

alternate REALITY

NEWSLETTER

Volume I

Issue 1

Greetings Alternate Reality Adventurer:

The Alternate Reality Adventurers Club is now established and this is the first official newsletter. We'll be publishing on a bi-monthly basis from now on. Welcome to the Club!

In this, and all future issues of the Newsletter, we will follow a basic format. First, we'll give you some hints on the game that we have discovered or that have been passed along to us by other players. Second, we'll answer questions. We may not get to your particular question right away, but be patient (a virtue often rewarded in The City); the most frequently asked will be answered first. Third, we'll publish character descriptions sent in to us by players, such as the one in this issue from Gary Thrane of Midvale, Utah. This is your Newsletter, so let's hear from you!

First -- to business. Printed below is an artist's rendering of The City. This map is being printed on 8 1/2 x 11 parchment type paper and is available for \$1 (to cover postage and handling). If you would like one, please send cash, check or money order to



Datasoft, Dept. B, 19808 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311. No VISA or MasterCard, please. Don't forget to clearly PRINT your name and address and indicate that the money is for the Alternate Reality map.

More business: Since everyone likes to make a statement in the form of a T-shirt, Alternate Reality - The City T-shirts will be available, provided we get enough orders. They are Hanes, 50/50, and will be available in blue with yellow lettering. The cost is \$10 per shirt. Use the order form at the end of the Newsletter to place your order.

A reminder -- If any of your friends are playing Alternate Reality but haven't sent in their warranty cards yet, please tell them to get them to us right away -- they will automatically become members of the Club as soon as we receive their cards.

HINTS

Now for the good stuff. Many of you have been asking (begging?) for hints on playing Alternate Reality, and wanting to know what the object or goal of The City is. The main purpose is to make a complete map and build a high level character. In fact, building 2 or 3 characters wouldn't be a bad idea. When you get to The Dungeon, you will need a Level 10 character to solve all the mysteries and reach all the goals. The character you develop in The City can be used in all future installments of Alternate Reality. Many players are building both good and bad characters to see how different the game is under various circumstances.

The reason for the complete map is that once you begin playing the other episodes you WILL be able to go back to The City. In fact, if you acquire great treasure in The Dungeon and can't carry it all with you, you will have to re-enter The City and put it in the bank. Or you may be injured and will need a Healer in order to regain your health and be ready for further encounters in The Dungeon.

When mapping The City, look for vertical lines on the walls. The distance between these lines corresponds to one square on the 64 x 64 map grid provided with the game. Buy a Compass in any Shop to help figure out which direction you're going. It's easy to get turned around. Most people find that the best way to travel is by using the keyboard instead of the joystick, especially when turning right or left. Of course, in the Atari version, you'll still need the joystick for some things, such as leaving Banks.

Periodically, the goods for sale in the Shops, Smithies, and Taverns change. If you can't find what you want on your first visit, try again later.

To develop a "good" character, there are certain things to remember. Alternate Reality is a game with high moral standards. The computer is constantly checking your character against these established standards and awarding stat points that you never see, in accordance with your behavior. You should never Attack a Commoner or a Poor, unless he attacks you first. Don't trick or Charm them, either, unless they start the trouble.

NEVER Disengage when you meet a Thief or Mugger! If you have high Charm or Intelligence, you can try a Trick; but once that has failed, go ahead and do battle.

Another way to make the life forms in the game friendly to you is by buying a "round for the house" in the Tavern. But don't overdo this, or you could end up dying of alcohol poisoning!

When you overdo assaults on lesser life forms, you are more susceptible to attacks from Guards, Warriors, Noblemen, Wizards, etc. Never Attack these life forms unless you have a very high level character and some pretty good weapons. If your character is "evil", it's almost impossible to Ignore one of these fellows and get away with it.

Buy a Weapon, if you can afford it (you can bargain with the Smith), and Ready it as your Primary Weapon (don't wait for an Encounter to Ready your Weapon). Usually, you can afford a Dagger or Stiletto. If not, you'll have to depend on your Strength and Skill for awhile. Some Weapons are Magical, which gives you a definite advantage in battle.

