



QuestBusters™



The Adventurers' Journal

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New quests announced at CES in Chicago

Russ Cecolla's feature on the adventures shown at the Chicago Summer CES will materialize on these very pages next month. Meanwhile, here are some of the startling developments.

Accolade has finally leaped into the fray with their first graphic adventures, *Les Manley In: Search for the King* by Steve Cartwright and *Altered Destiny* by Michael Berlyn. Both are for MSDOS. *Les* is previewed in this issue.

Sierra says they're advancing into 256 colors for VGA and releasing their first CD ROM game, a reworked version of *Mixed-up Mother Goose*. New titles planned for 1990: *King's Quest V*, *Space Quest IV*, *Keeping up with Jones*, *Hero's Quest II*, *Rise of the Dragon* and *Heart of China*.

Lucasfilm is doing *Secret of Monkey Island*, a humorous pirate tale. Magnetic Scrolls, the best text/graphic design team in England, will have a new game here, marketed by Virgin-Mastertronic.

SPA Reports on Game Sales

Now for an officially licensed look at the number of games being released for various systems, brought to you by those friendly schmoozers at the Software Publishers Association. They say that in the first quarter of 1990, \$40.7 million dollars worth of MSDOS games were sold, while the Mac accounted for one-tenth as much and "Other" computers racked up half as much as MSDOS. Comparing 1990's first quarter sales

with those of 1989, we learned that MSDOS game sales are up 42%, Mac is up 76.7% and "Other" is down 16%. (Look for *Other Computers Magazine* soon!)

Escape from Hell

This MSDOS quest is a humorous adult-oriented RPG. Simple combat, good graphics, weak sound—but worth a shot if you're as jaded as the designers. Look for a hellacious review soon.

EA Announces Sega Games—World Recoils!

Electronic Arts says their first games for the Sega 16-bit machine will include one that may appeal to adventurers. *Populous*, the "god for a day" British game, will ship in the summer, along with several arcade games and simulations that were also converted from computer games. EA has also scheduled a number of games for Nintendo's 16-bit machine, but no adventures so far.

Centauri Alliance on C64

Michael Cranford's *Centauri Alliance* is out for the C64. While it's a great game, we do think the press release slips way past credibility by calling a game written at least two years ago "the future of role-playing" and saying Cranford has "re-invented role-playing" when *Centauri* is essentially *Bard's Tale* in space. We'll have a conversion review real soon.

Earthrise

An animated graphics adventure from Interstel, *Earthrise* is for MSDOS machines. It promises alternative solutions but looks weak visually. This game too will soon be picked apart by one of our most vulturesque reviewers.

King's Quest IV for the Amiga

Following the precedent set by *Hero's Quest*, the Amiga versions of *King's Quest IV* and *Police Quest II* will need a full megabyte—but they're well worth the upgrade.

Unofficial Book of Ultima Contest Winner!

Michael Teixeira was the first (and so far, the only) person to figure out how to access Iolo's cheat menu in *Ultima VI*: just say tqbn (one of the lost mantras) three times, then ivncvh (these are coded in the still-controversial QuestBusters Code. He won a two-year subscription renewal via the exclusive Adventurer Express and a copy of the book, which by mid-July should have shipped from Compute Books (and from *QB* to everyone who advanced ordered it.) Michael acknowledged help from Mark Travi and Paul Pennell, so let's hope he lets them read his book!

Census Contest Winners!

Yes, everyone's a winner here at *QB*, the all-contest adventure game network! Ten

lucky winners were selected randomly from the people who sent in their QB Census forms from the May issue. These adventurers won an extra year's worth of the journal, plus an upgrade to Adventure Express for those with third class subs: M. C. Lumbardy, Tracy Gross, Ingrid Hybinette, Bruce A. Smith, L. Oyler, Russell Greenspan, Randy Kiessig, Lou Iwaszko, and Luis Perez Jr. Wait a second! That's only nine! Oh yes, David Hunnes (whose name we finally managed to spell correctly) from plain old Plano, Texas.

MacAdventures

Legends of the Lost Realm is the latest RPG from Avalon Hill. Sir-tech has a revised version of the *Mac Wizardry I*. Both will be reviewed by Steven

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Census Report Ushers in Sweeping Changes at Adventurers' Journal!

Ok, we confess to gross exaggeration and hyperbole in the headline, since the changes aren't *really* sweeping (vacuuming maybe, or just a light dusting). But over one-third of the more than 300 Census questionnaires from the May issue have been tabulated, and we're already making some of the suggested changes.

When we asked about the thing you'd most like to see changed in *QB*, we had no idea so many of you were so burned out on having to "flip to the back of the magazine to read the rest of a review." This is true of most publications, we reasoned when a few people made this comment in the past, so why should we be different?

Why Change Now?

Then we realized that is *precisely* the reason we should change—why not give people what they want, instead of what everyone else is giving them? So we toiled away into the night, redesigning the layout.

The news, which many rated right up there with reviews and clues as their favorite part of *QB*, will now appear on the front page and be continued on page two.

We'll put the "Best Quest of the Month" on page three and continue it on four. As often as possible, all reviews will continue on the next page. (Of course, there are bound to be a few exceptions now and then, but we'll do our best to keep the rest of a continued article a mere page away.)

Your Favorite Reviewers

We also learned your favorite *QB* reviewer is Shay Addams and will strive to

cajole him into doing more reviews. (He actually wrote three for this issue, and would have done more if not for death threats from his editor regarding his deadline for *Quest for Clues III*, hopefully out by Christmas.

Your other favorite reviewers were Stephen King and Ken St. André. This was so close, we can't really call it till the rest of the votes are counted. Same for "company that does the best adventures" (ORIGIN and Sierra are leading, with SSI close behind).

Your Favorite Computers

Which computers do you adventure on? Nearly half of you have IBMs or compatibles. Apple, C-64 and 128, Amiga and GS accounted for about 15% each, and ST and Mac owners representing 5% each (these numbers are off a bit, since some people have more than one computer). Nearly 20% have videogame machines, only half of which are Nintendos (most of the others have Sega).

Of the 24 people planning to buy a new machine this year, seventeen want IBM, three are going for GS, two have their hearts set on Amigas, one wants a Mac and one wants an ST. Several of these people were upgrading from an old IBM to newer model, which was true for Amiga users as well.

In August or September, we'll have a final tally on these and other questions from the Census. (We'll even include the funniest answers to various Census questions.) No major editorial changes are indicated so far. On the controversial subject of videogame coverage, we currently plan to limit it to reporting adventure-style titles in the news.

ad here about an "officially licensed Sierra Pen-Pals Club," the gist of which was that it ain't licensed, officially or otherwise, by Sierra.

Stuck Again?

If you need help, especially in a older game, write for the "Key Club" list of people who have volunteered to provide assistance (unfortunately we can't directly answer such questions). And if you'd like to help others by fielding questions, let us know which games you've solved, and we'll add your name and address to the Key Club list.

Ye Quest-type News

Continued from previous page

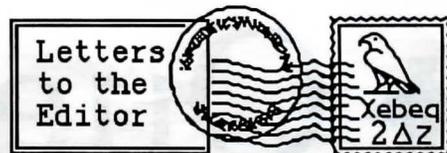
Payne in the next couple of issues.

Five More Years

Special thanks and a tip of the *QB* helm to James Philips, Stephan Dobay and J Cade, who recently renewed for a whopping five years.

No Sierra Pen-Pals

Sierra's John Williams sent us a copy of his letter to the guy who ran a recent



Dear QuestBusters:

My subscription was to expire 90/06. In April I renewed for two years. How come you only prolonged my subscription only 22 months? I thought a year consisted of twelve months! Please change my subscription's expiration date to 92/06, not 92/04, as soon as possible. Looking forward to hearing from you about why this happened.

Ingrid Hybinette

Didn't you read the February news item about our adoption of the Babylonian calendar, which consists of eleven months, except for leap years, which add four months to compensate? That's the only explanation we can come up with on such short notice.

Except perhaps the truth, which is far less entertaining: due to a nuance in the database, almost everyone who renewed in April received eleven more issues for each year they renewed. The error was detected too late to correct it, and the processed renewal orders had already been fed to the iguana.

So everyone who renewed about that time should check the label on your issue. If yours looks awry, send a copy of the label from an issue with the pre-renewal expiration date on it, along with a copy of one with the current, incorrect expiration date (we swear we won't feed it to the iguana this time). We'll update your sub and add an extra issue to it to make amends.

QuestBustersTM
The Adventurers' Journal

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Circuit's Edge: Best Quest of the Month

Aeons have passed since I truly enjoyed an adventure from Infocom, whose transition from all-text to illustrated interactive fiction was rockier than—that's funny...I can't think of anything rockier than that clutch-slipping, gear-grinding shift. *Journey* and *Shogun*, *Arthur* and *Battletech*—each had its virtues, but none effectively implemented graphics into Infocom's literary style of gaming. So it's ironic that *Circuit's Edge*, the one game that finally does the trick, lacks one of the most distinguishing elements of Infocom's early games, the articulate full-sentence parser.

A Zorker Writes a Game

Edge is a science fiction story based on characters and settings from a series of novels by George Alec Effinger. (*Zork* fans take note: he's working on a novel based on the *Zork* trilogy that's due out late this year.) On this game he collaborated with Infocom designers to devise a story set in the Budayeen, the bad part of town in a 23rd Century city in the Middle East. Effinger also wrote most of the text. (He says in the manual that he's been an Infocom adventurer for years, perhaps one reason for the game's success.)

In ways *Edge* is reminiscent of Interplay's *Neuromancer*, with plug-in chips that modify your personality and endow you with special powers. But *Neuromancer* focused on

Type: Graphic Adventure

Systems: MSDOS (512K required; mouse optional; CGA, EGA, Tandy, MCGA & VGA (16-colors for last three; Ad Lib, Roland; 5.25" disks only)

Planned conversions: None

breaking into online computer databases and wielding assorted software in combat with the Artificial Intelligences of the computers, while this one emphasizes interacting with people rather than computers, and its events unfold in a more story-like fashion.

