



QuestBusters™



The Adventurers' Journal
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Quest of the Month

A wicked RPG: The Magic Candle

By Shay Addams

Eating orc with a fork—that's as good as it gets out on the open range in Deruvia, where I've spent the past few weeks battling more of those deadly little devils than in any fantasy land since *Ultima II's* Sosaria. Though a cursory glance at the screen shots on the package might at first lead you to deem this just another clone, *Magic Candle* contributes numerous innovations to the computer RPG, doing so in an imaginative setting and story. The insightful game design shows the author's visions owe as much to his experience as an adventurer as they do to his role as a designer.

What? No Evil Wizard?

Ali N. Atabek, who did *Rings of Zilfin* in 1986, makes a far more impressive showing in this six-character quest. Summoned to King Rebnard's castle, you're informed that for centuries the demon Dreax had been securely locked away in a Magic Candle kept aflame by the Four and Forty Guardians. The Guardians have vanished, the Candle is burning low and Dreax will escape unless you can find a way to prevent this catastrophe. A time limit is in effect, and one window tells the number of days left before the Candle burns down. If playing the easy version, you have 1,000 days (800 for the intermediate level setting, 600 for difficult) to unravel the riddle of the Candle.

King Rebnard doesn't have a clue as to how this might be accomplished, but he'll at least donate some gold, food and other goods to your party. There are lots of mini-quests to complete, but these are not assigned as formal missions by anyone. You run across clues suggesting things you might do, such as seeking the Hammer of Thorin in Marmaris.

Meet the Party (Animals)

This is your basic Dwarf, Human, Halfling and Elf society, and there are only five skills. In addition to the usual weapon skills, however, Atabek thoughtfully gave us a Learning Skill that enables fighter types to learn faster at combat schools, and cuts the time magic users need to memorize spells. Skills such as swordfighting and magic are improved with use as well as by accumulating experience points.

Your pre-rolled character is called Lukas, but you can change his name. In the Knight's Room of the Castle, 25 more volunteers await your selection. Their attributes, weapons, magic books and brief bios are described in the manual, and you can also check out onscreen stats at any time.



IBM EGA/Tandy version

While some people probably prefer more input in character creation, I like this style of party creation: you get to make key decisions about the party's composition without spending time rolling up (and rerolling up) every single character. And your party is ready to rock—fully stocked with weapons, armor, spells, weapons and other necessary gear. That means you spend less time building up hardware in the early stages.

There are no character levels as such, so you don't have to keep returning to a Guild. Traits such as Strength are boosted by first awakening the appropriate god (there are eight), who increases your potential. Then you've got to drink from

dungeon fountains to elevate the trait's actual rating.

One thing to work on immediately is Charisma. I've never seen a game in which Charisma is so important at the outset. You can't enter some rooms or talk with certain people until your Charisma is high enough—and must travel quite a distance to do so.

There are only a dozen kinds of swords, axes and bows, and five types of armor. The interesting thing is that weapons wear down in battle. A weapon starts at 00 points for Wear and Tear, which, as it gets worn down in battle, goes up to 99—and at this point becomes useless. To keep it sharp, a sword must be "Fixed" in camp.

Continued on page ten

Type: Fantasy RPG
Systems: Apple (64K), C 64, IBM (256K required, EGA, CGA, Tandy graphics, hard drive supported)
Version Reviewed: Apple (version 1.5)

Would You Believe...?

According to our new "undercover editor," a well-known designer (who prefers not to be named at this time) is writing an adventure game version of *The Satanic Verses*, to be published by a company that also prefers not to be named at this time, and distributed by a distributor that prefers not to be named at this time. In a related story, we hear Infocom acquired the computer game rights to Roy Orbison's last album, *Mystery Girl*, and will make it into a graphic adventure—*The Orb of Orbison*. (It's a little known fact that Orbison was among the world's most devoted adventurer gamers—the only reason he wore such thick glasses was because he spend so much time staring at the monitor while lost in a maze.) Interplay just announced they'll convert *Neuromancer* for the Cray—"the next big game machine," according to Brian Fargo. And Jon van Caneghem plans to team up with the author of *Future Magic* to produce *Future Might and Magic*.



Adventure Hotline



Letters
to the
Editor



New Quests

Project Firestart, which looks like it was inspired by the film *Aliens*, is a new RPG from Dynamix (distributed by EA) for the C 64. Based on the Agatha Christie series, *The Scoop* is out for the IBM and Apple (from Spinnaker). *Lancelot* is a graphic adventure with over 60,000 words of text that tells a three-part saga in which you seek the Holy Grail (IBM, ST, Amiga, Mac). It's from Datasoft, as is *Time and Magik*, a set of three graphic adventures with time travel themes. Both games feature impressive digitized graphics.

Conversions

Dondra should have shipped by now for the C 64 and GS. (Still no word on game two in Sean Barger's *QuestMaster* series.) Baudville's *Dream Zone* is now available for the Amiga and IBM. The Amiga and GS versions of *DungeonMaster* are out. The GS version includes a new dungeon designed for kids. Mac and IBM versions are next.