Potions are very useful or very deadly. Examine, Sip, Taste are simply ways of identifying a Potion. The only way to get its benefits is to Quaff it ("Quaff" means to "drink deeply"). You can categorize the Potions by their color and taste. Of course, it takes a lot of experience with them before you know which Potion types are safe.

Once you have a little bit of experience, try going out at night. Skeletons, Giant Rats, and the like are okay to Attack and useful for developing a higher level character. Also, some of the best Treasures are found at night. Be careful, though, you can get Diseased from rat bites or mold spores.

If you have a lot of money, it's a good idea to spread it around. Put some in more than one Bank account and carry some with you. If you have too much in one place, the computer reads you as a "greedy" sort and will penalize you (Bank failures, robbery, etc.). The Banks do offer different prices for jewels and gems. Sometimes one bank will tell you something is worthless, but another Bank will give you a decent price for the item.

Eating and drinking will not cause disease, however, you can become diseased from contact with Brown Mold, Giant Rats, Black Slime, and some other creatures. Your only options, then, are to find a Potion that will heal your ailment or go to a Healer. There are no shortcuts to the Healers. The Clarity and Sight the Healers offer is to cure Delusions.

There's no need to hurry through The City. You can take all the time you need to explore and map. Pause the game while thinking or drawing on your map.

A word of caution: Being an aggressive player is fine, but if you're overly aggressive when you first begin playing, you won't get very far. Remember, you enter The City with fairly low stats and are in no position to attack everything in sight and expect to live. Use caution and common sense during Encounters, because killing a Nobleman or Pauper isn't going to win you any friends.

Be sure to always make a back-up of your character disk. That way, if your Level 9 character dies, you can still play with it. **Any** fast copy program for your computer will work for making these back-ups.

The documentation says there are 14 Guilds in The City -- we goofed -- there are only 12. Sorry 'bout that.

Attention Atari Owners: If you're diseased when you load your game, you have a defective disk. Send your game disks with your name and address and the reason for returning them to: Datasoft, Dept. B, 19808 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311. We'll recut your disks at no charge.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Can I join a Guild?

A. Not in The City, 8-bit versions (Atari, Apple II and Commodore 64/128). The 16-bit computer versions (IBM PC/PC Jr., Atari 520 ST, and Macintosh) will allow you to join Guilds, but beware of the consequences.

Q. Define Charm.

A. Charm is defined as a technique of distracting the life forms you encounter in The City. If you use Charm on an innocent or good life form and then kill him, you will be regarded as a more evil character than if you had just killed him. Charming an evil life form will not have any negative influence on your character.

Q. How can I tell which life forms I encounter are good?

A. The music that accompanies each life form provides you with clues to his personality. The more ominous the music, the more evil an adversary.

Q. What happens when you kill an "Arch Mage"?

A. The Arch Mage is a lawful life form and killing him will add credence to the other city inhabitants' belief that you are evil and not to be trusted.

Q. Can I cast spells in The City?

A. No. See the first question for the explanation.

Q. Why is the Tower Shield so powerful?

A. Because it covers your entire body.

Q. What criteria determine personality?

A. All of your stats plus the interaction and decisions in playing. If you constantly attack and kill good life forms you will be known as an evil character.

Q. Can you alter the personality of your character once you have killed a number of "good" or "innocent" people?

A. Yes, but only very slowly. If you stop killing the good or innocent people you will gradually lessen your reputation as an evil character.

Q. What is wisdom good for?

A. Wisdom helps determine the value of various weapons and potions.

Q. How many character levels are there?

A. An infinite number. However, the higher your character, the more experience points required. You must double your experience points for each higher character level.

Q. What is the object of The City?

A. To develop your character and prepare for the journey into The Dungeon. The City will also be of value to you as you enter The Wilderness, Arena, or Palace to rest or revive your character for the arduous trips he must take.