I Want My Moddy!

Decked out with names like Kung Fu, Julius Cesar, Rad Hacker and Muscle Man, the chips that can be implanted in your skull are dubbed "Moddies" and "Daddies." Moddies affect your personality, some making you more aggressive, for example. (These, and other events and

actions, can affect the way people react when you talk to them.) Daddies, on the other hand, endow you with specific knowledge: the Rad Hacker chip enables you use the datalink terminal. In some instances you can "use" a skill chip to solve a puzzle or deal with a situation.

Once the Chronos chip is installed, you get a non-stop digital display of the time, for this is a real-time story with real-time events, whose shops and bars are usually open only in the wee hours, and in which you've got to sleep, eat and drink.

With a mouse, you can click on the on-screen slots to plug chips in and out; keyboard users will find it almost as easy a task. You can look at a chip to learn its use. This is true of the objects you find, for the program tells you if an item can't be used in a place if you try to do so, which saves the time otherwise spent grappling with it on the door, the furniture and everything else in sight.

The Gritty Part of the City

As Marid Audran, a character from Effinger's novels, you awake in a run-down tenement. Several calls on your belt-phone promptly spur you to race around town on a progression of mini-quests. These are linearly structured, so you've got to go to a hotel to pick up a notebook before the next turn of events will send you to visit Papa, who runs the underground scene in the sordid section of town called the Budayeen.

Papa is infuriated by the murder of Kenjii Carter, one of his minions, and wants you to nail the killer. He offers assistance in the form of cash and contacts. This even includes some help from the police, who are also in his pocket. Then out you go, back into the sleazy streets of adventuredom's sleaziest city.

Or into topless bars like the Blue Parrot, Frenchy's and the Red Light Lounge, that is, where much of the action occurs. In these and other interior locations, you can hit "L" to see three pictures. These flip back and forth horizontally, frequently revealing a flash of flesh.

Scantly clad hookers, grungy drug dealers, transvestites, sex-changers—the people who live in the Budayeen are in-

deed a colorful lot, and the world of the Budayeen itself brings to mind the French Quarter of New Orleans (which makes sense, for Effinger hails from the Big Easy).

Anyone seeking cross-references to other Infocom games, a popular pastime of all Zorkers, won't have far to look:

there's a racy bordello called Leather Goddesses, which is run (or should that be dominated?) by an appropriately attired madam. (Yes, I could go over the edge and call this Infocom's "gamiest game yet," but I refuse to resort to such questionable puns.)



Is that a parser, or are you just glad to see me?

Menus to Go

The interface consists of drop-down menus whose options can be selected with a mouse or from the keyboard. You can move by clicking on the picture with the mouse, or by hitting the number or arrow keys, which I found myself relying on more than I expected.

Conversation is initiated by choosing Talk from the menu. A sub-menu lets you utter one of several pre-written one-liners, offer to buy things, or talk about something (in which case the seriously handicapped parser waits for you to type in a few words). Objects may be manipulated in a similar fashion and can be used, given away, looked at and so on.

A small text window scrolls to reveal ample portions of inviting prose. Dialogue is sprinkled with the local slang and assorted Muslim expressions that lend flavor and spice to the drama. So do the exotic names of liquors like *tende* and hallucinogenic drugs such as RPM.

Infocom's renowned parser was reduced to looking for keywords and is the game's weak spot. If you don't get the package to Saied in time, he loses interest in it and won't even respond to your dropping the word "package." For someone so determined to get his hands on the thing a few hours earlier, he should at least have had some conversational response.

Bill the psycho cab driver proved more talkative. He drove me to a few locations outside the Budayeen, small places where I could do only one or two things before a quick ride back to the Budayeen.

By Shay Addams

Teleport to next page

Circuit's Edge

Teleported from previous page

A first-person view shows the characters and buildings in front of you, while a little map in the corner divulges your location on an aerial-view map. You can call up a full-screen map of the Budayeen with a single keystroke but can't move about while viewing it. Even so, the little map that's always onscreen is one of most useful auto-maps I've seen. And by comparing the main auto-map with the street map in the manual, I learned my way around town in no time.

Sights and Sounds

Graphically the game excels, with sharply defined illustrations that are imaginatively employed. Black and blue marks sustained in a street fight slowly fade from your face as time goes by, and though there's no substantial animation, the pictures themselves are dynamic.

A sound board will introduce a whole new dimension to your quest, for the music and sound effects contribute immensely to the action and atmosphere. With a Roland I heard foreboding music while sneaking through the alleys, livelier tunes in the bars, and energetic blasts of rock music during combat. (Ad Lib users will hear the same music and sound effects, but Activision says they sound better with a Roland card.)

Combat, while not the core of the game, is fun and easy. You click on an icon to pick a weapon, then click on the attack: jab, slice or thrust with a stiletto, for example. It's over in a hurry, which I appreciated.

Though your character's life is governed by stats like Strength and Stamina, which are affected by lack of sleep and food, and you do have all those skill chips, *Edge* is not really a role-playing game. The emphasis is on puzzle-solving, not attribute development or combat.

Money, called kiam, may be stashed in the bank and withdrawn with an ATM card. I whiled away a few hours at Bacarat and roulette, self-contained gambling games that outstrip anything seen in a Sierra adventure. (They're nice enough that you'll want to keep the game just to play on nights when you're too burned out to do anything except push-button gambling.)

Ye Futuristic-type Puzzles

The conundrums and clues were hauntingly familiar—quite suggestive of those in the classic Infocom games. You spend your time exploring places and finding objects, then using them in other places, and talking to people for clues about where to find or use them, and so on.

From France It Came:

Yugga Waggu? Oops, you caught me meditating—meditating on all the different slimy ways to die while trying to reach the Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess, hidden somewhere in the mountain of the protozorqs beyond the pool of Deilos.

The time is the far future, centuries after the Burn, whatever that was. You, Raven, are a young mutant who is part of the growing Network of psionically talented humans representing the future of humanity. There are some Normals around, humans who don't like mutants and are undoubtedly envious of your superior powers, and then there are the evil protozorqs, a mutated race of lizard-men (and women).

Did You Say Zorq?

These protozorqs worship Zorq, a creature from outer space who intends to use them as raw material to spawn a race of beings that will conquer the planet. Zorq has already tried this once and failed. Now he threatens to return with a

Komponent that will guarantee success. One Protozim of the protozorqs got impatient and tried his own luck with the Spawnomatic that Zorq left behind, but his offspring were only boot-licking Vorts who couldn't obliterate a squashed gerbil. Oh, the shame of it!

But, after centuries of waiting, Zorq has returned once more, and it seems he is likely to succeed, unless you overcome the five ordeals, avoid the jaws of Deilos, rescue Sci Fi (your kidnapped girl friend) and slay the evil Zorq in his lair. It's a pretty tall assignment. But then again, rumors indicate you're a pretty



The Truth hurts...

tall adventurer.

Are you weirded out yet? Do you want to be weirded out? If you want to be, then don't miss *Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess*, game two in the Draconian line from Data East [but otherwise related to *Drakkhen*]. Known as *Kult* in Europe, *Chamber* is another French import—and one of the best.

After saying the right word to Lt. Hajar, for instance, you'll get a police pass that enables you to claim the dead man's personal effects, which include a telephone answering machine chip and a pawn shop ticket.

Then you've got to figure out how to play back the chip, only to learn part of the message is in a foreign language. This calls for a special language chip. Then there's a holo disk you can play back for more on the plot, and so on and so forth.

Others sorts of puzzles are also in store. I was extremely proud of myself for figuring out the MCDIX clue was really a string of Roman numerals and not someone's name (and I'd be even prouder if I could figure out what to do with this startling revelation).

The Recall Events automatically records up to 50 of the most significant conversations and events, which may be reviewed in the text window for clues you overlooked, forgot to scribble down, or scribbled down but can't quite decipher the next day.

Unfortunately you can save just one game in progress, but that's the only drawback. Though parsing is weak, the parser is used only when conversing

with NPCs.

The 32-page manual offers background information on the people, places and customs of the Budayeen, composed by Effinger himself. You also get two pages of hints and a handy street map with a list of useful phone numbers.

Conclusions: Finally Infocom has done it—achieved a remarkable synthesis of their pre-Activision style of all-text adventure with the latest in graphics, and tossed in a dash of role-playing elements that bring the story to life. While relatively linear, the flow of the story feels loose, and Effinger throws in enough plot twists to keep you from feeling as if you're just being dragged through yet another series of set situations. The Recall Events and auto-map features make *Edge* the most adventurer-friendly Infocom game in years. Except for younger gamers (whom I'm confident are already running out the door to buy it), *Circuit's Edge* is highly recommended.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: None

Price: \$49.95

Company: Infocom/Activision

Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess!

Game design is credited to Arbeit von Spacekraft [a take-off on Lovecraft?—and is Zorq a twisted shot at *Zork*?], Patrick Dublanquet, and Michel Rho, pseudonyms all. I don't know why they chose to be anonymous, unless maybe they ripped off the artistic style of H. R. Giger (he of *Alien* fame) for the illustrations in this graphic adventure. (Giger is famed for his fabulously complex pictures of intertwined bones and tentacles. If Arbeit von Spacekraft is an alias for Giger, that would be great. If he's a ripoff artist, then imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Priceless Pictures

In any event, the graphics of *Chamber* are themselves worth the price of the game. Every scene is pictured in beautiful, smoothly-animated hi-res color and bolstered with digitized sound, and you'll hear a very fine, weird piece of New Age space-music when you boot up the game. It must be at least five minutes long, and if you like wind chimes mixed with other-worldly hoots and tweets in a minor key, then give it a listen.