Coming Soon:

Star Saga Two should be ready for the GS and IBM this summer (we'll review the first game next month). *DungeonMaster II*, erroneously reported as being released in January, has *not* been released for the ST, and FTL has not set a date.

Going for the Gold: Bestselling Adventures of 1988

King's Quest IV went gold (100,000 copies) in the first two weeks. Many dealers are calling *Pool of Radiance* the bestselling C 64 game of all time, and it should go gold with the IBM version. And *Ultima IV* has already sold over 250,000 copies.

New Features

We've added two new features. Each month, one game will be recommended as the Quest of the Month—this will usually be the cover review. And to further clarify the reviews, the specs box will state which version was reviewed (unless the game is currently available for a single system).

Business News

Datasoft was recently acquired by Software Toolworks, and all products will be distributed by Electronic Arts. Chris Earhardt left Infocom for Level Systems.

Six Free Issues of QB!

Do you know anyone else on the entire planet who plays adventures? Get them to subscribe to QB—and mention your name when they do—and we'll add six free issues to your sub (four if it's First Class or Canadian, two for overseas.) You can even give someone a gift subscription and get the free issues (but you can't give a gift sub to yourself or a household member). And thanks to everyone who has already done so.

Contest Winners

This winner of this month's Random Drawing is Walter Compton. Fred Andoli won the Keys to the Kingdoms contest, and will also get the game of his choice.

Secret Contest

Our all-new Secret Contest is a simple one: all you have to do is tell us the question, and you'll win the game of your choice. That's right—you don't even have to give the question's correct answer! Contest expires June 5, 1989. Send entries to Secret Contest, c/o QB.

The Key Club

If you need help on an older game and can't stand waiting for Duffy, request a copy of the Key Club list. It gives names and addresses of QBers who will answer questions of specific games. Write to Brian Smith, 3035 Montego, Plano TX 75023 and send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you want to add your name to the Key Club—and can help with games released in the past year—Brian, the Official Keeper of the Keys—will be glad to add your name to the list.

Writing and Calling

If sending in stuff for more than one department (Duffy, Swap, Keys, etc.), put each on a separate sheet of paper—and put your name and address on each one (the reason Fred Johnson didn't get a by-line for his Demon's Winter clues in the December issue). We rarely reply to mail but will almost always do so if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. A few resourceful subscribers have discovered the QB phone number. This is just a reminder that we don't give out clues by phone. But call if you're having problems with your sub (and, of course, can track down that elusive number!).

Dear QuestBusters:

Sega recently released a few adventure games for its videogame system. Do you plan to review any?

Joseph M. Smith

Dear QuestBusters:

Have you ever considered doing a monthly Nintendo/Sega column?

Steve Kempton

Dear QuestBusters:

...some of them are actually better than many computer role-playing games. Do you plan to start reviewing more of them?

Susan Jenkins

We'll be covering adventure-style videogames (like Zelda) for the Sega, Nintendo and other systems, but won't devote as much space to these reviews. Maybe a column, or we might combine several reviews into a longer piece. (Hopefully the videogame industry won't vanish, as it did just a few years ago, before our next issue!) And if it's a matter of space, we'll never cut a computer game review to make room for videogame coverage.

Dear QuestBusters:

Lately I've had trouble sleeping. Can you recommend a good potion?

Jason Watts

Yes--Deathlord.

QuestBusters™

The Adventurers' Journal

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Police Quest II: The Vengeance

By Stephen King

Well Sonny, things were really starting to come together for you. First you re-discovered love with your high school sweetheart Marie (currently retired from her "profession" in *Police Quest I*). Then came the promotion to homicide, and to top it all off, that scum-sucker Jessie Bains—AKA The Death Angel—is currently cooling his heels in a maximum security cell.

Don't get too cocky though, because situations tend to change fast. If you don't keep your eye on things, Bains might be sent back to the city jail pending an appeal. And if you don't stay on your toes, he might even kidnap a guard at knife-point and escape. What? It's already happened, you say? Uh oh...

Do Not Pass Go, Do Not Even Try to Collect \$200

Police Quest II takes up where the first game ended. A message alerts you that Bains has escaped jail and your Captain has assigned you to investigate. Together with your chain-smoking partner, Keith, you drive to the jail to look at Bain's file, pick up a current mug shot and get a detailed account of the escape.

It doesn't take long to find that Bains has stolen the kidnapped guard's car and abandoned it at a local shopping mall, where he picked up a less conspicuous vehicle. From here, The Death Angel leads you on a merry chase that includes an underwater search for clues, the hijacking of an airline flight and a grand confrontation with the man himself, deep in the picturesque sewers of Steelton.

Sonny Today, Hot Tamale

The first thing everyone wonders about a sequel is how it compares to the original. In this case, exceptionally well. Although other games have been based on law enforcement, none has approached the realism of the original *Police Quest*. *The Vengeance* carries on with the same

gritty feel, yet doesn't beat the player to death with mundane details like eating, sleeping and other assorted trivia common to such games.

Since you are no longer a patrol officer, the overhead map has been eliminated. Driving is now an automated task seen from a first-person perspective. Time spent in the patrol car is the one thing that can get tedious about the game if you let it [but at least you don't have to drive the animated car and crash into a building every other block].

