Evil Wizards take over Summer CES!

By Bob Guerra

Mediagenics (formerly known as Activision) hosted an early breakfast on the first day of the summer CES to introduce a new Gamestar sports simulation—*Pete Rose Pennant Fever*—and to show off new products from their other affiliated labels. If you're keeping track, the Mediagenics umbrella now covers Rainbird, Lucasfilm Games, Absolute Entertainment, Microillusions, Interplay, Infocom, Gamestar and, of course, Activision, which is now the name of a product line instead of the company. Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of Mediagenics' showing was that Infocom had nothing new to show and little to report except that their upcoming illustrated adventures and other new titles will be announced at a September press conference. [They do have some interesting RPGs coming up, from a variety of unexpected sources.]

Corruption at Rainbird

Meanwhile, Rainbird introduced a pair of British action adventures called *Enlightenment* and *Black Lamp*. The first is a fifteen-level game similar to *Demon Stalkers*, in which you can summon the Earth, Air, Fire and Water elementals to help you defeat the Evil Wizard (what else?) Acamantor. *Black Lamp* is more of a pure arcade game but has a medieval theme. Both should be available by now for the Amiga, ST and C 64. Promised for September is a Magnetic Scrolls adventure involving insider trading on the stock market—*Corruption*.

Stupid Alien Tricks

One of the highlights of the Mediagenics showing was Lucasfilm Games' *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*. In one of the most bizarre storylines of the season, the lead character, a journalist named Zak, must uncover a gang of aliens who have taken over the phone company and are using a "stupidity machine" to steal everyone's minds and take over the world (wait a minute,

Star Command

By Stephen King

Space...the final frontier. That sounds vaguely familiar for some reason. Oh well, science fiction role-playing games really do seem to be something of a frontier. Sure, the subject has been touched on from time to time. There was the Epyx game *Rescue at Rigel*, and of course we all remember the space travel sequences in *Ultima I* and *II*, not to mention the epic *Universe* series.

Still—though many of us have spent a great deal of time whacking wizards and battling balrons—science fiction has remained a vast and largely untapped area. But a new trend is rapidly changing that situation.

Last year *Starflight* was launched by Electronic Arts, and game players showed their approval by making it a runaway success. Then came *Space Quest* and its sequel, followed by *First Expedition* and *Wasteland*. Now Strategic Simulations can claim the latest major release in the science fiction genre, *Star Command*, written by Winston Douglas Wood, author of the *Phantasie* trilogy.

If you were to read descriptions of *Star Command* and *Starflight*, you might think they were the same program with different names. The settings, goals and some internal elements are very similar, but in many other ways the two diverge as sharply as Electronic Arts and SSI. A major difference is that much more attention was given to the strategy and tactics of combat, both hand-to-hand and ship-to-ship, in *Star Command*.
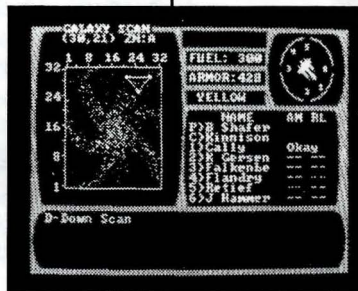
Selecting a Crew

The game begins at a military base called Starport. Actually there are three different Starports that outline a triangular area that forms the human section of the galaxy. You start with 90,000 credits to buy a ship, weapons, armor and other assorted gear, but first you must select a crew. Crewmembers are rolled up in the usual

Type: Science Fiction RPG
System: IBM (256K)

manner, their main attributes consisting of Strength, Speed, Accuracy, Courage, Willpower, Esper Factor and Intelligence. Once you've decided on a character you feel is a winner, you can select a name and class.

There are four classes: Pilot, Marine, Soldier and Esper. The Esper class is science fiction's equivalent of a magic user. You're allowed only one of these per ship, and—because they require a minimum Esper factor of 51 (out of a possible 60 for new characters)—they are extremely hard to generate.
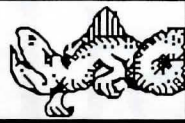
In addition to class, each character also has a rank. There are thirteen different ranks, ranging from Private to Grand Admiral. These primarily affect your pay rate and don't come into consideration during play. Of course, the higher your pay, the faster you can buy advanced equipment. And in a game this top-heavy
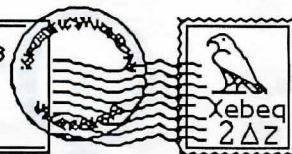

Scanning the galaxy

Adventure Hotline

Have Sword will Travel

Paladin, a fantasy RPG based on an enhanced version of the *Breach* system, is out for the Amiga. Up to nine characters go with your Paladin to complete ten quests. Some are stand-alone quests, while others are linked to form lengthier outings. An ST version may be ready by now, and a quest disk (16 quests that are linked to form one blockbuster) is also tentative for August. The IBM *Paladin* should be done by August or September. It will support EGA as well as CGA, as will all future Omnitrend products. *Universe III* is being beta-tested now, but no release date is set.

Ybarra Teleports to Interplay

Joe Ybarra, the "invisible man" of role-playing games—who worked behind the scenes producing the *Bard's Tales* series, *Star Flight* and a host of others—has left Electronic Arts and is now working behind the scenes at Interplay Productions.

Recent Conversions

Romantic Encounters is out for the IBM at $39.95. The IBM *Return of Werdna* escaped. So did the C 64 *Wizardry II: Knight of Diamonds*, which requires characters from *Wizardry I*.

Sir-Tech Supports 3.5" IBM

All Sir-Tech software for the IBM is now available on 3.5" disks. Send in your 5.25" disk within 30 days of purchase and it's free; after that, it's $7.50 + shipping.

New Worlds for New World Computing

While polishing *Might and Magic II* for a September release and working up a science fiction IBM game for Christmas, Jon van Caneghem found time to buy up Task Force Games, which has produced board games for about ten years and is best known for *Star Fleet Battles*. "We wanted to get into this industry," he says, "since we've been board gamers for a long time and have a lot of ideas for board games. We had been talking about licensing some of their games for computer games but ended up buying the whole company. We're planning a lot of cross-licensing: computer versions of board games and board versions of computer games." Does that mean we'll soon see a board game version of *Might & Magic*?

No Mail to 9131

A few of you have been sending orders for games, etc., to our shipping address because it appears on the packages we've sent you—please don't. Mail sent to this address will be delayed at least two-three days and stands a chance of vanishing in a raging Dust Storm. *All* mail should go to POB 32698, Tucson, AZ 85751.

SSI Signs with EA and Mindscape

As mentioned in the CES story, Electronic Arts will now be the exclusive distributor for SSI software—except for titles from SSI's backlist, such as *Galactic Gladiators* and *Battalion Commander*, which Mindscape's Thunder Mountain line will handle.

Contest Winners

Brian James won the contest announced in the January issue by finding 30 cross-references to other Infocom games in *Beyond Zork*, things like the Elvish sword of great antiquity (*Zork I*) and the umbrella with the parrot handle (*Wishbringer*). For a prize, he picked *Plundered Hearts*. Hillel Kaminsky won this month's *Keys* drawing, and Alan and Lin Schwarz won the Random Drawing. These QBers will get the game of their choice.

Survey Winner

From the 300 people who sent in surveys from the February issue, Brian Jacobson's name was drawn—he'll get the game of his choice. See page thirteen for some facts and figures from the survey.

Brian Fargo's Demonic Past

An inside source recently reported that the graphic adventure *Demon's Forge* was written by Interplay's Brian Fargo—who confessed in a subsequent phone call that it was his first commercial game.

Key Club Update

Due to the Greenhouse Effect, the updated list has been delayed and probably won't be ready until late this month. Maybe...

Deathlord Walkthru Wanted

Has anyone finished this game, or did everyone get bored and move on to something else? Whatever, we want a solution, with maps, but write before sending it.

Dear QuestBusters:
You should stress to people who send in clues that accuracy is important. *Ultima V* clues by two people in the June issue's *Keys* were inaccurate. The skull keys in Minoc are in a tree, not a stump, and can be retrieved any time—not just when a Shadowlord is present. Goeth lives in Jhelom, not Shelam, and the Resistance password is not needed to get the Glass Sword.
Ian Proffer

OK, those guys are fired. Their Guild pensions have been cut off, and they're never work in this Realm again. (But remember, a stump is really a very short tree, so that clue wasn't too inaccurate.) We'd like to check every clue in Keys, but there isn't time to reach the specific situations—the walkthrus, however, are always verified.

Dear QuestBusters:
Why didn't you put your new address in the June issue, so we could write to renew our subs and stuff?
Several Wondering Subscribers

In the true spirit of adventure, GuildMaster Addams decided to jump in the QuestMobile and journey to an unknown land without having ever been there—so we had no Arizona address to put in that issue, which was left with the printer to mail from PA. Fortunately, Duffy insisted on taking road maps instead of relying on the QuestBusters Cartography Kit as Addams had planned.