The guttural mumbling of the prot-zorqs is filled with arrogance and contempt. As befits a bleak future world, these creatures are not speaking English as we know it; the translations appear in

Type: Graphic Adventure
Systems: MSDOS (512K required; mouse optional; CGA, EGA, Tandy, MCGA & VGA (16-colors for last three; Ad Lib, Roland; 5.25" disks only)
Planned conversions: None

cartoon-style word balloons. Some of the words seem vaguely familiar. You, Raven, are an Offa; this reminded

me of offal, which is how you are treated.

Though you take the part of Raven, *Chamber* is not a role-playing game. It is a smoothly-executed, beautifully-animated graphic adventure with a mouse-driven point and click interface. The frustration of not being able to come up with the right word to satisfy the parser has been neatly eliminated by using a sort of inverse parser where all possible choices are shown as ideas on the surface of your mutant brain. (It is kind of disgusting to look at a naked brain so often, but you get used to it.)

Like many those of so many frustrated

gamers I know, Raven's ideas for what to do with various objects often include Smash. It never works, but at least you have the choice. But *Chamber* is no action-oriented game. Tell Raven to lasso a hook dangling from the ceiling, or climb a wall, and he does it without waiting for you to perform any jubilant joystick manipulations. I like that.

In fact, *Chamber* comes as close as any adventure I have ever seen in allowing you to do whatever you want while trying to stay alive. You can collect objects in your inventory and use them at will, in whatever way you want.

Correct usage of the objects you acquire is the key to most of the puzzles in the game.

Or, you can use your psi-powers—and must use them occasionally to stay alive, or advance to the next part of the adventure. If you get too frustrated, you can even fight, which is depicted with a veritable torrent of animated karate strikes and kicks. When the odds are not too heavy, you can even win some of those fights. You *have* to win some of them to stay alive.

Stay Tuned...

As a mutant Tuner you have eight unusual psychic powers. Use them sparingly, but don't be afraid to try them out. Sometimes they are the only things that can save you.

The powers are: Solar Eyes, Sticky Fingers, Know Mind, Brainwarp, Zone Scan, Sci Shift, Extreme Violence and Tune In, most of which are self-explanatory. Of them all, Zone Scan, which enables you to find hidden passages, is the most useful. Sci Shift is great for disarming a foe, and Extreme Violence is sometimes necessary.

Unlike many adventures that have only one true path through the game and one solution for each puzzle you face, *Chamber* offers multiple options at practically every turn. Most of them are useless, but I found a couple of places where there are alternate ways of getting things done. Psi-powers can sometimes substitute for equipment. And sometimes there is no

substitute for psi, especially in the pool of Deilos.

The puzzles you must solve range from very easy (De Profundis, The Noose) to very involved and complex (The Twins, the Wall of Stars). Overall difficulty is intermediate, but it gets very tough at the end.

Graphics are extremely revolting in an excellent sort of way—spiders, scorpions, snakes, amorous lizard-women, turkeys, tentacles, bones, masks, a wiseguy fetus and Marilyn Monroe with dan-druff. (Get far enough and you'll meet Normajean the defective mutant queen.) My wife was extremely repelled by it all. Oh, I almost forgot

the boiling slime. This game has something for everyone.

As if ordeals, combats and mazes and dazzling animated scenes were not enough to deal with, you also have to fight the clock. From the moment the horribly masked Maze Master sends you to your doom, you have only one hour to reach the moment of spawning horror. Thus, there is a time pressure that heightens the feeling of urgency already permeating the quest. You can take as much time as you want to think over a puzzle, but the clock keeps running.

Chamber comes on a single disk for the Amiga and will play in a mere 512K. You must play and save one game on the original disk. Since the program is copy-protected, you can't make a back-up—and have one life to give for your world and your people.

If Raven is killed, there will be a death scream, a passage through star-flecked hyperspace and you'll wind up back at the beginning. Little time is wasted in getting started again. The only way out is to win or turn off the computer.

Conclusions: *Sci-Mutant Priestess* gets a very high recommendation from me—it's an adventure game that I actually liked, and I'm a guy who really doesn't like puzzle-solving adventure games. No real SF gamer should miss this one.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: Disk
Price: \$49.95
Company: Infogrames/Data East



Those Zany 'zorqs

By Ken St. André

The Keys to Maramon

Keys is set in the *Magic Candle* universe, and that's where the similarity ends. As with most of SSI's *DragonLance* series, Mindcraft made this an action adventure instead of a role-playing game.

For a character that will be your "window" into Maramon you can choose one of four types, just as in *Gauntlet*. These characters, however, are a bit unorthodox compared to those usually found in fantasy games.

Four Ways to Die

Instead of a Fighter, you might choose a Blacksmith. How about a Ranger? No such thing? Ok, I'll take the Huntsman. The other two characters are a Scholar, who corresponds to the usual Wizard, and a Courier...the only female character and perhaps the one closest to a Thief.

As usual, the main difference between these four types is their initial statistics. The Blacksmith is by far the strongest, but has very little money and will likely have to start out killing monsters with his bare hands.

The Huntsman is poorest of all. However, he is very well equipped with weapons and healing potions. The Courier

doesn't need to worry about money, but must use it right away to buy good weapons and armour. Last but

Type: Action Adventure
Systems: C64; MSDOS (384 required; joystick optional; CGA, EGA, Tandy 16-color)
Version reviewed: MSDOS
Planned conversions: None

not least is the Scholar. Though better equipped than the rest, he must spend most of the game getting his wands recharged.

What's Going On?

King Rebnard's timing couldn't have been worse! No sooner had he taken all the young men with him to reclaim the mighty Castle Oshcrun, than hordes of monsters ran amok in the streets of Maramon.

Up until now, Maramon had been a peaceful island village. Everyone in town *literally* knew everyone else, and most were related in some way. Besides being

a vital link between the continents, Maramon was the sole supplier of the precious blue pearls, a key item for barter. No matter, as important as the pearls were, there was no helping it. *All* the town resources were being spent just repairing the damage done each night by the monsters.

What is needed is a hero! And so, an emissary of the village is sent on Captain Barbo's Elven Maid to hire a mercenary from the port at Knessos.

The turnout was disappointing. Only the four described above were interested in returning to Maramon. An unusual group, but competent, none the less.

Whatever Gets you through the Night

Background aside, the game actually begins with your choice of the hero standing near the gates of Maramon. You have about twelve hours to look around town before the sun sets. Then the inhabitants lock you outside with the monsters that suddenly started pouring out of those dark towers.

Swell! A nice way to make new friends and influence people! Problem is, the only way to influence *these* people is to beat them severely about the head and shoulders with a blunt object!

The time is kept in the upper right corner for you. The sun sets abruptly at 20 (which corresponds to 20:00, or 8:00 PM). A random number of various creature types will come out of one of the four towers. It is your job to track down these creatures, be they trolls, wolves, whatever, and dispatch them to a higher plane.

Most of them won't stand still for long, so you'll have to develop a knack for canvassing as much of the town as possible trying to find the last one that got away. A record is kept in the lower left corner of the screen to tell you how many monsters are left.

If even a single monster makes it through the night, there will be some destruction in the town. This might not affect you if it turns out to be a residence, but if it's Rosel's Herbal Wonders, or maybe Elmer's Magick Shoppe, you

might be in trouble.

It's hard to buy new healing potions when the herb shop is closed for repairs! Not to mention that the inhabitants get friendlier towards you if you defend them from the monsters. Some of them are downright jovial! The owner of The Flying Fish will even start buying you drinks.

If you kill all of the monsters early enough, or if you are getting desperately low on hit points, you might visit one of the three stronghouses.

These three brick buildings are used for storage. The monsters will not come in at night, so you can rest and regain your strength.



Back to the Stacks

Daylight Come An Me Wan Go Home

After spending the night fighting monsters, you'll be glad to see the light of day. Morning officially begins at eight, when the sun rushes up just as rapidly as it shot down the night before.

Most of Maramon's buildings are residences. These have no doors, so I guess the owners must sneak in through the windows. No matter—you can't get in them anyway.

There are several points of interest though, such as the two pubs. You can go to The Flying Fish and The Crab's Claw and talk to people to get some hints about what to do next.

But be advised that, like most inhabitants of small villages, these folks' horizons are very narrow. They rarely say much that is really useful, and usually you've heard them say it before.

There are also three lodges: the Sea Breeze Inn, Stoner's Bed & Board, and Pickell's Towne House. You can rest in any of these, just as in the stronghouses. The difference is that resting on a nice, soft bed is much better for your recuperative powers.

There is an added advantage in that the owner of the inn will take special care with your weapon. If you are not using a special magical weapon, it's going to take a beating. As it wears out, you'll have to take it to the weapon shoppe and have the proprietor fix it. The better the shape you

By Stephen King

keep it in, the less it will cost to fix it. If you let it get completely broken, it will usually cost more to fix than to buy a new one.

Each time you rest at an inn, the owner will polish your current weapon and take one damage point off it. The various innkeepers seem fiercely competitive, so on certain days it might be to your advantage to go to different inns for this.

The Maramon Mall

So far we've been sticking to services that are gratis. There are four special places in town where gold comes in handy. Maramon Weapons will happily sell you a better implement of destruction, fix your current weapon or even sell you a quiver of arrows. Then there's Steele's Armor. Apparently the Steele family's past was studded with heroes. The heroic type are all apparently dead too, because all their armor is up for sale.

Rosel's Herbal Wonders will be happy to sell you some healing potions, or various herbs to increase Speed, Strength and Durability. And of course, there is Elmer's Magick Shoppe. Elmer would love to sell you a few fire globes to trap monsters with, or perhaps you'd like one of his high-quality magic wands.

The last two places of interest are City Hall and the Maramon Library. City Hall keeps a map of the town, including spots that have been damaged by the nightly patrol of cave dwellers. The main reason to come here though, is that once a week the Mayor will give you your pay.