Q. Can you give money to Paupers?

A. No - you will need all of your money to continue your quest.

Q. Will a map of The City be available?

A. See previous information on first page of the Newsletter.

Q. Is it necessary to eat a certain amount of food each day?

A. Yes, to maintain strength. You must also seek water and rest on a regular basis.

Q. Can I enter the area southeast of the Arena?

A. Not yet. This area can only be entered through The Arena, which will be available as a later episode of Alternate Reality.

BEWARE OF TRAPS From the Journal of Togar

It was nighttime. I was looking for a couple of Imps or Gremlins to dispatch, as they are creatures of evil and don't belong in a City where men dwell. I was walking through the southeast quadrant of town, around 48 East and 7 North (the left bottom square of the map is 1 East, 1 North), when I saw a young fighter running for his life. He turned and looked over his shoulder, running east, when he hit a wall and passed through it.

I knew this area pretty well from my first month in The City, but had never checked that particular wall for secret doors.

I stood around for a while, waiting for the fighter to come out. The Ghoul that was chasing him arrived on the scene. I hid in the shadows, sword ready, as the Ghoul searched around, scenting the air like a bloodhound. I jumped out, taking the foul creature by surprise. My convictions against outright bloodshed do not extend to devil spawn such as this. My sword bit into his thick hide before he knew what hit him. The fighter in the Enclosed Area still hadn't come out, but that was his affair. He'd leave when he felt it was safe.

I gathered up the Ghoul's meager treasure and walked over to the Flaming Dragon to see if they had any Water Flasks. I sat down at the bar beside a man in transparent armor that glinted like fine crystal. You know what I mean - the 24% lead stuff that women collect back on Earth. The man was talking with the bartender, but I could tell he was sizing me up to see if I would be a match for him in combat.

I emptied my coin bag onto the bar, all twenty-seven coppers of it, and bought him a drink. He clapped me on the back and introduced himself as Fargen. I didn't much like his manner. The only thing we had in common was that we were both Earthers; but in a City like this, that was enough. We talked about our adventures awhile and I told him about the Enclosed Area I had just discovered. He chuckled and called me a fool. I nearly hit him, but held back when he said I should be happy I didn't follow the fighter.

"Those who go in, never come out," he explained. He related a similar tale about another Enclosed Area at 42 East, 5 North. I shivered. It could've been me that found those death traps by accident!

I pulled out my worn and tattered map and Fargen showed me where the second trap was. I marked a one-way secret door on the west wall of the square at 48 East, 7 North, and on the east wall of 42 East, 5 North. I thanked Fargen and he replied, "That's okay; I'm sure we'll bump into each other again."

I wonder how he meant that?

TOGAR is a "Mr. Nice Guy" 10th Level character. But don't push him too far! He carries a Longsword and Battle Hammer and his armour is Ring Mail. His Stats are: Stamina, 22; Charm, 26; Strength, 36; Intelligence, 23; Wisdom, 18; Skill, 23.

FARGEN is a 9th Level evil character, wears Crystal Plate armour and does battle with a Longsword and Magical Battle Hammer. His Stats are: Stamina, 23; Charm, 22; Strength, 25; Intelligence, 27; Wisdom, 19; Skill, 27.

As you have all realized by now, Alternate Reality is a very unique game. It is the first of its kind we have produced, and from the response we've had, it won't be the last. We realize, though, that not everyone enjoys playing this type of game all the time, and want you to be aware of the other games we produce.

If you enjoy arcade style games, we have Pac-Man, Pole Position, Mr. Do! and Dig Dug. For fans of the action/adventure/strategy type games, you might want to try your hand at Bruce Lee, Conan, The Goonies or Zorro.

Coming up in the next few months are four new products from Datasoft: The NeverEnding Story, a text-graphics adventure based on the book and film; Mind Pursuit, a three-level test of your knowledge of facts and trivia, can be played as text only or by using the on-screen game board option; Crosscheck, a combination crossword and strategy word game; and 221 B Baker Street, an animated graphics and text game that challenges you to solve 30 of Sherlock Holmes' most intriguing cases.

Please send me _____ Alternate Reality-The City T-Shirts at \$10 per shirt. I have enclosed \$_____ to cover the cost. (California residents add \$.65 per shirt to cover sales tax. Check or money order only, please.

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