The Gem of Zephyrr

By William E. Carte

After awakening with a vague notion of being on some sort of mission, you realize you can't remember what it is. But as you travel through a land of deserts and woods and towns, you soon discover what must be done. An Evil Wizard [yes, they still abound in great numbers, no matter *how* many you have already slain] named Zephyrr possesses a gem that gives him control over this fantasy world. His domain is somewhere deep in the dungeon of Doom (where have I heard that name before?). A daring hero is needed to destroy Zephyrr and his gem, and your name is at the top of the list.

> **Type:** All-text Adventure
> **Systems:** Apple (64), GS, IBM (256), TRS-80

Armed with a mystical, bejeweled sword and 50 coins, you set out on the quest and find a total of three towns, one lake and one dungeon to explore. Each town has its own hotel, shops and bars. Investigate them thoroughly, for much needed information can be gathered in these places.

50,000 Points?

Points are awarded for solving puzzles and finding valuable items, and the game has nineteen alternative endings. Part of the fun is to replay it in hopes of achieving the perfect score of 50,000 points. By the way, it also has a surprise ending.

Besides puzzles to solve, you'll find staying alive is a major problem in the forest and swamps and on the highways. Orcs, elves, barbarians, unicorns—you'll have to swing that sword at a variety-pack of creatures. This aspect of the game reminded me of *Beyond Zork*. After a few victories, you'll be able to collect valuable items and sell them in shops, then spend the money on other objects.

The end game takes place in a dungeon composed of 32 different locations. Here you'll encounter the game's three nastiest creatures: a fire-breathing Dragon, a magical Banshee and the Wizard himself. To make matters more interesting, your sword is useless here. You must rely on your head as well as your muscle to win this one. *Gem of Zephyrr* is the first in a series of three games.

A No Frills Adventure

There are no frills, gadgets or fancy packaging, and no pull-down menus or mouse control—just a simple, basic text adventure that happens to be pretty good. It's not in the league of an Infocom game. For example, you cannot "examine" an item unless it can be read. Most objects have no special features, and many can't be used at all, only sold. If you see a cot in a room and type "examine cot" or "move cot," you'll be told "I see no cot here." This is the program's way of informing you the cot is not pertinent to solving the game. In spite of these minor shortcomings, *Gem of Zephyrr* is still a good game.

With exactly 200 locations, *Zephyrr* is a cartographer's delight. It's easy to get lost in the burning desert sands or deep in the frightening forest, so mapping proves to be one of the game's most difficult aspects. You must also learn to communicate with the townspeople in order to determine which items to keep and how and when to use them. Miss a valuable item and you may wind up dead. Overall, though, it's not really difficult. In fact, the author, Eric Seiden, admits that most hard-core expert gamers find his adventures too easy. However, he doesn't subscribe to the theory that bigger and harder is better. Seiden feels a game should be challenging but *fun*! I tend to agree.

If you do get stuck, a color map is available for $5.95, a hint book for $1.95. (And I've already completed a walkthrough for QuestBusters, complete with map.) It probably won't help much, but you can get a novel called *The Realm of Altair*, based on the game, for $21.95.

Documentation, sold separately for 75¢, is brief but adequate. Most commands are one- or two-word "sentences," but the parser does accept multiple commands—up to 127 at a time. I don't recommend this, since a monster may appear and kill you in the middle of a series of commands. Some versions, such as the GS, may be moved to a RAM disk to speed up some aspects of game play as well as saving and loading.

Conclusions: I highly recommend this game for all-text fans. It's an excellent choice for beginners, yet still a fun challenge for veterans. The author has pledged his continuing support for text adventures, and we'll be covering more of them in the future.

The Label Fable

Last month Steve Dragonbreath forgot to look at his mailing label and didn't realize his subscription was about to expire. As a result, Steve is now hopelessly stuck in three different adventures—and if he gives up on them, he can't even trade or sell the games in a Swap Shop ad!

Don't let this happen to you. Look at the label before reading the rest of this sentence. (OK, we expected you to finish the sentence—*now* look at the label.) If your sub expires within two months, renew it now. Why take a chance on missing the issue that will probably be full of clues for the game that's giving *you* nightmares by then? Check the masthead on page two for the latest sub rates. US and APO/FPO subscribers: add $5 for Adventure Express, which arrives 1st Class about two weeks faster—in an envelope.

Obliterator: The Drak Attack!

By William E. Carte

A cross between *Star Trek* and *Aliens,* this British import casts you as Drak, the last of the Obliterators. Obliterators are a breed of genetically enhanced fighters, bio-engineered for the execution of incredible tasks.
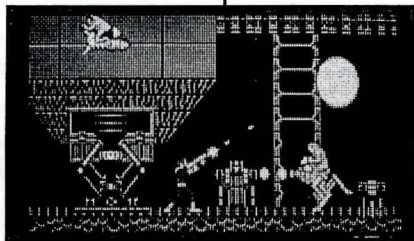
The incredible task *you'll* face is to rescue Earth from the threat of an awesome alien spacecraft that seems indestructible. As the enormous ship heads toward the planet, the Elders summon you, their last hope, planning to beam you aboard the alien ship so you can disable and disarm it. This could be your most important mission ever. This *could* be your *last* mission ever.

Stunning graphics—among the best I've ever seen—are complemented by a complete musical score that's in stereo on the Amiga. (It can be toggled off.) But there are plenty of mediocre ST and Amiga games with great graphics and sound effects. The thing that makes them mediocre is poor plot or game-play. This is not a problem with *Obliterator*, whose hot and heavy action from beginning to end will keep your interest for many hours.

> **Type:** Action Adventure
> **System:** Amiga and ST

On the Alien Ship

After materializing on the spacecraft, you'll traverse miles of corridors, ride up and down elevators, pass through countless doorways—and, of course, encounter creatures of all shapes and sizes. Some of the monsters are aliens, others are machines—but all are deadly. With the exception of the ones that resemble the creature in *Aliens,* they are most original. For example, how about a huge, moth-like creature that is spinning a ball-shaped larva on the ceiling? The larva breaks open when the creature drops it, and a tiny creature emerges and comes running at you at top speed. Then there are the green fiends that ride on the backs of mechanical "kangaroos." The Boy Scout's motto would have to be amended for this game: "Be prepared—for the bizarre."

Armed with only a small pistol, you must devote the early stages of the mission to staying alive long enough to find some new and more powerful weapons and ammunition. Your long-range goal is to locate and remove five pieces of important equipment, which will disable the ship. When this happens, the aliens will attack you—and you've only a short time to locate the space shuttle, activate it and make your getaway.

This reminded me of the scene in *Return of the Jedi,* which for a few moments had me wondering whether Luke had been blown away with the space station. The amount of time you have to escape depends on your score, which becomes the timer and counts down to the moment of the alien attack. This is a novel and significant use of a game score; for once it is more than just a number that means you've solved a series of puzzles. More games that have scores should reward the player by giving him something to do with all those hard-earned points.

Choose Your Poison

The action can be controlled with joystick, keyboard or mouse (preferred). If using the mouse, you'll see a row of buttons on the bottom of the screen. These are for moving left, right, up or down an elevator, entering a doorway, jumping, rolling, picking up objects and firing your weapons. Obviously, you've got to master these buttons in order to win. Not so obvious is the ability to enter a sequence of actions: instead of holding a button down, you only have to press it once to activate it—and in some cases can press another one right away. If you press "left" and then "up," Drak will run left and then go up at the next opportunity. Game-play may feel awkward at first but becomes natural very quickly.

Pressing the space bar removes the action buttons and brings up an inventory strip that shows which weapons you have, the quantity of ammo for each, how many of the five pieces of equipment you've found, the score and the condition of your shield. A tap of the space bar brings back the action buttons.

The weapons you'll find include a rifle, a blaster and even a bazooka. But they're useless unless you also scrounge up some ammo. You can switch weapons if you have more than one. Drak's shield absorbs enemy blows. Each time he gets bitten or shot, the shield deteriorates—a little or a lot, depending on the creature that attacked him. At various places you'll stumble across shield regenerators that will recharge the shield.

The major drawback to many action adventures, especially British imports, is the inability to save a game in progress, which means you've got to— well, you already know what *that* means. Though it is from England, *Obliterator* doesn't suffer such a deficiency, for you can save the game when you enter one of the shield regenerators. It also allows you to do so each time you find one of the five pieces of equipment.

Besides play instructions, the manual includes a background story that serves as your mission briefing. It's very thorough, except that it gives no clue on how to restore a saved game! Thanks to QBer Paul Shaffer of Kentucky, I learned this is done with the help key. He seemed to think there was a note to this effect in his package, but there was none in mine.
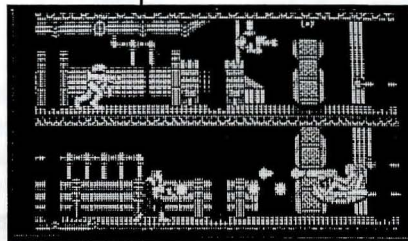
Conclusions: You simply cannot ask for more in a computer game—outstanding graphics, great sound effects, smooth playability and a real challenge that keeps you coming back for more.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: Program
Price: $39.95
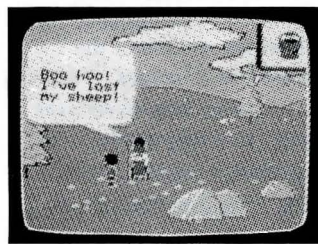**Company:** Psygnosis

Mixed-Up Mother Goose

By Shay Addams

Designed by Roberta Williams for children ages four and older, this charming game propels Mother Goose headlong into the computer age. First the player picks from icons representing children of both sexes and a variety of races; this determines the appearance of his or her character in the game.