The Maramon library has a handful of books for public viewing. These might provide you with a few hints, but the real treasures are in the closed stacks, or better yet, the rare book section.

As you start killing monsters, your score rises. When it changes color, you should pay Timothy Quint his lousy twenty bucks so you can visit the closed stacks. Each of the books in here will give you further insight that increases your Strength, Speed or Endurance. And when you have enough gold, the rare book section can also furnish clues that will advance you even further along your chosen path.

Into The Depths

And so it goes...an endless cycle of death and destruction from dusk to dawn and dawn to dusk. As you kill the mon-

sters, you will notice that some of them have gold or herbs you can put to use. Eventually, you will find one with a key. Each of the four towers has a different type of metal gate. One is iron, one copper, one brass and one steel.

When you find the first key, you will be able to enter one of the towers and take the fight to its source. The four tow-

*"...the real treasures
are in the
closed stacks, or
better yet, the rare
book section."*

ers are all interconnected, but until you have all four keys, you will not be able to get through every door. As all of the keys become available, you will find caverns that go deeper and deeper until eventually, you will find...

Surprise...an Evil Wizard!

In a refreshing change of pace, you do not actually have to destroy the evil wizard. You just have to run him out of town, so that he'll settle in and start sowing destruction on another unsuspecting town. [Is that a sequel lurking in the last line?]

Meanwhile, the caverns are flooding with water! If you're going to live to brag about this to your grandchildren, you'd better get a move on toward the surface!

You control your character with the arrow keys or joystick. Use the appropriate arrow, or push the stick in the direction

you want, and the character will move in that direction, along with the pitter patter of his little feet coming through the PC speaker.

Press the space bar or button to attack with the weapon in hand. You need to be careful how you are placed/facing with respect to your enemy. It's a fairly simple

matter for them to stand on an angle and beat the tar out of you while you make nary a hit on them. The bow and wands all fire in a straight line also, so you may find your powerful magical weapons less useful than you first imagined.

A handful of other alpha keys also enhance your control. C allows you to check

the hero's inventory, while H is the command to hold a different weapon. J toggles the joystick on and off. It also puts your character in the single-step mode if you are using the arrow keys. O gives a status report, V turns the meager sound on and off, U will use an herb, ESCape pauses the game, Q quits, and P will pass the time quickly till the next sunrise/set.

Special Effects

As I indicated, the sound in this game is nothing to brag about. There is no music, and the sound effects are limited to the footsteps of your hero, the crash of your weapon and the pinging sound of enemy projectiles coming at you.

The graphics are pleasant in 16-color EGA. No ground-breaking technology here, but some were still quite striking. According to the game box, CGA, EGA and 16-color Tandy are supported. I had to play the game on my PC clone with EGA, because it would not get past the opening screen on my Tandy 1000 TX with VGA card.

Bottom Lines

Both disk formats were included in the box, along with a nice little lead-in booklet to give you some background on the situation and the four character types.

Copy protection is of the key word type, which I oddly didn't find too offensive. You don't need the keyword when starting a new game, just when restoring a saved game, and only once for each play session.

In other words, if you can finish the entire game in one sitting, you'll never see the copy protection. If you come back another day to play some more, you'll only stumble across it the first time you load your saved game. After this, you will be allowed to save and restore at will

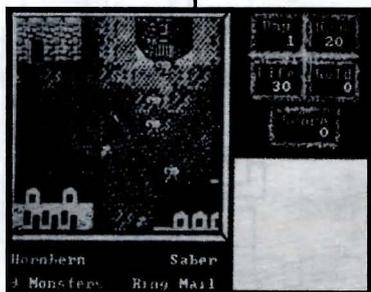
Conclusions: I found *The Keys to Maramon* a pleasant little action adventure that will appeal to people who like shoot-em-ups but not to questers who are heavy on strategy/tactics or role playing. It was nice to look at and fun to play. The little booklet added a lot of enjoyment by fleshing out the plot, but there is no real brain food here—it is basically another "If it moves, kill it!" game. Still, it has more depth and detail than games like *Gauntlet*.

Skill Level: Beginner to Intermediate

Protection: Keyword

Price: \$49.95, MSDOS; \$39.95, C64

Company: Mindcraft/Microprose



Locked out of Town

Walkthru: Universe III

General Tips

Take all objects you can. Some items aren't needed till much later in the game, and if you find that you don't have a particular item, you'll have to return to a prior saved position or restart the game. Before starting each section of this solution, check your inventory to make sure you have everything needed that section. Follow map for all directions. A command followed by "(zoom)" means you click on the object to open its picture. References to interactive screens indicate you must click on part of the item in the picture in order to operate or use it.

Section One

Captain's Quarters

Open safe (zoom). Remove mission orders, personal note, Security Card (use interactive screen). Read orders and note. Don't bother trying to read other documents. Record the names of people you can trust. Exit. Explore the ship and learn everything you can by talking with the crew (ask them to report, interactive screen, and record anything unusual).

Galley

Go to Nutrimatic (zoom). Depress bar. Take Nutri-bar (interactive screen) and save for later.

Science Lab

Take Recorder and UV goggles. Record what the technician says about the data recorder. Give recorder to technician and wait till it's repaired.

Engineering Room

You must wear **Vw hphhmft** before entering this room. There will be an attempt on your life. Examine control panel (zoom). Press emergency button to dispose of assassin. Exit.

Security Area

Put Security Card into card slot to open door (interactive screen). Enter and take Briefcase. Exit.

Bridge

Ask each officer to report (interactive screen). Examine both screens (zoom). Order Second Officer and Engineer to follow. Go to Shuttle, enter, order Engineer to report. Exit. Go to Drive Access Area.

Sickbay

Take Medi-kit and Chronokleptic tablet. (Note doctor's warning about the tablet.)

Hibernation Room

Examine control panel (zoom). Operate chamber control panel (interactive screen). Do chamber #2 last. Note what doctor and Floyd say as well as Gotol's actions. Go into chamber # 2. Look at body (zoom). Examine body and envelope (interactive screen). Note what you find. Order Floyd, Sella and Gotol to follow.

The Shuttle

(Engineer must have repaired Shuttle by now.) Take Transceiver. Close shuttle door. To launch: examine controls (zoom), press bar in front of chair (interactive screen). Wait.

Section Two

Reception Center Shuttle Pad

Upon landing, go to gun rack (zoom). Unlock rack (press button). Open rack (press bar). Take Blaster (you'll have to interact twice to unlock and open; Blaster needs repair, which is done later in the game). Turn on Recorder (interactive screen, press red switch). Exit. Save game.

Getting the Pistol Past Stun Field Passage

Enter the small courtyard east of shuttle. Stand on the small burrow hole. **Johftu ovusj-cbs. Qvu** Blaster in **gppe xsbqqfs** and drop it. Step back. Enter and explore center, then examine everything: Quark-a-Cola (zoom; get one) newsfax, playback, pile of ashes (take Earloop).

Retrieving the Pistol

Follow map to inner courtyard and stand by small burrow hole. Start punching keys on the

Usbotdfjwfs (interactive screen) till you make a high frequency noise (the display will report a howl). Take Blaster.

The Jammed Door

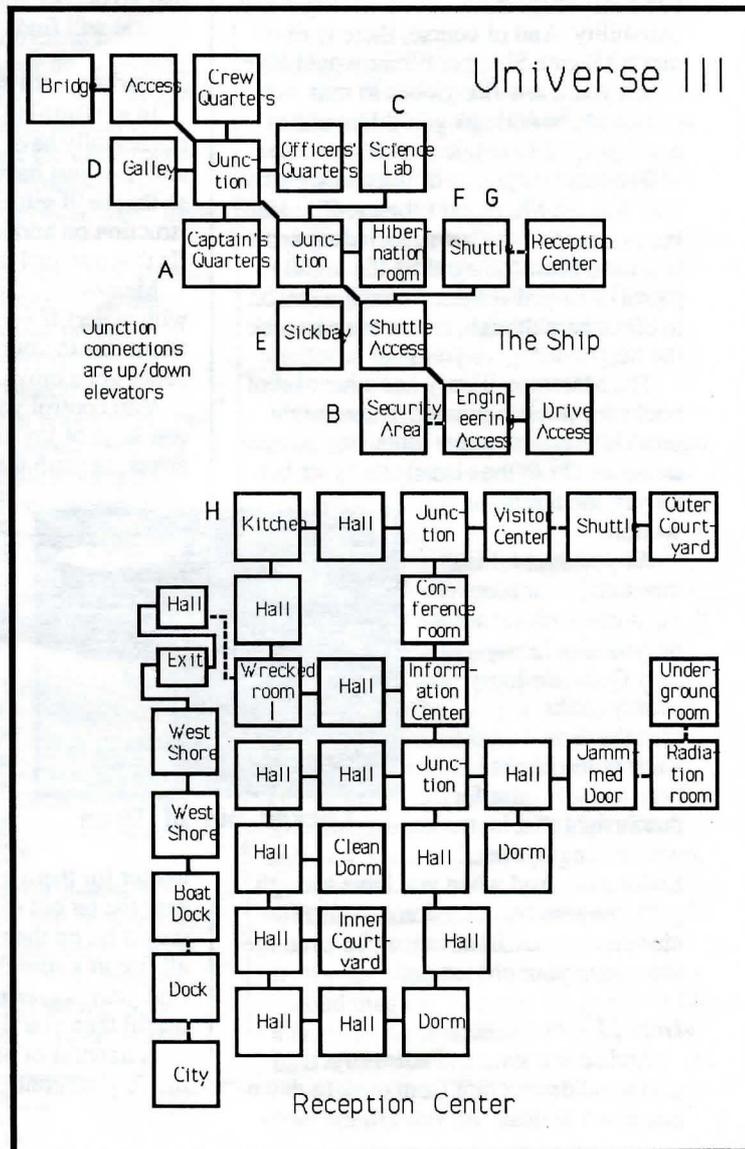
Open Quark-a-Cola (interactive screen; click on tab). Put it next to door. Step back. Wait.

