookcase on the back wall. Read the *People's Republic* book. "Look" on the right bookcase and read *The Primal Ones*. "Look" at the left wall bookcase and read *Ancient Roots of Africa*. "Look" at the far left bookcase for the *Sun Worshipers* book. "Look" at the lower far right bookcase for *Ancient Digs of Africa*. After you read all these books, *The Snake Mound* book appears. Get it, and you will be able to fly to Africa later on Day 8.

R. Holbrook

Warriors of Legend

The Lava Pits: Eventually you will arrive at the Lava Pits. Save the game. Cross the bridge to the east, noting the safe spots. Once you're safely across, follow the path to the door. Prepare a Flaming Death spell. Save game. Enter door and slay the Dragons.

Enter the left tunnel and get all items. Return to where you encountered the Dragons. Enter the right tunnel. Talk to Madure, then **quickly** hit him with a Flaming Death spell. Enter chamber to Right and get the Chaos key and another key. Retrace your steps and return to Llandria.

In Llandria, sell your loot and buy spells, ingredients, weapons and armor. If your money is still limited, at least buy the Freeze, Paralyze and Magic Fire scrolls, and the necessary ingredients. Heal and Resurrect will come in handy too. Exit Llandria.

F. J. Philipp and C. F. Shaffer

Day of the Tentacle

Miscellaneous hints: Bernard should open all doors and look behind them (trade keys for crowbar). Annoy the residents by putting the speaker on the floor and turning on the stereo. Instead of flushing items between the characters, "give item to" works faster and from any location. Give decaf to Doctor Fred, then videotape his actions (you

must push Edna out first). Let Hoagie mail the signed contract. Laverne should use the tiny sweater on the cold, wet hamster (after dethawing him).

John Beck

Dark Sun

Wym School: Balkazar cannot be killed unless you destroy his power focus. Several books scattered around will help you determine what it is. If not, try using Reflection.

After destroying Balkazar, stand next to the mixing bowl in his quarters and use the Terror Extract on it. Next, dip an Obsidian Dagger in it – the one off the floor will do. This produces a Terror Blade, a +2 Dagger that poisons and makes a very effective weapon.

Johnny Garret Jr.

Critical Path

Scene 1, Tunnel doors: press space bar to answer KAT.

Scene 2, MCL established: enter 123 on detonator.

Scene 3, Ore carts: enter 152 on detonator.

Scene 4, Conveyor belt: stop belt by pressing button E when Kat awakes. Then start belt when blood orange draws his gun.

Scene 5, Furnace: press button J to open chute when Kat is surrounded.

Scene 6, Crane: press unlabeled button G to use crane.

Scene 7, Catwalks: Lead Kat left, forward, left, left, forward, right, right, left, right, then straight through door.

Scene 8, Hallway: Go right toward faucet. Answer yes to Kat.

Scene 9, Packing room: Go right.

Scene 10, Water Tower: Enter 666 on detonator.

Scene 11, Torture Chamber: Enter 451 on detonator.

Sam & Max ..from 11

Museum (tomato on map). Exit and go to vegetable museum.

Vegetable Museum

Walk to the right. Get Conroy Bumpus eggplant from the container. Talk to the lady. Give her the John Muir picture, and she will turn it into a squash that you can pick up later. Return to the car and go to Mount Rushmore Park.

Keys ..from 12

Scene 12, Electric Chair: Enter 911 on detonator.

Scene 13, Elevator shaft: Press button N to blow siren and win the game.

Joseph J. Courter

Star Trek: Judgement Rites

Light and Darkness, the samples: Use medical tricorder on blue and yellow sample dishes. Use blue sample on DNA sequencer. Talk to Ensign. 3. 1. 3. 3. Use yellow sample on sequencer. Use blue sample again. Use Ensign on sequencer. Use Ensign on replicator. Take new sample. Use medical tricorder on green sample. North. Use tricorder on computer. Insert sample into port. Use tricorder on projection. Talk to Cicissa. 3. ✖

Paul Shaffer

This month contributor R. Holbrook was randomly selected to receive the game of his choice – so send in your clues & tips today, so we can fill two pages in the next issue. (All submissions become property of Eldritch, LTD until May 12, 2317 A. D.)

Mt. Rushmore Park

Walk to bungee jumping and then go to the right of the tarpit slide. Enter the elevator. Talk to the instructor. Use the screen to put the equipment on. Use the bungee cord to jump off. Use Snuckey's cup on the golf retriever, then use it on tarpit to get some tar. Use screen to take off equipment.

Enter elevator. Walk to the animal display on the left. Look at the woolly mammoth to see that the mammoth hair is similar to sasquatch hair. Use Max, and he will chomp off some hair. Listen to T-Rex speak by using speaker box by his foot; while his mouth is open, use the rope on it. Then use Max on the rope. Sam will throw Max to the car, and the tooth will be pulled out. Enter the car and go to the vegetable museum.