Type: Animated Adventure
System: GS, IBM (256K; EGA, CGA, Tandy 16-color, Hercules, VGA, MCGA), 5.25" & 3.5" disks

After going to bed and presumably falling asleep, the child flies on the back of a goose to the land of nursery rhymes, where Mother Goose needs some help. All her rhymes are mixed up: objects that belong to certain characters, such as Jack Be Nimble's candlestick, are strewn across the land. The player earns a point for each one found and returned to the proper person; top score is eighteen.

The 3-D graphics, in which your animated character can be guided via keyboard or joystick to walk behind and in front of elements of the landscape, are as well-done as in previous Sierra games. And the sound effects and music is equally entertaining.

No Typing Required

But to make it accessible to youngsters, the interface was modified so typing—or even reading—is not necessary. Upon meeting someone who needs your help, Mary Quite Contrary, for example, she tells you what she needs, her words filling a cartoon balloon over her head. Then the words are replaced by a picture of the required item, a watering can in this case, for players who can't read.

You pick things up by touching them. A small window in the upper right corner shows the current inventory. Only one item can be carried at once, but may be swapped for another one with ease.

The nicest thing about this game—something designers of all adventures should notice—is the way it rewards the player for each accomplishment by having the character act out the nursery rhyme. When Mary gets the watering can, you don't just receive a point. First the lyrics of the rhyme fill a window, accompanied by music. Next Mary waters her flowers while the "row of pretty maids" from the rhyme sway in the background, and finally the flowers burst from the ground. Maybe this can't be done for every puzzle in all adventures, but similar rewards for solving a game's final puzzle would certainly be appreciated by those persistent enough to complete it.

Conclusions: Finally, a game *I* could solve without calling the designer for a clue! Seriously, young children will probably find this so captivating that their parents will wind up playing the kids' Nintendo until all the rhymes are fixed.

Skill Level: Beginner
Protection: Key Disk
Price: $29.95
Company: Sierra On-line

Infocomics:
ZorkQuest: Assault on Egreth Castle

By Shay Addams

Egreth Castle in northwest Quendor is the setting of the second *Infocomics* title, jointly produced by Tom Snyder Productions and Infocom. Like the first, it is an illustrated story with no puzzles; the only "interaction" is the ability to occasionally switch and view the action from another character's perspective. Unlike *Lane Mastodon*, however, the story is more appealing to adventure fans.

Type: Illustrated Story
Systems: C 64, Apple, IBM

Accardi-by-the-Sea or Bust!

One reason is because it's set in the Zork universe. Traveling in a caravan bound for Accardi, each of the five key characters—two youngsters, a young woman, a Conan-type and a Hobbit-type—has his or her own motives for the trip. On the way, they pass Egreth Castle, now the haunt of an E. W. (see page seven) whom you will ultimately defeat.

There are some subtle differences between *ZorkQuest* and *Lane Mastodon*.

The designers showed restraint with the "change perspective" option, which was overworked in the first game. Here it often leads to flashbacks that fill you in on a character's background and motivation, so the people in this tale are more well-rounded. Humor is more sophisticated. The authors paid as much attention to mood-setting as to action, though there is still plenty of the latter.

This time I "played" a Tandy version, which is autobooting and covers both disk sides. Still, it is limited to four colors and the same resolution as the Apple and other versions.

Conclusions: If you passed on *Lane Mastodon* (or passed out on it, as I did), you may find *ZorkQuest* more to your liking. The main characters are a couple of kids, but it's told in a way that older 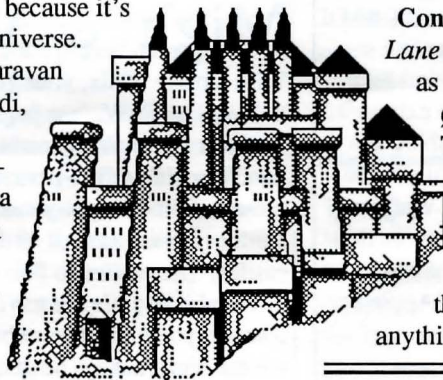fans of fantasy fiction will enjoy. It's still not a game, though, so don't expect to do anything except turn those pages.

Skill Level: Can you press a space bar?
Protection: Program
Price: $12
Company: Infocom

Conversion Castle

IBM
Maniac Mansion

The gimmick here allows you to control up to three characters in an animated adventure. Your goal is to rescue a girl from the Mad Scientist in a haunted-type house, which is occupied by a sentient meteor that is affecting the house's inhabitants. A wacko parady of science fiction and horror films, it's enlivened with frequent "cutscenes" in which parts of the story are told in animated sequences. (See the August, '87 issue for a feature review.) These are fun to watch and may be skipped once you've seen them.

You can send characters to different locations, and some puzzles require two characters acting in concert, a rarity in this kind of game. Fifteen verbs (open, walk to, use, etc.) are listed in a menu, so you don't have to type: just pick a verb,

then click on on object or person in the picture. In addition to stick and keyboard controls, the IBM version offers mouse or keypad control, and function keys are devoted to common commands such as "save game." This scheme works much more efficiently than its unwieldy counterpart in *Labyrinth*, Lucasfilm's first adventure.

Improved resolution is available via settings for Tandy 16-color, EGA, CGA, MCGA, Hercules and CGA black and white. And you'll hear some catchy tunes as you roam from room to room. The program is unprotected, relying on type-in codes printed on the hard-to-read, impossible-to-Xerox paper introduced by Sir-Tech's *Wizardry IV*, and can be copied to a hard disk or backup disk. Both disk formats are included.

Lucasfilm Games/Activision, $49.95

C 64/128
Wasteland

Lots of subtle improvements distinguish this conversion: more colors were added, you see more texture in the stones that form the walls, and buildings have more depth when seen from overhead. Individually, none of these enhancements makes a big difference, but collectively they add up to create a more vivid experience. Most dramatic is the spot animation seen when you face human foes. The extra crispness of the graphics noticeabley improves their facial expressions, like those squinting eyes of the Wasteland Warriors. (For reference, all except Mac games that are played in-house are displayed on the same monitor, an Amiga.) In the Apple version you can hold a key down and the party keeps moving; that feature was removed, which makes it harder to fall in the river or bump into radioactive barrels and so on.

It auto-loads on a 128, and disk access is average and kept to a minimum (though it doesn't seem to take advantage of the 128's extra memory). For those

who missed the May review, it's a seven-character game set in the deserts of the Southwest after a nuclear war, combining *Ultima*-style top-down graphics with the first-person presentation of *Bard's Tale*. Highly recommended.

Interplay, $40

Macintosh
Might & Magic

With a party of six, your goal here is not to S & S an E. W. (see page seven) but to discover the unusual secret of the Inner Sanctum. It's a first-person perspective presentation, but many mazes consist of outdoor scenes as well as dungeons and castles. (Reviewed in Feb., '87.)

Graphically it's not too exciting, but what do you expect from black and white? Fortunately, most of the atmosphere that vanished with the color was worked back in with sound effects and music. You'll need two 800K drives or a hard disk to hear the best tunes—some of which employ multiple instruments, such as drums and clarinets.

Mac owners who complained about

MacWizardry's failure to comply with that Holiest of Holies, the Mac Interface, will be pleased with this conversion, which bows and scrapes before the altar in its wide-ranging and perceptive use of windowing, icons, keyboard shortcuts and music. It's even compatible with full page displays (the Radius, at least), allowing you to drag practically any window to the most convenient part of the screen.

You need 512K minimum to play the game, which comes on a pair of 400K disks. It will run on 400K drives, but you'll have to phone the company for a special master disk. You can move all the files to a hard disk; the original program is used as a key disk at the outset of each session. RAM is used efficiently, for the program automatically loads mazes and other data into extra RAM if you've got a meg of memory; the RAM cache is useful for those with more. It will even run under MultiFinder. Recommended.

New World Computing, $59.95

Macintosh
Moebius

Converted by Micromagic, who did the IBM and Amiga versions, this is essentially a black and white version of the Amiga rendition reviewed in July. Your single character, while striving to recover a missing orb, will solve four quests that occur in different realms, each a separate scenario that loads upon completion of the preceding one.

There is an interesting enhancement to the combat interface: the pointer turns into a boot when placed over your foe, and becomes a hand when moved closer to your character's body. This lets you aim the attack more realistically than clicking on the icons that are still located below the combat screen, and is especially effective if combined with keyboard controls for moving back and forth.

With good sound effects, crisp animation, and an array of alternatives for most commands, this is a first rate conversion. But it is protected and can't be moved to a hard disk or another floppy. It's a one-disk program that calls for 512K and a double-sided drive. Mac II owners can swap their disk (plus $10) for a color version that requires two drives, one of which can be a hard disk. Recommended.