Radiation Room

Enter after unjamming the door. Examine control panel.. Break bent card. Examine control panel (zoom), press third button (zoom), press middle button. Enter small passage. Give pistol to Sella. Wait till she returns it to you. Save game. Examine control panel. Turn off stun field (push Inner Entry button). Go to Boat Dock, carrying repaired Blaster. Save game before dock.

Boat Dock Encounter

There are two ways to get to the boat. You can shoot your way there, or run (don't use the tablet!). It may take several attempts. Save game after you make it.



By Grant Wiedemer

Boat Destination

Examine Autopilot in upper left part of boat (zoom). If your destination is the "Bureau," change it to "New Anchorage" (interactive screen; alter). Take off (interactive screen; go) for New Anchorage. If your health is below 50%, give Medi-kit to Second Officer. Wait.

Section Three

The City

Explore city. Search the Orchard (Multi-tool), Apartments (lighter), Bank Port (bank teller), General Store (sponge), Restaurant (notebook) and Ticket Teller. (Some of these actions are described in detail in the next four sections.) Only after doing them all, enter the Paladin Bar.

General Store

Examine machine (zoom). Drop Multi-tool on it. Examine machine (zoom). Get sponge.

Bank Port

Place Briefcase on the bank teller (interactive screen). Take bank card. Exit.

After Second Officer is killed, take object. Examine object. Read object (scrap paper). Go to restaurant.

Restaurant

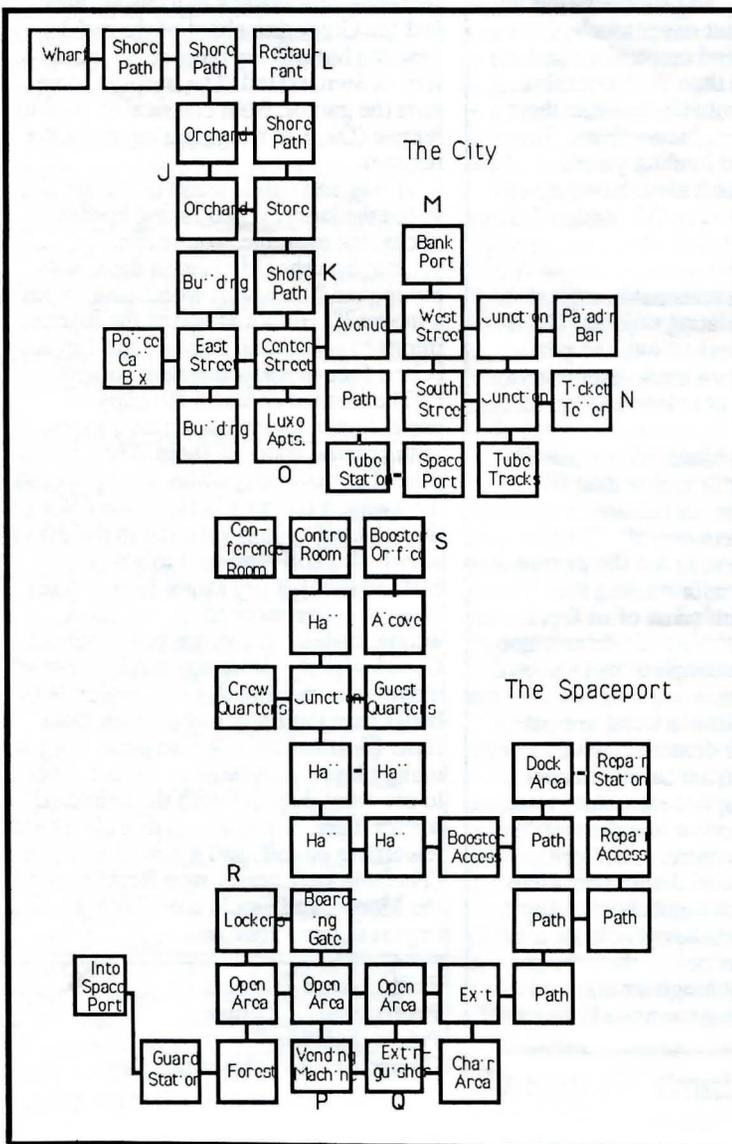
Examine trash can (zoom). Repeat till you find notebook; if it's not there, return later, but before the Paladin Bar scene. Take electronic notebook. Examine notebook (zoom), activate. Note locker number. Drop notebook.

Ticket Teller

Put bank card on Ticket Vendor. Buy two tickets for Spaceport (interactive screen; repeat for second ticket.). Floyd will take one ticket. Get ticket.

Paladin Bar

You'll need the sponge, tool, lighter and ticket. Wear fbsmppq. Enter. Attack each bar patron and kill them all. Don't cross the room till you've killed them everyone on the screen. Cross the room and repeat. When there is only one left, go back. The news will come on. The remaining patron will shoot at you. You must survive till the Wandering Robot makes a hole in the wall. Ingest tablet and attack the remaining patron (tablet lasts two turns).



Exiting Paladin Bar

As soon as the exit appears, run to the train station. (If you face two patrons in final scene, get close to lower section of wall and make a run for it without killing them.) Drop all items except lighter, bank card, sponge, Multi-tool and ticket. Insert ticket into vendor and enter train. (If someone says "Hope you didn't drop anything," then you did because you were carrying too many items.) Save game after train stops.

Section Four

Spaceport

Exit train. Go to vending machine. Buy bottle. Put bottle into sponge. Put sponge into fire extinguisher. Examine lighter (zoom). Press lighter switch (interactive screen). Stand back and watch. When fire starts, run to lockers along western wall. Save game.

The Lockers

Stop at locker mentioned in electronic notebook (number five). Break locker with Multi-tool. Take camouflaged suit. Wear suit. Go to door in east wall (see map). Exit. Go to Repair Access. Enter. Wait.

Section Five

The Booster

Exit Control Room. Go to Booster to Control Room. Explore around; don't touch anything. Go east to Booster Office. Save game.

Booster Office

Note what the technician says and the sequence code. Go to alcove. Examine first pod (interactive screen; push button). Take rock.

The Conference Room

Pay close attention to dialogue. Show spdl to Nichols when he asks for evidence. Save.

The Final Confrontation

Follow Gotol (to launch pad, east) after he grabs Sella. Activate control screen (interactive screen) immediately. Use the sequence code from above: (1) third button from left, bottom row; (2) third button from right, bottom row; (3) first button from left, bottom row. Push colored bar beneath symbol (interactive screen) for each. Wait. (Time is vital; if Gotol gets loose, you took too long.)

Map Key: Universe III

- A: Orders, Security Card, Note
- B: Briefcase of Tridium
- C: Data Recorder, UV Goggles
- D: Nutri-bar
- E: Medi-kit, Chronokleptic tablet
- F: Transceiver
- G: Blaster
- H: Quark-a-Cola
- I: Earloop
- J: Multi-tool
- K: Sponge
- L: Notebook
- M: Bank card
- N: Tickets
- O: Lighter
- P Bottle
- Q: Fire Extinguisher
- R: Camouflage Suits
- S: Rock

Future Wars: Adventures in Time

Rare is the computer game whose illustrations truly earn the distinction "computer art." Yet another French import, this is one of them.

The graphics show off the artist's vision as well as technique at splashing a multiplicity of color and patterns across the screen, for each major scene looks more like a painting than a location in a game. Many scenes appear as smaller pictures scattered about the screen, and the bevy of interactive graphics (pictures you click on to the depicted items) makes this story exceptionally engaging.

Cleaning up in Time

In the opening scene, you're on a scaffolding outside a skyscraper, the kind with that the brilliantly reflective windows—which it is your responsibility to keep shiny and clean and brilliantly reflective. But upon this lowly window washer's shoulders lies the fate of a future Earth, and that of the past as well, for you will soon stumble upon a time machine that zaps you to the Middle Ages.

Each geographical area consists of about a half-dozen locations, and most areas are relatively limited in the number of places to explore. On one hand, you don't get to explore as many places as in most games; on the other, you won't have as much trouble ensuring you've searched each location thoroughly enough to find all the clues and useful items.

Type: Animated Adventure
Systems: Amiga, ST (both 512K); MSDOS (512K required; CGA, EGA, Tandy, MCGA & VGA; Ad Lib, Roland)
Planned conversions: None
Version reviewed: Amiga

A bit of investigation in the Middle Ages eventually leads to the discovery that the monks at the local monastery are actually aliens from Betelgeuse who are engaged in a time war with Earthlings from the 43rd Century—a war fought in different eras, as each side hops back and forth via time machines.

Since one of the game's most enjoyable elements is the manner in which the plot is revealed, I won't reveal much more. Well, since you twisted my arm...there's this girl named Lana, her

father, a mechanical wolf, that mutated creature in the sewers, and a conclusion so clever it made my head hurt. (Finally, we learn the real reason the dinosaurs disappeared, and it wasn't a meteorite.)

The interface is an imaginative variation on those in Lucasfilm's games and *Universe III*. As in the latter, you call up onscreen menus that list verbs and inventory. First you pick a verb, then an object to use; finally you click on an object in the picture to use the thing on it.

You examine or take things by picking the corresponding verb. The word "examine" appears in a one-line parsing box, followed by the name of any interactive object you move the cursor over.

Same thing applies for using objects from your inventory and for operating onscreen items. I almost never touched the keys—it's smooth and convenient and even more intuitive than the Lucasfilm interface, though probably because there are far fewer verbs in *Future Wars*. The menu for saving and loading games (which may be named) also shows up in such a window.

Get Closer!

Most puzzles are reasonably logical and involve manipulating objects. The illusion of depth is worked into the puzzles, for you won't see each useful item in a room until you get close enough to its location.