Vegetable Museum

Talk to the lady about the squash, and she will give you the gourd of John Muir. Return to car and go to Bumpusville.

Bumpusville: Toupee

Enter the building and go to the far right room. Use the Conroy Bumpus eggplant on the toupee. Sam will switch them, but the alarm goes off and Lee-Harvey kicks you out. Get in car and go to Jungle Inn

Bigfoot Party

Enter the inn. You can now create a bigfoot costume. In your inventory, use tar on hair, and then use hair on stiltwalker's costume. Now use the toupee on the costume. Use the costume, and you will go into the phone booth to put it on. The guard will let you into the party.

Get the bottle of wine from the table. Enter the door that is to the right of the stage. Enter the freezer room and take the ice pick. Open the back door, and in comes Conroy and Lee-Harvey.

Talk to Conroy. He believes you are a

bigfoot. To convince him you are not, use the costume. You will take it off. Now Conroy wants to wear the costume so he can infiltrate the bigfoots, and he and Lee-Harvey steps into the freezer to put it on. Use Max on the freezer door to shut them in.

A Yeti chief comes in and makes you an honorary chief. He takes you to the four great totem poles. He believes they are the answer to saving his race and asks for your help in solving their secret. Look at each of the four totem poles. Walk to the left and return to car. Go to the Ball of Twine.

Twine: Corkscrew

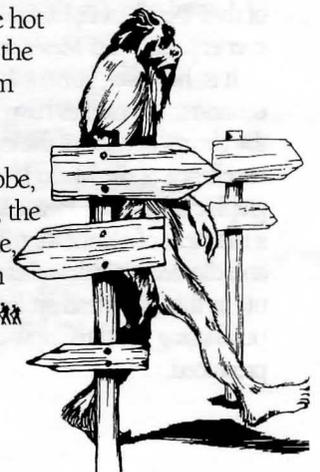
Go to the magician in the restaurant. Give him the ice pick, and he will bend it into a corkscrew. Exit. Return to the car and go to Mystery Vortex.

Vortex: Sno-globe

Enter and go through the door with the curtains. Use corkscrew on the wine bottle to remove the cork. Use cork on the sno-globe. Use the mini-vortex machine. When you are inside and machine is turned on by the woman, use the globe to fill it up with mystical energy. Exit and return to car. Go to the Jungle Inn.

Jungle Inn: Totem Poles

Enter the Inn. Go past the guard and through the door to the left of the stage. Click about an inch above Bruno's head to walk to the hot tub. Give the chief the items that the totem poles represent. From left to right, they are the sno-globe, the dinosaur tooth, the John Muir vegetable, and the pillow with the hair tonic. ✖



Dragonsphere ..from 7

process was made even more maddening by an error in the Butterfly King exchange logic puzzle that penalizes those who understand the game too much. [This is a preview, of course, so we can expect this and other problems to be cleared up before the final release.]

The neo-classical music and the sound effects, fit with the fantasy adventure theme of dragons, wizards, kings, castles and wicked stepmothers. Music is enjoyable enough that you may not even turn it off.

You can save a virtually infinite number of games. This will be necessary to sort out the convoluted plot, which keeps you returning to each land many times, thus completing the quest in piece-meal fashion.

One glaring deficiency in the otherwise pure composition of this swords and sorcery opera is the lack of a magic map to facilitate getting from one place to another. Another problem is the game's small size. There are 52 background locations, which is substantially smaller than games such as *Shadows of Darkness*. Regardless of the great graphics, long and involving story line, interesting characterizations, clever puzzles and other nice features of this game, *Dragonsphere's* lack of scope detracts from its overall perfection.

Recently Micro Prose was acquired by Spectrum Holobyte and received an extensive marketing overhaul with the goal of positioning the company aggressively in an entrenched but rapidly expanding marketplace. Hopefully MicroProse will survive — for the sake of their excellent flight simulators and ever enjoyable Sid Meier strategy games.

It is, however, lamentable that economic necessities have resulted in the abrupt demise of the emerging excellence of the Micro Prose animated graphic adventure. Please let us pause in a moment of silence for the departed and dig deep in our wallets to contribute to this now dead art form by purchasing the three now-classic games produced. ❧

Iron Helix... from 9

and begin scanning for scattered DNA. The sense of movement through the halls is smooth, and the sound effects are quite good.

At first it is difficult to juggle the tasks of avoiding the relentless defender, manipulating the maps to ensure a thorough search, and scanning for DNA. But you do get accustomed to it. In the first five minutes, I wasn't sure the game would hold my attention for long (I kept getting fried by the defender). Once I learned how to use the elevator and ladders to keep a couple of steps ahead of the killer robot, though, I became committed to finishing what I'd started.

Three hours later, and after several restores, I smiled with satisfaction as I trapped the defender in one of the hallways, having lured it in with my probe as bait, then using the security system to secure the bulkheads and seal it in. It was with even greater glee that I accessed the program that drained the defender of all its energy and destroyed it. Next to that, activating the ship's self-destruct was just wrapping up business — with the defender, it had become a personal vendetta.