Origin Systems, $39.95

Play your next adventure with some friends and

You don't have to die alone!

By Tracie Forman Hines

Before the advent of computer gaming, role-playing games had their own peculiar props: a dozen or so cans of Coke, Diet Coke and/or beer, a pair of ashtrays (always full to the point of overflowing with half-stubbed cigarette butts), paper plates holding cold pizza in various states of leftovers, at least five crumpled character reference sheets, pens, paper, custom-painted lead figurines, dice in every shape and color—and of course, a roomful of people…usually arguing with the Dungeon Master.

Playing computer RPGs is naturally a lot neater, since the disk eliminates any need for reference sheets, figurines, dice, DM, and often, even the mapping. But playing adventures on a computer doesn't mean you have to get rid of the most interesting, variable element of a good RPG: the people. In fact, playing adventures with a group of friends is usually much more fun—and productive—than going it alone.

Some Games That Work Well With Groups

A lot of excellent computer RPGs lend themselves well to multiple adventurers, among them any *Wizardry* except *Return of Werdna*, *Ultima II* or *III*, any *Bard's Tale* and *Star Flight*. And some adventures that are meant for a single player, such as *Questron*, *Legacy of the Ancients* and Mindscape's icon-based adventures like *Shadowgate*, may also be effectively played by a group, since several heads are better than one when it comes to solving puzzles and mapping mazes. *Legacy of the Ancients* allows up to ten saved games on the same disk, so a number of my friends even competed to see who could solve it first.

It's easy enough to start a multiple-player adventure—just invite a group of friends over to play, making sure, of course, not to invite more people than the game has character slots. Generally, three to four (including yourself) is ideal. Let each person choose the class and race of his or her alter ego, then generate the adventuring party. In the event of a low-

level character's untimely death, the person who suffered the loss should create the replacement character.

Try to set aside a specific day and time each week or month for the game sessions, so everyone has a chance to be in on all the action. This also reduces the chances of an argument over why Phred the Fighter died ignobly while his human counterpart was out golfing.

Roles for Role-players

The person with the neatest handwriting should be designated Keeper of the Map, whose job is to mark your party's progress through a maze and guide the group back to safety when necessary. Accountants and graphic artists are usually best suited to the job, though the real purists may require you to lay in a supply of colored pencils (red for doors, yellow for specials, etc.) for the duration.

Controlling the party's actual movements should be assigned to the person with the best sense of direction—and the patience to stand still long enough for the Keeper of the Map to keep up. This job may be alternated with the task of reading specific spells and understanding their capabilities, so two people can share in the fun. Anyone left can either alternate jobs with someone else, or assume other vital roles, such as ordering pizza, refilling ice buckets and filling in for a player who gets tired or takes a break.

In combat and other encounters, people can shout their orders (slash, lunge and so on) at the person punching the keys. If there are arcade aspects to combat, however, you may prefer to let each player conduct his or her own battle.

The success of a multiple-player adventure depends on the team's imagination. The more people get into their roles and imbue their characters with personality, the more fun the game is for everyone involved. For example, one of the regulars in my group plays a Monk in *Bard's Tale II*. He's perfectly cooperative with the rest of the party—unless another

Monk tries to join the group. Then, using the Party Attack option, he quickly goes for the kill. Needless to say, he's the only Monk on the roster.

Another powerful character is the healer. Whoever controls this character generally has a lot to say about which doors get opened, and when. All he has to do is stop healing offending players and (assuming the party doesn't turn on him), everyone gets the message pretty quickly.

New Ways to Have Fun

Finally, it can be fun to create a group of characters around a specific motif. When the Bernard Goetz case was front-page news, we created a party of subway terrorists: Troy, James, Darryl, etc.—and the party's attack cry was "Le'me ho'l five dollars!" The Jackson Five, the crew of the *Starship Enterprise* and the cast of *Dallas* can also be a lot of fun to play.

We even enjoy making fatal mistakes, such as assuming our party is strong enough to take on a particular monster in *Wizardry*. Those in-jokes carry over into regular life. For example, one of the players recently suggested trying a new restaurant. "Yeah," replied another player. "And you wanted to kill the Golem, too."

If you've never played a computer adventure with a group and can find enough regular players, give it a try. It provides a brain trust for solving the more difficult puzzles…and a great way to while away the evening with your friends.

S & S the E. W.

In an effort to conserve space—and at the same time make a valuable contribution to the jargon of adventuring—we have begun abbreviating the term Evil Wizard to E. W. And when you see the phrase "S & S the E. W." in a review, that will, of course, mean your goal is to Seek and Slay the Evil Wizard. Suggestions for other abbreviations are welcome. Send to A. E. c/o QB in AZ. (OK?)
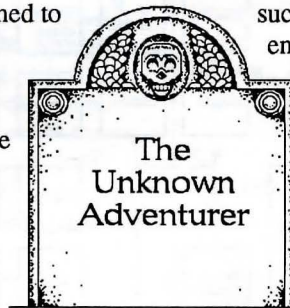
Walkthroughs: Dondra and >>>

By Bruce A. Smith

Some parts of the game are in real-time. Once you enter a room, you must perform an action or get an object and escape before you're found and killed. Such sections are italicized. This is the first in a series of games in which you use the same character & inventory, so objects that won't be of use here should be collected in case they're needed later.

Four-sided Room
Get key. Open south door. Kick key south. S. *Get key. N.* N. Say efbui to dpmobs. Open north door. N.

Center of Arena
Say efbui to dpmobs. N. Read mural. S. W. W. N.

One-room Cabin
Get cross. S. Put cross in sack. Drink liquid. W (3). N. W.

Modern House
Move pot. Get key. Unlock door. Drop key. Open door. W. *Open refrigerator. Get gppe. E.* E. E.

Bar
Examine man. Give gppe to man. W. N. N. E. [Automobile Chamber] Get dspxcbs. W. S.

Clay Surface
Look hole. Lift manhole with dspxcbs. Look down. Yes. D. Drop dspxcbs. NW. Cut vine with knife. Put knife in sack. Get fruit. Eat fruit (transports you to Barn. If this doesn't work, follow the map to the Barn).

Barn
Offer hfn to lioness. Move hay. Get rope. Put rope in sack. N. [Cornfield] Get dollars. Put dollars in sack. E. Get hat. E.

Tiny Tunnel
[Save game.] Wear hat.

E. NW. Get stick. N.

Large Cavern
Spring trap with uxjh. Get cheese. Eat cheese. N. Enter mover. Get all. D. E. Unlock door. Open door. N.

End of Long Corridor
Close door. Lock door. N. Open door. N. Get ladder. S. W. N.

Wide Crevice
Open ladder. Put ladder across crevice. N.

Door
Open door. (Due to a bug in some versions, the program may not acknowledge that a door exists until you've examined it

a few times and dropped and taken your inventory.) [Save game.] N.

Equipment Room
Open drawer. Get rod. Insert rod into ipmf. Get torch. Dmptf tpvui epps. Charge torch. Get qjo. (It takes about 90 seconds of real-time for the torch to charge. Check its status by saying "Read meter." You have 3 minutes in this room before you're killed.) When torch is charged, open south door. S. Insert qjo into upsdi. Drop stick. E. N.

Sludge-spraying Room
Pull trigger. Search men. Get keys. Put keys in sack. Get wrench. Put wrench in sack. N. W. W. Drop torch and rod.

Shaft
Press blue pad. W. S. Go south hole. W. *S.* W. W. N. N.

Bridge
Tju qfeftubm. Say your character's name (look at score if you don't remember your own name!). Say efbui to dpmobs. Say ufmfqpsubujpo. N. Get saddle. S. S. Get birdseed. S. E.

Peddler
Buy clips. E. Attach clips to fence. S. Drop sack. Drop saddle. N. W. N.