The only serious hindrance to puzzle-solving is that the text, rather than filling a text window below the picture, is displayed in white letters *over* the illustration. This enables you to see the picture but often interferes with reading the clues, which I'm sure some of us feel is more important! But it's a hindrance, not a handicap serious enough to merit one of those parking spaces.

Other puzzles follow a trend toward more tests of mouse dexterity, which I've observed in games from Sierra, Lucasfilm and others. I suppose it makes sense to incorporate animation into the puzzles of an animated adventure; still, I grit my teeth when I have to deal with one. Here you have to punch in numbers on a keypad before a door crushes you, blast a bunch of little aliens before they shoot you first, and race through a maze and out again before the six-minute limit ex-

pires. These challenges do enhance the drama, which is also underscored by numerous animated sequences.

These are some of the most vividly conceived and executed animation sequences I've seen in such a game. Instead of looking like a cartoon, *Future Wars* looks like a movie, the effect so many designers strive for but rarely attain.

Unfortunately, you can't hit a key and bypass them; no matter how artistically rendered a landscape, I can only bear seeing the same forest a couple of times before wanting to grab a chainsaw.

Sound effects don't compare with those from Sierra, but they are still top-notch. I heard some of the most realistic "echoing of footsteps in a castle" ever, and the Gregorian chant of the monks took me back to my days at the monastery in Switzerland. The musical score runs the gamut, from classical to rock to reggae (Ok, I'm exaggerating about the reggae).

A wry and subtle sense of humor pervades the story. When facing hordes of aliens, for example, you realize "...maybe I should click on them with my mouse," then start wondering "what's a mouse?" Humor is one of the hardest things to achieve in a game, and I'm surprised French jokes translate so well.

The manual contains the copy-protection, a picture of a man's pants with colored spots on them. They're displayed in black and white, one spot blinking away. You must indicate the color of the blinking spot as pictured in the manual (which I still managed to get wrong half the time). They might have at least give you one more try if you get it wrong, instead of forcing you to reboot. **Conclusions:** Interplay made a shrewd move by importing this one, which is far better than the French stuff from Data East. Cinematically, it's so good that I actually played it through to the end—just to see what they did with the animated scenes there. It was worth it: a clever and rewarding payoff, and a hint of a sequel. (This one very nearly won Best Quest of the Month, and would have been the first import to have done so.)

Skill Level: Novice

Protection: Off-disk

Price: \$49.95

Company: Delphine/Interplay



Rambling through the Ruins

By Shay Addams

Death in adventure gaming: is it *always* necessary?

All year long I've been reviewing games instead of designing them, and in doing so have become aware of a problem in computer games—especially in fantasy role-playing, my main love, but also in other game genres as well. Namely, the problem of Death to the player.

First I should get some disclaimers out of the way. My games—*Tunnels and Trolls*, *Stormbringer* and *Wasteland*—are not death-free. As a designer I've been known to take just as much joy in killing off my players as anyone. Still, I believe there are times when game death is appropriate, when the Game Master should award that death without even a backward glance. But I no longer believe in unnecessary or gratuitous game murder, and hope I can bring more designers to see that point of view.

What is the fun of a computer game? Is it fun to be killed over and over again while battling your way against all odds through a killer program? I think not. As a player, I often get discouraged and give up after getting killed too many times. Is that what game designers want, to defeat the player so often that he or she gives up on their games?

The Ideal Adventure

Ideally, we'd like to create a game so absorbing and fascinating that the player gets lost in the game world and can only tear himself away with the greatest of difficulty. Then why do we treat our players so badly, kill them off and kick them out of our worlds so often? Because we don't really think about what we're doing—we just blindly follow the patterns of the past.

All RPGs, be they fantasy, science fiction or topical, developed from the seminal ideas of Dave Arneson and friends, the source of *Dungeons and Dragons* back in the Seventies. Yet there are people writing RPGs today who never even heard of Arneson, Gygax or St. André, who have no idea of the origin of the concepts they use so blithely.

The first pencil and paper RPGs were basically hack and slash games whose object was to kill as many monsters, grab as much loot and make your character as powerful as possible. All designers went through that stage; some games, and some gamers, never went beyond it.

When games jumped from graph paper and dice to the personal computer, they remained hack and slash. The key difference was that there's no way to sweet-talk the computer when you get in a jam, whereas a human GM might let you talk your way out of it. As the genre developed, however, GMs learned to fudge the die rolls a bit and keep those players alive and going, on to the next mind-numbing

horror or fearsome challenge.

Any paper and pencil game designer who's spent 50 hours plotting an elaborate adventure campaign doesn't want to ruin it all by killing his players at the beginning. Sure, you may off a player character here or there, especially if the player proves himself too dense, too unpopular or too lousy at role-playing to contribute to the enjoyment of the group. The other party members can carry on, and the dead player can always roll up a fresh character and rejoin them.

But computers don't care how the quest turns out. If the entire party gets killed in some games, the player has to start all over. Here's an example of an otherwise excellent game that falls into that trap: *Curse of the Azure Bonds*. It has a complex plot, a story line capable of picking you up in places and carrying you right along, a virtually infinite variety of character types, weapons, magic and the like. As a player, you're limited only by your imagination.

The object is to rid yourself of five magical marks. While doing so, you'll enjoy exploring the beautifully developed *D & D* world, meeting strange peoples, fighting bizarre monsters and charting a fascinating geography. But all that depth in world creation takes a back seat to practically endless tactical combat against ever more hopeless odds.

In fact, in an article in *Computer Gaming World*, the designers admitting stacking the dice against gamers—a deliberate bending of the rules to try try and kill the player. Worse than that, they made a game in which you can easily waltz into an evil stronghold and get the marks removed, yet have to fight your way through ten times the original number and power levels of monsters simply to get back out into the world.

Of course you can save the game and try to emerge victorious from a hopeless situation, which means getting killed over and over. Needless to say, though I liked many elements of *Azure Bonds*, I've quit playing it—and will never see half the good things they put in it.

Another kind of game that kills off its players all too often is the logical puzzle-solving adventure like those for which Infocom was once so well known. Many of these turn out to have just one successful

path—The One True Way—through all the many twistings and turnings of the action. Take a wrong turn and, whoops, the path crumbles beneath your feet, drops you into a pit full of vipers, and you're dead. Or fail to solve the puzzle in ten seconds, and the Evil Witch springs from the cave and catches you. You can't fight, you can't run, and you can't bargain—you're just dead and out of the game.

I'm not saying all computer games murder their players unreasonably. Many excellent adventures give the player every chance to survive. If your entire party gets wiped out in *Ultima*, *Times of Lore* or *Wasteland*, then you know you really blew it

badly—but that you can also restore your last saved position with a very good chance of playing past that particular stumbling block. The same cannot be said for games like *Azure Bonds* or *Deathbringer*.

Note that plenty of games don't rely on death to defeat the player. *SimCity*, for instance, doesn't kick you out of the game for building a lousy city. Even Lucasfilm's lukewarm *Loom* won't kill you if you don't solve the puzzles.

The Solution?

I wouldn't raise the question of death in games if I didn't have a solution. In adventure and role-playing games, the designer should kill the player only when he has blown things so badly that there's no possible way to recover. Instead of having that monster kill the outmatched warrior, have him knock the poor guy unconscious and drag him off to his lair. Or let some computer-controlled character rescue the guy.

Yeah, I know this kind of thing might be hard to program into a game. But it would be worth it. To game designers reading this article, I ask: don't you find it far more satisfying to have your players on tenterhooks, wondering what's going to happen next, than to just slay them and make them start over? And to the players, which would you prefer?

Again, I'm not saying there aren't plenty of good games out there. Just that too many potentially good games have been ruined by the designer's short-sighted policy of killing off the player unnecessarily. When creating your next game, stop and think: is this death really necessary? What do you and the player really gain from this game death? If you don't have a good answer, don't do it.



Deja Vu does it Again

By Ken St. André

Sneak Preview! Les Manley in: Search for the King

Why did Accolade put off publishing adventures all this time, when industry veteran Michael Berlyn has been producing games there since he left Electronic Arts (along with a raft of other designers). It must be that they were waiting until their new game system was perfected: Accolade is well-known for their polished presentation style, and this adventure is no exception.

Les Manley was designed by Steve Cartwright, who wrote some major videogames long ago. It's good to see that, as EA and Activision stumble over each other in the race to snare the videogame market, a few artists are still looking toward the future of interactive entertainment.

Cartwright and Berlyn are credited with creating the game's engine. We got a pre-beta copy with just enough bugs to impede significant progress, so this will be a quick sneak preview, to be expanded upon in a future issue.

Quest for Frisbees

I almost sailed all three 3.5" disks out the window after trying to install the game, which proved maddening for someone just adapting to the MSDOS environment. I kept getting an "out of memory" message, even though it was supposed to be a 640K game and the ZEOS

I'm using *has* 640K. A phone call illuminated my befuddled brain on this fine point: the game requires 640K of

Type: Animated Adventure
Systems: MSDOS (640K required, but read the fine print); mouse optional; Ad Lib, CMS, Roland, Casio, "generic MIDI"
Planned conversions: Amiga

"free memory," not overall memory. Ultimately, I hear you'll need 589K free for VGA graphics, 565K for EGA.

So there I sat, struggling to weasel memory out of the system by deleting lines in the autoexec and config files. Finally I did so, though only by dumping the DOS shell that I cling to so dearly whenever I try to do anything file-related.

Accolade says the package will clearly point out the "free memory" requirements, but still I wonder how many people will end up like me, trying to carve out enough RAM to accommodate this memory-hungry program. Had I not discovered a utility for doing so just a few days before, I definitely *would* have sailed the disks out the window, since I managed to wreak utter devastation on

the computer the last time I attempted to rewrite my autoexec file using "edlin."

Enough Whining...