I played the beginner mode and had a good workout, so I can imagine how tough it gets at the higher levels. But having seen other sections of the ship that were off limits to me in beginner mode, I was really curious how the story would change at difficulty settings.

Conclusions: While I don't consider *Iron Helix* a must-have game, it certainly was thoroughly well-done. The higher levels offer greater difficulty and a more involved plot, but the quickie satisfaction of having beaten it once on the easy level may not motivate you to come back for more. Recommended. ❧

Skill Level: Quester-adjustable

Company: Spectrum Holobyte

Price: \$59

QuestBusters price: \$49

Quest for Glory ..from 1

and people in the town from conversations. Simply click on subjects when you talk to characters to hear what they have to say. Their topics may change when you return to them, depending on what you've done in-between talks, so you should always try to talk to characters every time you run into them.

Combat is a joy for players of all types. Those who want an arcade mini-game can click on the opponents to strike blows or cast spells in real time. Those who hate action games can guide the actions of their character in a strategy mode, or just let the computer handle combat completely.

In a nod to the *Dr. Brain* games (a series started by Corey Cole), the town's mad scientist Dr. Cranium (a distant relative of Brain) has a laboratory that requires solving a few Dr. Brain-like puzzles before you can get inside.

The horror aspects of *Shadows* are tongue-in-cheek. Monsters are equally goofy and scary. You will encounter most of them in the forest as you wander around. The horror references are many, and they contribute to the game's atmosphere and the occasional silliness. Though *Shadows* was designed to be the horror-based game in the *Quest for Glory* series, it comes across as a B-movie.

I definitely recommend replaying *Shadows* with each character type. The second and third times will be a little easier because you'll know your way around the forest and certain events or story elements. But the game is long enough and contains enough variety in each version that it's like you get three games in one.

Conclusions: Lori and Corey Cole are a wonderfully entertaining duo of game designers and masters of storytelling. *Shadows* continues their saga and further improves the unique game interface that combines graphic adventures techniques and role-playing character development. ❧

Skill Level: Intermediate

Company: Sierra On-Line

Price: \$69.95

QuestBusters price: \$59

Swap Shop

Swap Shop ads are no longer free! We are accepting nothing but clues for recent quests (to appear in our Keys to the Kingdoms section) in exchange for ads. Please type your ad and include with your clue. 10 games per ad, original software with boxes only. * = clue book included.

MSDOS & Quest-alikes

Want clue book for Summoning. Daryl Dally, 621 N Wakefield St, Arlington VA 22203

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11418

✪✪

Gabriel Knight ... from 3

graphic novel that sets up the historical background to the game. The artwork is very good, and the cover looks like it came straight off a *Sandman* comic book.

Gabriel Knight's music and sound effects complete the illusion of total immersion into the game's events that the graphics started. The score is haunting. The sound effects are clear and realistic.

CD specials

The CD version is a must for those with the equipment. In addition to the music and sound effects that disk users get, it also contains the finest assembly of voice talent so far in a multimedia game. Tim Curry plays the part of Gabriel. His performance alone is worth the CD purchase, but players will also hear such people as Michael Dom, Mark Hamill, Efreem Zimbalist, Jr., Rocky Carroll and Leah Remini.

Is it a coincidence that both Efreem Zimbalist, Jr. and Mark Hamill also starred in the recent animated movie *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*? Not at all. A little time with the CD version of *Gabriel Knight* will quickly show why these actors and actresses do this type of work.

Conclusions: When I first played a demo of a single day in the game back in August, *Gabriel Knight* blew me away with its atmosphere and intelligent storyline. The finished product produced the same effect. Jensen worked hard to get *Knight* out, and her influences and the efforts of the design team shine through. Those players who have been waiting for a game from Sierra with a little more edge will not be disappointed. Jensen's take on New Orleans and suspense is a long way from the sunny skies of Davenport. ✪✪

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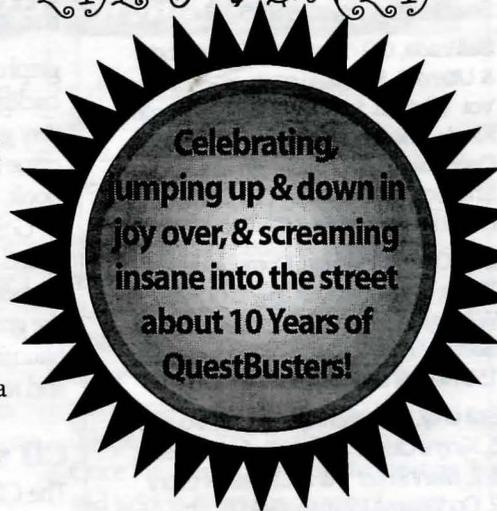
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