Stream
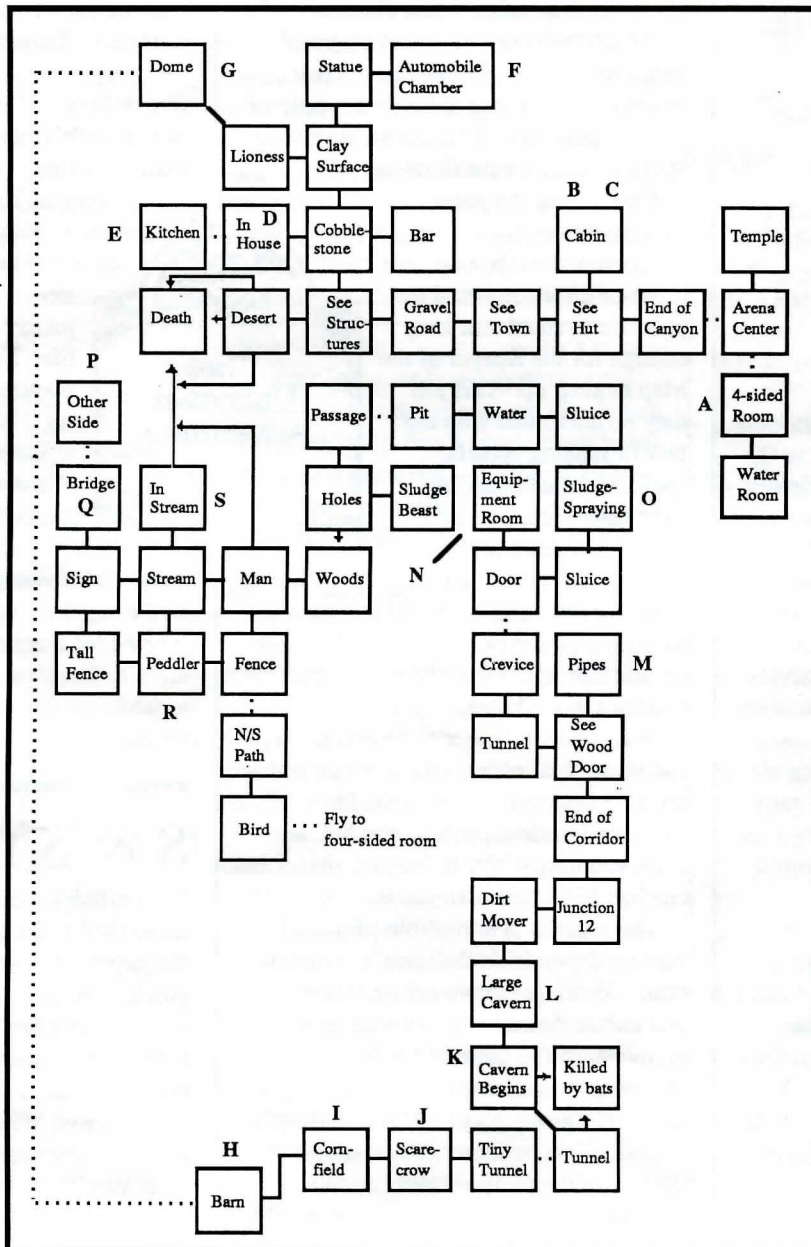*Get sffe. Enter stream. Get chest. U. Open chest. Look chest. Get prism. S. E. S. Get sack. S.*

Bird
Give cjsetffe. Drop sack. N. Get tbeemf. S. Put tbeemf on bird. Sit bird.

Key to Objects on Map
A: key   B: cross
C: liquid   D: key
E: food   F: crowbar
G: fruit   H: rope
I: dollars   J: hat
K: stick   L: cheese
M: ladder   N: torch and pin
O: key, wrench   P: saddle
Q: birdseed   R: clips
S: chest and prism

See page 14 for code

Dome G		Statue	Automobile Chamber F				
Lioness		Clay Surface			B C		
E Kitchen	In D House	Cobble-stone	Bar		Cabin		Temple
Death	Desert	See Structures	Gravel Road	See Town	See Hut	End of Canyon	Arena Center
P							
Other Side		Passage	Pit	Water	Sluice	A	4-sided Room
Bridge Q	In Stream S	Holes	Sludge Beast	Equipment Room	Sludge-Spraying O		Water Room
Sign	Stream	Man	Woods	N	Door	Sluice	
Tall Fence	Peddler R	Fence			Crevice	Pipes M	
	N/S Path				Tunnel	See Wood Door	
	Bird · · · Fly to four-sided room					End of Corridor	
					Dirt Mover	Junction 12	
					Large Cavern L		
			K		Cavern Begins	Killed by bats	
H		I	J			Tunnel	
Barn		Cornfield	Scarecrow		Tiny Tunnel		

Police Quest

By David Heidt

Directions in boldface are to be typed in; others are executed via mouse, key or stick controls. When told to enter or leave car, the directions "open door, get out, close door, start car" have been omitted. Before entering a car at the station, perform a safety check by walking around it. Before entering the jail, put your gun in the locker at the top of the steps and close it. To shower, open locker and get towel. Except when going off-duty, load your gun with the loader after each shower. When gambling, hold two or three cards of a kind (or four if you're that lucky); save the game after each win. Direction such as "drive to B2" refer to the map included with the game, which is not reproduced here.

Main Hallway

E. (lower right). Walk to locker on right side, second from front, and open it. **Get gun. Get loader. Load gun. Get briefcase. Close locker.**

Briefing Room & Patrol Car

(Start over if you missed the briefing.) Walk to newspaper. **Get newspaper.** Read it by pressing cursor keys. **Close newspaper.** Walk to assigned briefing position (left side of upper right table). Wait until briefing ends. Go to pigeonhole, third one on bottom and **look in. Open briefcase. Get notebook. Get pen. Get ticket book. Close briefcase. W.** Walk to table. **Get extender.** Walk to keyboard. **Get keys. W** (upper left.). Drive to C3.

Scene of the Accident

Drive around, avoiding B2, till you hear radio message. Drive to map B2 and park by wrecked green car. Get out. Walk to wrecked car. **Look at body. Look at window. Look at body. Radio.** Walk to crowd. **Talk to crowd. Talk to witness. Radio.** Wait for Dooley and Hamilton. Drive around, avoiding map A3, until you get radio message. Park at Carol's Caffeine Castle (A3).

Carol's Caffeine Castle

Radio. Get out. N (left door). Sit by Steve. Wait for Carol to bring coffee. **Drink coffee.** Wait for phone to ring and Carol to answer it. **Stand up.** Go to phone. **Answer phone.** Enter car. **Radio.**

On Patrol

Drive to D3 and patrol D3 and D4 until you get a message about writing tickets. Drive to D3 and wait around corner south of courthouse for red sports car to right light. Chase it in code 3 until it pulls over.

Your First Ticket

Open door. **Look at license plate. Radio.** Get out. Walk to sports car. **Look at woman. Talk to woman. Say Bonds. Talk to woman. Ask woman for license. Write ticket. Return license. Say sign ticket. Give ticket to woman.** Drive around until you get radio message, then go to A3 and park at Carol's.

Caffeine Castle & Wino Willie's

Open door. **Get nightstick.** Enter Carol's. **Talk to Carol.** Enter Willie's. Approach leader and **Say move your bikes.** Use nightstick. **Look at girl. Talk to Marie. Say bye. S. Radio.** Drive to A1.

The Drunk Driver

Patrol A1 and B1 until drunk driver starts weaving in street. Chase it in code 3 until it pulls over. Park. Get out. **Look at license plate. Radio.** Walk to drunk's car. **Talk to man. Smell breath. Say get out of car.** Wait till he does. **Perform FST. Handcuff man. Say no. Read rights. Search man. Say follow me.** Walk to your car and open back door. Wait for man to get in. Close door. Enter car and **radio.** Drive to D3 and park at jail.

Outside Jail with Drunk

Get out. Open back door. Wait for man to get out. Close door. Enter jail. **Wait. Remove handcuffs.** Wait (for Laura). Walk to jailor's window. Wait for Laura to leave. Drive to police station (C3). (See introduction for what to do with your gun.)

Back at the Station

Drop nightstick (before exiting car). Inside, go to table in first room. **Write memo. Put memo in basket.** E. Move past all four men and hear what they say. **Open door** (lower right). W. **Open door.** E. Move next to men and listen to them. **Drop keys** (at keyboard). **Drop extender** (on table). E (lower right). Go to locker and **get towel. Close locker.** Take a shower. Go to locker, open it and drop towel. **Look at clothes. Get keys. Close locker.** Go to parking lot and enter Corvette. **Look. Get wallet.** Drive to B4, park and enter Blue Room.

The Blue Room

Sit down and wait through party, then get in your car and go to C3. Park at police station and enter.

Locker Room

Go to your locker, **get towel** and take a shower. **Open locker,** get gun, uniform and loader. **Load gun, get briefcase, close locker.** Go to briefing room and assigned seat and wait through briefing. Go to pigeonhole. **Look in pigeonhole. Get pen** and **notebook** from briefcase and close it. W. **Get extender** and keys. Get in patrol car and drive to A1.

To Arrest Hoffman

Patrol A1 and B1 until blue car and radio message appear. Chase it (Code 3) until he pulls over. **Radio.** Park and **wait** for backup. **Open door.** Wait for Jack to draw gun and move into position, then get out. **Draw gun. Say get out of car with your hands up.** When he does, **say lie down** and walk toward him. **Holster gun. Cuff suspect. Read rights. Search suspect. Say stand up. Say go to police car.** Follow him and open back door, then wait for him to enter. **Close door.** Search blue car, **open glove compartment. Look at black notebook. Close glove compartment.** Get out and **open trunk. Examine drugs. Close trunk.** Return to squad car, **radio,** then drive to D3 and park at jail.

At Jail with Hoffman

Open back door and wait for Hoffman to exit. Enter jail. **Say drugs. Remove cuffs.** Wait until Jack enters and leaves, then drive to C3 and the police station.

Police Station

Get out and go east up the steps. E. W (lower door). After Dooley leaves, **read memo.** E. E (lower right). Take a shower, then **Drop key** (on rack) in main hall. Go to Morgan's office. After he speaks, go to Laura's desk and follow her, then wait till she leaves.