When I finally got it running, I beheld a faint glow from the east—the sun was rising, for it had taken me all night! Diligent reviewer that I am (it says so right here in my resumé), I stayed at the keyboard and watched a cartoon-style intro about a TV station's promotional campaign to give a million dollars to the person who can find Elvis Presley, the King. Then I set out as Les Manley, lowly employee of the station, on my quest for Elvis. The search stretches from New York City to Vegas and, naturally, to Nashville.

The scenery seemed familiar, for the presentation style adopts many elements of Sierra's animated games. With the arrow keys or a mouse, you guide Les about the screen and type in full-sentence commands (and soon start yanking out your hair when the parser doesn't recognize half your words). I didn't get to try out the mouse interface, because I dreaded the thought of going back in and installing the mouse driver (or even trying to figure out *where* to install it).

Interior scenes are portrayed in an interesting style in which you see the outside of the building and look into it through a big hole in the wall. The illusion of depth is reinforced by the program's insistence that you get close to an object before you can do anything with it.

The illustrations are all finely detailed and profit from a rich palette. You see full-screen pictures, for the parser shows up only when you type, and the program's responses are displayed in pop-up windows instead of below the illustration. Dialogue is posted in cartoon-style balloons, and when you examine important objects, they are illustrated and described in individual windows.

All kinds of spirited animation is seen: cars zoom by, balloons float overhead, people walk past. At least one scene, a circus, is shown from an aerial view in which the characters and animated rides are tiny, as if seen from the Goodyear blimp.

A Sweat-stained Clue

Puzzles consist primarily of object manipulation. You've got to round up an i. d. card, for example, in order to pose as a reporter and collect clues from an Elvis fan whose most prized possession is a sweat-stained scarf the King tossed to her at his last concert.

A logical inconsistency reared its logi-

cally inconsistent head when I tried to climb a rail and get to the counter in the bus station. I was not allowed to do so, on the pretext that I might split my pants—even though the rail was much lower than the fence I had already climbed earlier (a "graphics error" prevented me from circumnavigating the maze of rails and reaching the counter).

Though the parser comprehends full sentences and pronouns, most situations can be handled with two-word commands. Hopefully the vocabulary will be augmented before the game is released, as I had trouble talking to anyone about anything but the most obvious subjects.

And the parser can be finicky. You can't just "get jar" that's in your lunch bag, for the parser wants you to say "get jar from bag." That's what I call a sophisticated parser—maybe even *too* sophisticated.

Banana and Peanut Butter Sandwiches

Besides the predictable Elvis jokes, a plethora of computer jokes poke fun at adventuring and computing in general. "Examine sidewalk," for instance, and you'll read: "without it you'd fall through the bottom of the monitor." I looked at a mail box and was asked if I thought that letters deposited there would be sent to another computer game. A bit of topical humor is also in store: when I examined the bus, I got a gag about the Greyhound strike.

Sound effects had not been put into the pre-beta version; text messages indicated there will be plenty of them. The music was already in place, and I heard a variety of tunes in different locations. Ultimately I put down the headphones when it started sounding too much like elevator music.

You can adjust the animation speed and the volume. Ten games can be saved, and you can name them. As in Sierra games and few others, there's a convenient button for changing directories.

Conclusions: None—this is a preview, based on a pre-beta version, so all I can say is that it looks very promising and I hope to know more about editing config.sys and auto.exec files by the time it's released. But if that sort of thing is no big deal to you, and you like the Sierra adventures, this is certainly a good-looking, smooth-playing quest with an original plot.

Skill Level: Undetermined

Protection: Offdisk

Price: \$59.95

Company: Accolade

By Shay Addams



Keys to the Kingdoms



Ultima VI

See page one for access to Iolo's secret cheat menu.

To teleport anywhere in the land, press the Alt key and 2, 1, 4 on the keypad (keeping the Atl key depressed). A gargoyle's message will appear. By using the numbers obtained when you press Alt 2, 1, 3 (to get a free Peer at the land, as described in June) you can teleport anywhere in the game. The last number of the "2 1 3" series is the level you're currently on. The last three spaces preceding that are the position of your party along the Y axis. Preceding those are three numbers representing the X axis. To teleport anywhere, follow these rules. 1: The X and Y axes follows a hexadecimal system that starts with 000; if you move ten spaces to the right, for example, your position will be 00A. 2: Once you reach the position "OFF," moving one space to the right takes you to 100. The system repeats itself till you reach the end of the map. So, to teleport, A: press Alt 2, 1, 4. B: Type in the three-digit hexadecimal value for the X axis. C: Type in the three-digit hexadecimal value for the Y axis. D: Type in the level number you wish to go to (Britannia is level 0; anything higher is below Britannia).

Brian Coats

To make lots of money, go downstairs at the library and find these books: Wizard of Oz, Snilwit's Big Book of Boardgame Strategy, and the Lost Book of Mantras. Take the Wizard to Lord British, who'll give you some gems. Take Snilwit's to Dr. Cat in Paws for a small sum of money. Take Lost Book to the Wisps in Spiritwood (see white spot on map). You can trade the book for useless information, or as many gold nuggets as your pack can hold (so be sure it's nearly empty before going; do so in LB's castle, but don't forget to bring the book!). A secret door in Moonglow's food shop leads to the catacombs. I was hit with fatal bugs when Leonna and Leodon joined in Buccaneer's Den.

Brian Riggs

For Rune of Valor, ask Lord British about talking mouse, Sherry. Take cheese to levels below castle, give to Sherry after talking. Let Sherry join group. Avoid or be careful in battle, since the mouse dies easily. Go to Jhelom and send her into the mouse hole in the west wall of the tavern in Jhelom. Say goodbye and she'll leave the party. **Rune of Sacrifice:** Get freshly cut yew log (buy it from Ben in Yew) and take to Minoc to

get it cut into a board at the sawmill. Take this to Julia, who'll make pan pipes from it. Then Selganor will give you the Rune if you play "Stones." The numbers for the tune: 6789878767653. **Rune of Compassion:** see Chancellor Tholden in Britannia. **Rune of Spirituality:** talk to daughter Marney about Father Quenton's death, then locate Quenton House in Skara Brae and search box in main room. **Rune of Justice:** tell prisoner that he's lying about kids. He'll tell you where he hid the Run (under plant in slaughtered lamb bar). **Rune of Honesty:** visit Penumbra in Moonglow (in building with all the fields of power; cast Dispel Field to reach inner door). She'll say where it's buried and that you must take daffodils to his grave. Take flowers to Beyvin's cousin, who'll give you a key for the crypt. The crypt is under the saw mill at the north end of the island; check the dungeon, two levels down. Grab loot found on remains of bodies. **Rune of Humility:** See Antonio in New Magincia, who'll tell you to ask Arurendir for it. To learn lots about the Gargoyles, talk to Sin Vral in the SE corner of Drylands. Spells are available from the Mage in Cove and the Mage in the saw mill north of Lycaenum. Buccaneer's Den is at 31S, 33E. Sutok Island is at 75S, 60E (balloonist is there). Serpent's Hold is at 71S, 36E. Seek out the Gargoyle Hall of Knowledge at 65S, 16E. Get broken lens. You can talk to the Gargoyles here, but will have to kill a few (use Kill spell). Gypsy Zoltan sells reagents and tells about Silver Tablet needed to translate Book.

To use the Black Moon Stone for gate travel, consider "X" your position and use it on one of the positions in the following diagram (to go to 23, for example, move the cursor north two spaces, west two spaces and hit return.

23	24	09	10	11
22	07	01	08	12
21	04	X	03	13
20	05	02	06	14
19	18	17	16	15

Destinations of above:

- 1: Lord British's castle
- 2: Gargoyle land
- 3: nowhere
- 4: nowhere
- 5: Sacrificial stone south of the Tomb of Kings, 7N, 25E
- 6: Entrance to Codex at 64S, 74E
- 7: Dungeon dedicated to Mondain at 24N, 5W
- 8: Dungeon with Shrine of Passion at

23N, 56W

- 9: Portal at Brittany at 4S, 16E
- 10: Shrine of Compassion at 1N, 24E
- 11: Jhelom at 65S, 20W
- 12: Shrine of Valor at 72S, 19W
- 13: Yew
- 14: Shrine of Justice at 41N, 2W
- 15: Minoc at 37N, 35E
- 16: Shrine of Sacrifice at 25N, 65E
- 17: Trinsic at 53S, 10E
- 18: Shrine of Honor at 59S, 2E
- 19: Skara Brae at 18S, 29W
- 20: Shrine of Spirituality in outer space
- 21: New Magincia at 42S, 54E
- 22: Shrine of Humility at 71S, 66E (Island of Avatar)
- 23: Moonglow at 18S, 74E, near Penumbra's home
- 24: Shrine of Honesty at 13N, 78E

C. F. Shaffer

Buy a sextant from Ephemerides in Lycaenum (also ask about lenses. Get magic items from dead mage on fourth level of Swamp cave 0N, 38E. (If you bring the body back and have a Healer revive it, you're joined by an invisible horse!) More magic items are found on level four of Hefimus cave in Jhelom (past the Silver Serpent). Magical armor, etc., is on level four of the dragon's cave west of Trinsic (with lots of dragons!). The pirate's cave is found by going to the island south of New Magincia (about 58S, 51E) and killing the Hydra. Then dig with a shovel, SW of tree. Pirate treasure is filled with goodies, besides the Silver Tablet. Save game on the third level, since most exits to level four are one-way traps.