The Evidence against Hoffman

Open file cabinet (in Laura's office). **Look at Hoffman file. Get Hoffman file. Get clipboard.** With cursor keys, turn to FBI Wanted List. **Get FBI Wanted List. Drop clipboard. Get keys.** After Laura returns, drive Cadillac to courthouse (D3).

The Judge & the No Bail Warrant

Go to window and **say get no bail warrant. Say this is an emergency.** When

clerk returns, enter courtroom and go north. **Say Hoffman. Say file. Say yes. Say FBI Wanted List. Say tattoo.** Drive to jail, put gun in locker and enter. **Give no bail warrant to jailor.** After jailor returns, drive to police station (C3). Wait for Laura, then drive to Lytton Park on B4.

Drug Bust in Lytton Park
Get out, go north and **draw gun.** Hide behind a bush off to the side in back. **Radio.** Wait until two men talk and do drug deal. **Radio. Say halt.** Reveal yourself, go to young man. **Holster gun. Cuff man behind back. Read rights. Search man. Say follow me. S. Question suspect. Question dealer.** Open back door and wait for them to enter. Drive to B1. **Radio** and park at jail.

At Jail after Drug Bust
Inside, **book men. Say drugs.** Wait for slip to be filled out. **Remove cuffs.** Drive to C3 and park at police station. After Laura exits the car, drive to Blue Room (B4).

Blue Room and Jack
Sit beside Jack and **talk to Jack.** Wait for the cab driver. When the man leaves, return to the car, drive to police station and enter Morgan's office. After he talks, go to the evidence window and **ask for black notebook. Read black notebook** and return it. Go to Morgan. After he speaks, drive the Caddie to jail.

The Jail and Marie
Go to cell one and **Say help me in hotel operation** to Marie. Wait, then drive to C3.

The Body in the Park
After the radio message, go to Cotton Cove (D4). Walk to corpse. **Remove blanket. Look at body. Radio.** Drive to the station (C3), see Morgan and wait through the briefing.

Blondes Have More Fun
Shower again, but after turning on the water **bleach hair** and **rinse.** Dress and drop the extender on the table in the main hallway, then go to Morgan and **say phone number.** Write it down. Get in the Caddie and go to the Hotel Delphoria (A2).

In the Hotel Bar
In the hotel, **ring bell, check in** and **pay man. W.** To get Woody to talk, **say wine. Wait. Pay man. Wait. Stand up.**

Walk to bar and **say gamble. E.** Enter elevator. **Push two.**

Dialing for Detectives
Unlock room 204, enter and **wait. Say yes** twice. **Use phone** and type in Morgan's number. **Say Bonds. Use phone. 411. Say cab. Use phone** (type number from information). **Say Hotel Delphoria.** Return to bar and **say gamble** to Woody. Go west and approach Woody, then go north after he searches you.

Back Room
Sit at table and wait for Frank. After winning $1,000, return to your room. **Wait** for backup. **Ask man for transmitter.** Return to bar and **Say Frank sent me.** Follow Woody.

Storeroom and the Big Game
Approach door and wait. Walk to Woody, who searches you and escorts you to the game. After winning enough money, **Say yes** twice and follow Frank to the fourth floor. When he opens the door, **radio.** If you've done everything correctly, everything is automated from here. If not, you're dead, dead, dead.

What's An
Adventure?

The definitions of adventure and role-playing games unfortunately vary from one reviewer to the next. As a result, computer magazines have at times labeled everything from *Type Attack* to *LodeRunner* adventure games. Here's what *we* mean. (To confuse things, however, it should be pointed out—and we'll do that right here—that *QB* tosses all these games into the general category of "Adventure," games of exploration and discovery and some degree of puzzle-solving. And mapping, lots of mapping.)

All-text Adventure: Like *Zork*, these games consist of logical puzzles and are distinguished by an all-text presentation and a parser interface into which the player types commands (though a few may use menu- or icon-driven interfaces.)

Graphic Adventure: Like the above, but *each* scene or new room is illustrated, as in *Tass Times in Tone Town.*

Illustrated Text Adventure: Like the graphic adventure, but only occasional scenes are illustrated, as in *The Pawn.*

Animated Adventure: A graphic adventure in which the characters are fully animated and the player's character is controlled via joystick, keyboard, mouse or voice (this hasn't worked yet, but I still yell at them); a parser may be used for input as well. The *King's Quest* series is the best-known such game.

Role-playing Game: Inspired by *Dungeons and Dragons*, RPGs share some of the adventure's characteristics, for you're usually exploring a strange world and solving puzzles. The main difference is that they are more statistically-oriented: hit points determine whether your character lives or dies, character attributes such as Strength must be developed, and combat is as important as puzzle-solving. The term Fantasy RPG refers to games whose plots are inspired by fantasy fiction such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, not just to RPGs whose plots are fantastic in nature. The other major sub-genre is science fiction.

Action Adventure: These combine arcade action with exploration and a limited amount of puzzle-solving. Mapping is often important and magic may play a role, but they are essentially "shoot-em-up-in-a-maze games" like *Gauntlet.*

Illustrated Story: We invented this category just for *Infocomics*, which have no puzzles. But Fred Saberhagen's earlier *Sign of the Wolf* also fits nicely here.

Miscellaneous Terms
A couple of other terms you'll see here should be explained for those new to adventures:

First-person perspective: Also called "3-D" view, this technique is used to show a maze or other location as if you were inside it, as in *Bard's Tale* and *Wizardry.* Programmers call the pictures "panels."

Top-down perspective: The bird's-eye view you see in *Ultima.* Programmers call each "square" a square. Some call them tiles. A 3-D tile is called a crouton.

Spot animation: When a dog named Spot appears to move across the screen, this is called Spot animation. Oh, you want the *real* definition? An individual graphic in an illustration that moves across the screen. The term "spot" is employed because usually it's a small one. Polar-Ware adventures have lots of spots.

Star Command

with hardware, equipment can be crucial.

Midnight Train to Georgia

The manual recommends taking along two Pilots, an Esper, at least two Soldiers and one Marine. That leaves the class of the other two people in your eight-man contingent up to you. The main difference between the four classes is in the training available.

Some courses, such as Medical and Light Arms, are available to all character classes. Heavy Arms, Survival School and a few others are open only to the Marines and Soldiers. Still

Ship-to-ship combat

others, such as Code-breaking and Chemical Weaponry, are specialties available only to a single character class, so a good balance of personnel is definitely recommended.

Each crewmember gets eight years of training for free upon joining the service and will get additional training as missions are completed. Training can also be purchased for 200,000 credits per session, but with so many other important things draining your funds, I'm sure you'll find this prohibitive.

All the Myriad Choices

A proper selection of equipment is as crucial as a balanced crew. In most RPGs you have to choose from a list of weapons and armor. The usual way to handle selection is to buy the best of each you can afford in the early game and then amass enough money to outfit every player in your squad with whatever weapon and armor is at the top of the list for his class.

Choices are not so easy in *Star Command*. Oh, some weapons are better than others, and price is still one way to gauge between two different kinds, but many other factors also come into play. I counted 54 different personal weapons, 25 ship weapons and six hand-to-hand weapons. A lot of heavy thinking is required to make a good choice.

In addition to price, you must also consider relative attributes of the crewmember, the weight of the weapon and its ammunition, and the number of rounds a single clip holds. How often must it be

reloaded, what kind of damage does it do, does it affect a single opponent or an entire group, and is there a hit point bonus? These aspects makes it difficult to classify any weapon as "best."

Aside from the weapons, you can choose between nine classes of ship, sixteen personal armor types, five kinds of personal shields, five auxiliary defensive systems, three missile killers, four sighting devices and eleven pieces of miscellaneous equipment.

Many of these possible choices have balancing factors that make selection difficult. But luckily, you can sell a turkey back to Starport for 80% of what you paid for it. This is true even of items that are damaged, so consider carefully before paying to have something repaired.

Exploring the Great Unknown

After selecting your crew and hardware, you can check with headquarters for your first mission. The two main objectives are killing the pirate leader and finding some way to deal with an alien insect race that has been making raids on humanity's area of the galaxy.

You'll also be assigned a series of smaller goals that increase in difficulty each time you complete a mission. You may be told to take medicine from one star system to help stop an epidemic at another, or maybe you'll be sent on a mission of espionage or scientific research. These smaller goals help you build up your cash reserves to buy much needed equipment.

Don't get in a hurry, though. While you're out in space it's a good idea to investigate as many planets as possible. Dropships can be sent to practically any planet to perform scientific research; if the planet is inhabited with hi-tech life, you might want to make a cargo or espionage run. Write down any items that the inhabitants of a planet ask you for, because you may be able to buy them for a good price on another world. It is certainly more profitable to sell greasy rags on a planet whose citizens have asked for

them than to try to get rid of them at Starport.

On the Bridge

Space is laid out on a two-dimensional array with XX,YY coordinates. You move the ship across this galaxy map by punching the cursor keys. Only the four main arrows affect movement, which makes some combat situations touchy.