Dennis Ewell

To get the balloon, go to Sutek's Castle. Cast Telekinesis on the crank to lower the drawbridge. In the catacombs under the castle, there's a dead body with the plans for the balloon. Take them to Michelle in Minoc, then go to Charlotte in New Magincia and ask her to construct a silk bag. You'll have to go back and forth from Magincia to Paws several times, so you may want to bury some Moon Stones. Next you'll need some rope, which can be bought at Paws, and a cauldron, found either in the sewers under Britain or in the dungeon Covetous. Finally, use the plans. Once you have the balloon, use the red Moon Gate to the southwest, which takes you to the altar where the game began. There's a path to the northeast that ends up at the base of some mountains. Since the balloon can't fly over the snow-capped peaks, you'll have to navigate straight across the gray area. Do so by

casting Wind Change to the south before boarding the balloon. (You can't cast spells while riding it.) Once across the mountains, dismount and enter the building to the north. Talk to the Altar of Singularity (in center of room), which sends you on your final quests. Also in the room is the Book of Circles, whose significance I have not discovered. Ask Homer in Buccaneer's Den about the Tablet and the Thieve's Guild. A secret door behind the food shop at the den leads to Budo's house and the Buccaneer's Cave, which extends into the sewers under Britannia.

The **Vortex Cube** (needed on the final quest) is at Stonegate (the castle in the mountains due south of Minoc). Caution: don't put anything of value in the Cube.

Brian Riggs

Transylvania III

Graveyard: follow ghost, get skeleton, up, bury skeleton. **Chateau:** give rose to monster. **Museum:** say *ifsbllmft*. Take teeth out of vase before taking scroll. Take moths. **Mummy:** release moths. Answer to riddle: **shadow. Well:** put *sfnvt* in well. Say *sfnvt*. Type swim, or put *sfnvt* in bucket. Say *sfnvt*. **Gypsy Queen:** go to Chateau and drink yellow potion. Go to well. North. **By Mere:** play flute. Ride elk. **Dobrodes:** drop *sfnvt*. Go to castle (don't carry crown). Pet dog. Get dog with hobble. Say *sfnvt*. Go to Chateau. Give purple potion to dog.

Fred Philipp

Transylvania: Ye Bright, Shiny New Version

You can't just get open the coffin now, for a bar is needed. To get it, go north from the house and open the cellar door. Go down into the cellar and feel the wall; something will fall to the floor. Feel the floor and you'll find the bar.

Steve Romberger

Starflight 2

These systems contain colony worlds: 106, 14; 199, 82; 241, 36; 238, 53; 249, 1; 181, 197; 216, 45; 35, 105; 215, 44; 34, 71; 200, 108; 159, 30; 198, 104; 207, 37. System 132, 6 contains two colony worlds. A planetary Teleporter is sold in 241, 163.

Jeff Peedin

Code-name: ICEMAN

Repairing the Conveyor: First cycle equipment and examine conveyor. Go to Machinery Room. Open cabinet. Get cotter pin. Get cylinder (six inches). Walk to lathe. Use lathe. Set lathe (one inch). Turn on lathe. Walk to drill press. Use drill. Get bit (1/4-inch). Turn on drill. Walk to grinder. Use grinder. Walk all the way left into the Engine Room. Open

drawer. Get hammer. Return to Torpedo Room. Fix conveyor. Insert cotter pin. Cycle equipment. When torpedo is loaded, return to Engine Room and put hammer in drawer. Walk to Galley if you wish to gamble. Otherwise, head for the control panel and skip the next paragraph. **The Russian Destroyer:** At the second stop, the Captain tells you to accompany him topside. Follow him up the ladder. When he grumbles, talk. After the animated sequence, save and return to the control panel. Turn on silent running (Shift/F4); turn active sonar off (Shift/F3). Don't go faster than five knots. Dive to about 700 feet but don't fire a torpedo yet. Remain at 700 feet till you see a white line. (Numerous torpedoes will miss, so don't worry.) When the white line is about halfway across the screen, fire all your Harpoon missiles. Be sure to target first. Don't fire when enemy torpedoes are near. After sinking the destroyer (which may take more than a few attempts), fire decoys to get rid of their torpedoes, because the torpedoes will hit you unless you sink the destroyer.

From the forthcoming walkthru by Adam Fischbach

Centauri Alliance

On Andrini, don't miss the Oracle in the NW corner, level two. You can avoid a shocking ordeal on level three by visiting SW corner as soon as possible. After getting the palm on Andrini, activate it and report to HQ, who'll send you to Chronum. Go there right away, without stopping at the Academy in order to avoid missing a shot at another mission and more experience points. The key to solving **Zentek's Fortress** on Kevner's World is on sub-level one. Find skeleton in SE section and read clue carefully. Then go to sub-level two and apply word *qfovmujnbuf* to three clues on this level. Return to terminal on sub-level one and enter the three words. You'll get the password needed for access to sub-level three.

Jim DeMarco

Epsilon Indi: don't go to HQ here till your characters are highly trained and advanced. If you go too soon, there's no way back and if you manage to escape, you'll never be able to return to get the equipment and passwords there. If you can pass test in Guild in the east of Tau Eridani, opt for Piloting. Go to shipyards in central Veladron II and go to Arcturan shuttle. Go north to cockpit and activate. You'll crash on moon of Veladron and find entrance to outpost of the old civilization. Answer to riddle on second floor of Guild on **Tan Eridani** is **eight**. In NW of mine on Adrini Cluster, write *psbdmf* to gain access to Oracle.

Robert Breezeley

Conquests of Camelot

Camelot: Don't leave without rose, lodestone (Merlin's chest) and coins. After donating at Chapel, return to Treasurer for more coins. Travel to the following places in this order. **Glastonbury Tar:** Give one copper to Troll, one gold to Hunter. Get silk sleeve. Against the Black Knight, hold shield up and lance to right; when he's near, shift lance to left. Cut shackles with sword. Put Gawaine on horse. Give sleeve to hag. **Boars:** Let program move horse; when boar almost is at horse, hit space bar.

Fred Philipp

Riddles of the Stones—always useful, *ofu*; drive men mad, *hpme*; bright as diamonds, *tfb*; seen in water, *cmvf*; lovely and round, *qfbsm*; turn around once, *lfz*; have three lives, *xbufs*; go in circles, *mpeftupof*; you'll break me, *ifbsu*; when young, *xjof*; always hungry, *gjsf*; see nothing else, *njssps*; measured in hours, *candle*.

Eran Lahav

More riddles—full of holes, *tjfwf*; points that downward thrust, *jdjdmf*; dream or stamp feet, *nvtd*

Damien Harris

Future Wars

Inside Office Building: Examine trash can. Take paper bag. Walk into toilet. Operate cupboard. Take insecticide. Operate door to W. C. and take little red flag (on floor). Use *cvdlfu* on *tjol*, then exit toilet and walk to the door on the right. After you get the message "something is under your feet," operate carpet. Operate right door. After the boss leaves, use *cvdlfu* on left door. Operate right door. **Teleport Room:** Examine machine. Examine opening. Walk to machine and use *qbqfs* on opening. Operate green button. Operate red button. Take documents. Enter teleport tube.

From the forthcoming walkthru by Andrew Phang

Keys to the Keys

Each month one contributor to Keys get the game of his or her choice. The winner is randomly selected. Please send clues and tips to recent adventures—those not covered in previous issues, walkthroughs or *Quest for Clues*. [All clues become exclusive property of *QuestBusters*.] This month's winner is Fred Philipp.

To decode clues,
count one letter back.



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ST

Sell only, Corruption and Fish. \$12 @, both for \$22. Write 1st. Richard Goodkind, 4444 W Pine #413, St Louis MO 63108

Waiting for Duffy

Duffy's escaping from hell, so contact these people if you can help.

Death in Caribbean: what phrases for kill the bull, escape from zombie, lift the mist. How to move pyramid, what to do with swing seat? J Schmitz, POB 6484 Bakersfield CA 93306

Dragon War: where is Stone Hound, how to get Frog Boots, where is Dragon Plate & Vampire Lord? How to restore walls of Yellow Mud Toad city, get to Irkalla's Island, on island in Mystic Wood? Bard I: what's Mad One's name? Carlos Cross, 1400 Banana Rd Lot 126, Lakeland FL 33809

Ultima 2: where's Quicksword to kill Minax? Bob Kloak, 6311 North B, Springfield OR 97478

Krynn: is there anything of value in Sanction besides the eggs? Glenn Berryman, POB 348 McVeytown PA 17051

Dungeonquest: how to exit room with Nerd in it. Steven Swiatek, 266 Ashley St, Buffalo NY 14212

Ancient Land Ys: how to get through musical room of Daan Tower to get column without getting killed? What's Hammer used for? Matt Daubenspeck, Rte 2 Box 466, Tuttle OK 73089

Dark Heart of Uukrul: where's arming mechanism? Linda Defoor, 2880 Stiegler Rd, Medina OH 44256

Book of Adventure, vol. 1, by Kim Schuette, wanted! Mike Pepan, 4411 W Howie Place, Milwaukee WI 53216

Beyond Zork: where's Dome for the dispel, how to get past Corbies in gray field, get in house in the fields? Brad Nolan, 8 Longmeadow Rd, Lincoln RI 02865

Deathlord: need hints, tips, maps, etc. Wizardry 5: where is Bird Cage; how to get Staff of Air? Ayumu Kasai, 425 Greenglade Ave, Worthington OH 43085

Battletech: where's cave "southeast of hut"? T R Frechem, 441 Carlisle, Chesapeake VA 23321

Dungeon Master: have Fire Staff & Power Gem, killed dragon; how to finish game? T. P. Repke, 358 1/2 E Broadway, Owatonna MN 55060

Last Ninja: how to pass dragon on level 1? M & M: what's answer to riddle "King to King's L. 3"? Brandon Doan, 566 Raintree Cir, Coppell TX 75019

Ultima IV: where is Nostro, rune of entory for Shrine of Valor? What do spell kill, jinx and view have in common? What's reagent mixture for dispel, negate, open? Where's mandrake (exact directions)? What's pure axiom, combination for key of 3 parts, password needed in Codex? Chuck Pederson, R D 4 Box 296-C, Slippery Rock PA 16057

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