Selecting <D>own scan from the menu will narrow your view from galaxy to star level. By placing the cursor on a star and using <D>own scan again, you can display the planets. Doing this one more time at the planetary level allows you to send a dropship on a cargo, scientific or espionage run. This gives the overall impression of moving a piece on a board, as opposed to the feeling of flying through space you get with *Starflight*. On the plus side, movement is much faster, since there are no fancy graphic displays [like *Starflight*'s tediously slow landing sequence if you don't have a hard disk].

A few details should have been cleaned up. Most annoying to me was that after you destroy a ship in combat, your crew continues to fire at the debris until the end of the turn. Sometimes your missiles even bounce off the shields. This is the first time I've ever heard of space dust with shields. Conservation of material is very important in this game, so it's maddening to have your crew wasting ammunition by firing at a dead ship.

Cruising a space bar

In Space You Can't Hear Anyone Scream

If you're starting to get the idea that a great deal of effort went into the mechanics of this game, you are unquestionably correct. Unfortunately, not as much elbow grease was allocated to graphic and sound elements. To be fair, I have to admit I never saw the EGA version because I don't have access to a machine with an EGA board. While I feel that the CGA version was adequate, it was nothing to shout about. It had the standard cyan and magenta colors, set off by black background and white text.

At the galaxy level, only the three starports, a field of stars and the cursor representing your ship can be seen. When you
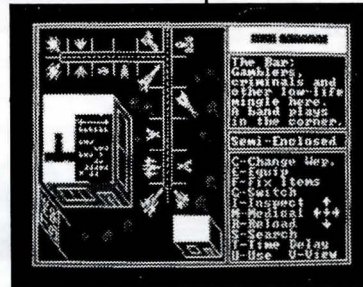
CES Adventures

didn't that really happen in the late '70s?). It looks to be even funnier than *Maniac Mansion* and is done in a similar style. It will be out in July for MS DOS and the C 64, in August for the Apple.

Neuromancing the Stone

Featuring a fully digitized soundtrack by DEVO, another title drawing attention at the Mediagenics meeting room was *Neuromancer*, Interplay's futuristic adventure for the C 64. In this one, the computers have turned the tables on the hackers; to win you must defeat various artificial intelligence systems and ultimately confront and outsmart the Intrusive Countermeasure Electronic (ICE) built into the computer network. Among the weapons at your disposal are computer viruses that can be used to infiltrate the system. *Neuromancer* should be infiltrating *your* C 64 by September. An MS DOS version is planned for December. (Suprisingly, Interplay's first independent release for the Amiga is *not* a role-playing game but something completely different—*BattleChess*.)

A Legend Before Its Own Time

The word from Microillusions was that *Land of Legends* [whose release was announced as imminent at the Winter CES in January] is very much alive and well, with a very tentative release date of July 15. Seems the program developed a life of its own and started to grow uncontrollably. David Joiner of *Faery Tale Adventure* fame is lending a programming hand to get it finished. Also, for all you IBM, IIGS and Mac owners out there, *Faery Tale* conversions are on the way and should arrive within three to six months.

Microillusions has also released *Mainframe* for the C 64. With a plot similar to *Neuromancer*, *Mainframe* involves a supercomputer that has just gone wild and taken over the world. Naturally, you're the only one who can save all of creation.

Finally, if you miss those great cartoons like *The Jetsons*, *Scooby-Doo*, *The Flintstones* and *Johnny Questbuster*...I mean *Quest*...you'll be happy to learn that Microillusions has signed a licensing agreement with Hanna-Barbera to bring some of these characters to the home computer screen. YABA DABA DOO!

The Sounds of Sierra

One of the most exciting new trends in adventure games is the use of better sound and music. At the Sierra On-Line booth, *King's Quest IV: The Perils of Rosella* was being demoed on a huge monitor while the music was pumped in from the computer via a MIDI interface, channeled through a Roland MT-32 sound synthesizer module, and blasted out of stereo speakers. The effect was that of listening to a movie soundtrack as the story was told through animated screen shots.

The pictures were pretty, the sound was terrific and the final product should be out for MS DOS machines in August, with IIGS, Apple II, Mac and Amiga versions to follow. The enhanced, MIDI-compatible soundtrack is a feature the company plans to bring to all machines and incorporate into all future releases.

Sierra served up video previews of *Manhunter: New York*, a science fiction suspense game featuring their 3-D animated adventure system as well as split-screen animation and advanced windowing effects, and *Gold Rush*, a historically and geographically accurate adventure that recreates a wild expedition to California gold country. Also shown were several sequels that are in the works. Among them were: *Leisure Suit Larry II*; *Police Quest II: The Vengeance* and *Space Quest III: The Pirates of Pestulon*. Most are being developed first for MS DOS machines but will eventually be ported over to the IIGS, Mac and Amiga. All titles promise to sound as great as they look.

EA, SSI & More...

The Ritz Carleton was the site of Electronic Arts' showcase of affiliated labels, including the latest software company to join the EA bandwagon—Strategic Simulations. SSI was showing off the first two installments of their *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* line, *Pool of Radiance* and *Heroes of the Lance*. One of the nicest features of *Pool of Radiance* is a combat system that provides a 3-D overview of the entire battle so you can simultaneously watch all the members of your party battle against all the monsters. You can either control the action yourself, or let the computer handle some or all of it. Up to six player-controlled characters and two NPCs (Non-Player Characters) can take part in the adventure.

Based on TSR's Dragonlance game module, *Heroes of the Lance* is an action game that requires you to guide eight characters, each with unique skills and attributes, into the temple Xak Tsaroth to find the Disks of Mishakal (see how important it is to make backups of everything?). *Pool* should be available for the C 64 by August and for MS DOS and Apple II soon afterwards. *Heroes* is slated for late July on the C 64, IBM, Amiga and ST.

SSI also plans to release the first volume of their *Dungeon Masters Assistant* line in mid-August. This initial offering will be an "encounter generator" for players of the standard TSR *D & D* games and will ship first for the Apple. If it's well-received, a Monster data base will follow. Other scheduled releases include *Questron II* for the Amiga (late July) and *Demon's Winter* for the Apple II (mid-August). Also look for a huge new adventure from the authors of *Shard of Spring* late in the year or early in '89.

Paragon Software, another EA affiliate, introduced two new products at the show. The first is a great looking fantasy RPG called *Wizard Wars*. This one involves a white unicorn, a black unicorn and the obligatory Evil Wizard, Aldorin. Features include smoothly-scrolling 3-D mazes, sophisticated magic and combat systems and more than 30 different kingdoms to explore. The IBM version is available now, and Amiga, ST, C 64 and Apple versions should all be out by September.

The Orb of Oswald

Paragon's other new title, *Guardians of Infinity: To Save Kennedy*, is a multi-character text adventure that lets you travel back in time to November, 1963 on a mission to prevent President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, Texas. To win, you must direct the independent activities of four special agents and ultimately uncover the plot to kill the President, then present proof of the plot to JFK in a climactic meeting. [If this is a hit, it will probably be followed by *To Save Bobby Kennedy*, *To Save Martin Luther King* and *To Save Jimmy Hoffa*.]

Along the way you'll talk to more than 125 historical figures via the program's sophisticated parser. IBM users with EGA will be able to see graphics on a "top secret picture disk." *Guardians* will be converted for the Mac, Amiga, and ST

late in the year.

Star Fleet II

Also in the EA press room, Interstel showed *Starfleet II: Krellan Commander*. In this sequel you pilot an enemy Krellan ship through 35 galactic regions and 1,700 star systems. Do a good job and you may acquire "the ability to annihilate entire worlds with a single command."

Also announced was *Scavengers*, a *Wasteland*-type adventure set in the 22nd century. In this one you have to scrounge around for weapons and food while battling bizarre mutants and the dangers of radiation. *Scavengers* will ship first for the IBM with a hefty suggested retail of $54.95. Interstel's *First Expedition* is being readied for the Amiga.

Scoping Out Mindscape

Meanwhile, back at the McCormack North, Mindscape was showing off *Willow:The Computer Game* on an IBM compatible with EGA graphics. No announcements were made concerning any planned conversions. Across the room a new graphic adventure called *Colony* was being demoed on a Mac by the game's designer. The smooth three-dimensional scrolling and digitized sound effects on this game were unreal. You use a mouse to move around the labs, halls, computer rooms and offices of a futuristic space colony. There's lots of interactive elements here and plenty of surprises, like the digitized sound of a toilet flushing when you click on the handle, and working light switches in many rooms. This game has the potential to become a big hit over the next year. It ships in August for the Mac, and an MS DOS version should be available by Christmas.

Epyx Enters the Fracas

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the for adventure fans, however, came from Epyx, who announced a pair of graphic adventure games, the UBIsoft titles *Trials of Honor* and *The Legend of Blacksilver*. *Trials* has a medieval theme and includes several skill/action sequences, such as archery. *Blacksilver* involves a princess' quest to save her father (the King) from the evil Baron Taragas. *Trials of Honor* will be released first for the Atari ST and IBM PC sometime in the fall, with a C 64 version to follow by the end of the year. *Legend of Blacksilver* will arrive for C 64 in the fall, Apple by Christmas, and MS

DOS machines sometime in 1989.

Lost in the Twilight Zone?

Finally, the most exciting thing at the First Row booth was the table and chairs from the original *Honeymooners* set. Neither the much-anticipated *Honeymooners* game nor *The Twilight Zone* were ready in time, and two explanations were given for the *Twilight Zone* no-show. The first was that the wrong disk had been sent (yeah, that's what I thought too!), and the second, more plausible story was that *TZ* still wasn't quite ready. Instead of a working demo or a beta version, all that was being shown were some neat-looking screen shots displayed by an Amiga paint program.

QuestBusters Survey Results

So far only 100 of the 300+ surveys have been tabulated. But a lot of you have asked about the results, so here is a preview of what we have learned up till now. The average age of a QB reader is 37. Those 20 and under comprise 25% of the audience; 31-39, 26%; 40-49, 25% and over 50, 12%. That means the largest chunk—37%—are 40 and over.]

What You're Playing

Other kinds of games played: 30% play D & D-style non-computer games, 29% like strategy and simulations, 7% participate in Play-By-Mail, 3% like to shoot stuff in arcade-type games and 2% like war games. But a whopping 29% said they play nothing but adventures.

What kind of adventures? RPGs scored 70% of the vote, with text adventures capturing 21% and graphic adventures pulling in 9%. You've been playing adventures an average of five years (one person said he's been playing *Zork I* for five years!) and devote about 2 1/2 hours a day to exploring dungeons and looking under rocks.

Reviews are still the most popular part of QB, ranking 8.9 out of a possible 10 points. Keys followed with 8.4, followed by walkthrus with 8.1 Duffy got the low score of 4.6. The vote on coded or uncoded walkthrus was an even split, so that

Legacy of the Ancients

To get a diamond coin, talk to villagers. **Before entering Fortress**, get Magic Ice, Guard Jewels and at least seventeen Healing Herbs. To escape the cell, speak to the Guard. When he walks over, kill him. Be sure you're completely healed when approaching the Compendium. Use the Hvbse Kfxfm when touching the Compendium. Take it and the Wizard appears. Get as close to him as possible and hit him with the Guard's Axe. It's better to use muscle than magic in the Fortress, where magic does little damage if it works at all.

Chris Allen

Police Quest

There are two **"bugs"** in the GS version. Sometimes the program won't accept "handcuff suspect behind back," so say "cuff man" or "use cuffs." The second is Morgan's phone number. Information says it's 555-7764 but it's really 555-6674.

David Auerbach

Sherlock Holmes and The Crown Jewels

In the yard near **Westminster Abbey**: Turn lamp on. D. Get pbs. U. Turn lamp off. Exit. Then take a cab to the Thames for another gamestopper: Enter boat. Put pbs in pbsmpdl. Get anchor. Launch boat. Row east (twice). Drop anchor. Get nptt (repeat until you get gem). Get anchor. Row west (twice). Row north. Exit. Look at gem through glass. If having trouble with **Nelson and the ruby**: Haggle with man (twice) at Birdcage walk. Buy telescope. In Pinchin Square, ask for pigeon. Go to Trafalgar Square and look at Nelson through telescope. Show svcz to pigeon. Ask pigeon to get svcz. Let go of pigeon.

Jeff Krich

Alternate Reality: The Dungeon

If brave enough to **start with a new character**, you'll need the free items quickly. Equip yourself ad D & P, then go north through the Sewers to get the X-Bow, then to 62N, 11E for the Thunder Quarrells. Head for 62N, 31E for the Whetstone and 59N, 31E for extra Hit Points. Also visit 57N, 63E for the Page of Cups. This should sustain you until you advance a few levels and can go to these rooms for items that will make you more powerful: 46N, 42E; 46N, 45E; 46N, 48E; 39N, 41E; 39N, 45E; 39N, 48E. (Save the Thunder Quarrells for the monsters in these places.)

Contributor's Name Missing in Action

To get a **great weapon and armor**, first get the Bnfuiztu Spe at 15N, 3E, Level 1. Go to the Hall of the Adept on Level 2. Make sure you're on the square at 15N, 28E, Level 2 and use the Bnfuiztu Spe. Then go two squares north to the purple triangle (17N, 28E) and you'll be teleported to 62N, 32E, Level 1. Go east down the hall and you'll find the Solar Suit and a Gauss Rifle with 95 shots.

Dan Whittaker

Wasteland

There are lots of **Bloodstaffs**, but only one genuine item. It's under the Offemft Ufnqmpe, reached by qmbzjoh the cpbse hbng. Take it to the Priest first. Then return to him and tell him the password you get from the Priestess in Vegas. He'll give it back so you can take it to her.

Gary Miller

Wizardry IV

To enter the Gates of Hell, you need five items: Cmbdl Dboemf (11E, 19N, 10D), Efnpojd Dijnft (9E, 8N, 9D), Bsbcjd Ejbrst (13E, 2N, 6D), (12E, 6N, 5D) and Esfbnqbjoufs't Lb (in secret chamber at 7E, 8N, 7D). By the time you finish the fifth level you should have them all.

David Berol

Bard's Tale III

The **passwords for the Mad God's Dungeon**: Ubskbo and Dibpt. In Chaos Dungeon, the answer to the "rhyming word" puzzle on Level 1 is cmvf; the answer "I am nothing" puzzle on Level 2 is Tibepx. On Level 3 in Chaos, answer Dsztubm Txpse to the "have no lips" puzzle. To find Brilhast, check out Level 4 at N20, W13 (enter at W14, N20). On Gelidia, say Bmfoebs to get to the second level of the Keep. **To open the Magic Doors in the Keep**, you must say the proper magic spells in the correct sequence. Black Door at N0, E10: Use HSSF, TITQ, GFBS, TVFM, TQCJ; Curtain at N9, E10: Use MFWJ, BONB, QIEP; Creature at N9, W1: Use JOXP, XJIF, GPGP, JOWJ.

Brian Smith

Ultima V

Before entering Doom (in the Underworld, near Dungeon Shame), you must have the Crown, Sceptre, Lord British's Amulet and the Sandalwood Box from LB's study. You must also have destroyed the Shadowlords.

Jayson Hogan

To open the **secret passage in LB's place**, play 678, 987, 8767653 on the harpsichord. Ask the Armorer in Kifmpn about the **Mystics**. Magic Axes are excellent weapons, since they don't weight much and have infinite magic. Whirlpools send you to the Underworld; some waterfalls also lead there.

Bird Anderson

Shards are found in these places: Falsehood—In Underworld below Efdfju. Follow path leading SW across high peaks opening to large system of caves. Continue SW and go NW at major intersection. Path soon turns NE. After long northward journey, path turns W toward hills in the SW, then NE over lake onto massive series of falls, ending in large lake. Shard is on small isle in the lake. Cowardice—At LA, LI in Underworld, below dungeon on Isle of the Avatar. Hatred—AT IA, IA in Underworld. Enter through dungeons by Lost Hope Bay.

Hillel Kaminsky

Star Command
Continued from page 11

downscan, first the stars are displayed, then the planets around a given star. A small window in the upper left corner displays an overhead view of ships in combat mode, planetary display when you are in orbit, or a two-dimensional animated man during hand-to-hand combat sequences.

I was disappointed that *Star Command* didn't support the richer palette of the TGA Tandy graphics. There have to be at least as many Tandy 1000 machines out there as there are PCs with EGA boards, so if it makes sense to support one, it makes sense to support the other. Many vendors are becoming aware of this fact, as evidenced by the great increase in games that make use of TGA.

Likewise, there was no support of the Tandy's three-voice sound system. There was no music of any kind for that matter. Sound effects were limited to last generation's beeps, buzzes and clicks to represent the firing of weapons and setting off of various types of explosive charges.

Bits and Pieces

Star Command includes three 5.25" inch floppies and two 3.5" inch microfloppies. I have applauded companies for doing this before and still think it is a fine example of customer service before the fact. An owners manual gives background and game details and doubles as copy protection. (The disks can be freely copied either to floppies or a hard drive, and the manual even suggests you do so right away.) When you try to save a game, you will be asked to enter a random word from the manual. If you fail to give it twice, you can continue the game but won't be able to save it. This is a bit troublesome, only because it is not always convenient to have the manual close at hand, but since the issue only comes up when you want to save the game, it is more than tolerable.

Conclusions: I'm ambivalent about *Star Command*. If the play mechanics and special effects were more equally balanced, I'd have liked it better. It isn't destined to go into the computer gaming Hall of Fame but will probably be very popular with tacticians and strategists because of the wide variety of available gear.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: In manual
Price: $49.95
Company: SSI

Survey Stats
Continued from page 13

won't change (unless there's a big difference when the other 200 surveys are tallied). On the Swap Shop: 38 said don't change it; 13 want it to disappear; 10 want more ads; 19 said to charge for ads; 13 said to run it every other monthy and 2 wanted it cut in half. That means the majority want some kind of change; we'll wait till the other surveys are tabulated before deciding what to do.

One-fourth of you subscribe to an on-line network: the main one Quantum-Link (15 of 25), with 10 for CompuServe. Few were interested in an on-line version of QB (which is a relief, since Duffy traded our modem for a rare copy of *Beneath Apple Manor* last week).

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