The animation of the scanner and the smoke from Keith's everpresent cigarette are excellent, and the "on the road" theme song is great, but these sequences tend to be a bit long. A good way to keep them short as possible is to hit the RETURN key every time there is radio traffic; the time spent enroute then becomes much easier to bear.

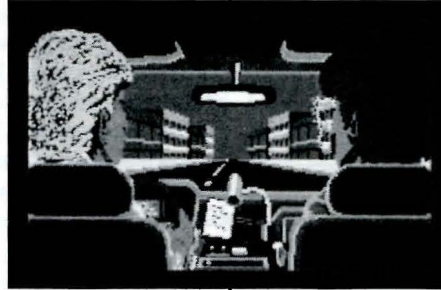
Target Shooting and Scuba Diving

The poker game from *Police Quest I* was replaced with a sequence at the target range where you shoot at a standard police-style silhouette target and adjust your sights between rounds. With no way to tell which direction or how much to turn the screws, this seemed difficult at first. But it quickly became apparent that while you're adjusting the sight, the joystick (or arrows) should be pushed in the direction you want the bullets to move. If you are shooting too low and leaning to the left, just move the joystick up slightly and right a bit. A little adjustment goes a long way with a gunsight, so be careful you don't overdo it.

The gun becomes very important to you in the later stages of the game, so make sure you get the sight adjusted as accurately as possible. Don't worry, for with a small bit of practice it becomes easy to manage.

In one of the most unique sequences, a police diver is called in to help investigate a crime scene. Being a firm believer in the "buddy system," he requires you to

go with him. There are three screens of the lake bottom at Cotton Cove, each covered with debris among the algae and other plants. A single clue lies buried in the mud at each place, so it's up to you to swim over curious looking items and survey the bottom. It is interesting to note that there is even an eastward current caused by the waterfall on the far left screen. Because of this, you can swiftly move to the right, while moving back to the left again takes more effort.



Just the Facts, Ma'am

Continuing in the tradition of *Police Quest I*, the sequel is heavy on procedure and investigation [if it were a crime novel, this style would be called a procedural]. The procedure part is a bit more forgiving than in the first game. For instance, you no longer have to walk around your car to check the tires every time you leave the parking lot.

But the detective work is quite a bit more intense. It's your job to cart around your trusty field investigation kit and get blood samples, dust for fingerprints, take pictures of the crime scene, and even make a plaster cast of a footprint if need

Continued on page 11

Type: Animated Adventure
Systems: ST, IBM (512K required, Turbo PC with least 8 MHz and a hard drive strongly recommended; VGA, EGA, Tandy, Hercules, Tandy and two CGA modes supported)
Planned Conversions: Apple (128K), Amiga, Macintosh, GS
Version Reviewed: IBM

Inventory

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Heroes of the Lance: a D & D Action/Adventure

By Stephen King

Heroes of the Lance is the first action adventure in the line of computer games produced by SSI in collaboration with TSR, the *Dungeons & Dragons* people. *Lance* is set on the world of Krynn and is based on the first module of the *Dragonlance* saga, *The Dragons of Despair*. SSI plans more in this series, with *Hillsfar* due soon if not out already.

You control a party of eight pre-rolled characters—the Companions of the Lance—whose goal is to search the ruins of the temple of Xak Tsaroth for the Disks of Mishakal, which will revive belief in the old gods. The Companions are controlled via joystick or keyboard, with the keypad numbers corresponding to the joystick directions. Moving the stick left or right sends the central character in that direction. Leaning it upward in the direction you're moving causes him to run, and pressing the button while running will make the character leap. If a door is accessible, pushing the stick up or down sends the party through it.

Combat occurs in either close quarters or ranged. If you've previously selected your central character's distance weapon, you can choose ranged combat by pressing down on the button with an enemy some distance from you. Otherwise you'll enter close combat mode as soon as he is near enough.

May I See a Menu, Please?

By pressing the space bar you can call up a menu that allows you to change the central character of your party to another one who is perhaps more rested, or maybe a better match for the current opponent. Keep in mind that if you plan on using Clerical spells, Goldmoon must be one of your first four party members. Likewise, if you want to use Wizard's magic, Raistlin Majere must be in this group.

The menu is also used to pick up or drop items, to use an item one of the party has in his pack, to give an item to another party member, to save and restore the game, to check the current score, or to cast one of the various spells.

How Do You Spell Relief?

As is usually the case in *D & D* games,

the bulk of the Clerical spells are protective ones like healing, raising the dead or shielding your party from the acid breath of a dragon. This last is somewhat of a mixed blessing. While it does a good job of protecting you from terminal halitosis, it also limits your party's effectiveness in combat. Wizard spells are generally for attacking or restraining an opponent.

They work well on the other nasty creatures, but for some reason I was not able to make any of them work on the black hatchling dragons.

There are several types of creatures—all of them evil, wicked, mean, bad or nasty: enemy humans, Baaz Draconians (a small type of lizard man), Giant Spiders, Trolls, Spectres, Wraiths, Bozak Draconians (slightly larger than their cousins, they carry a contingent of offensive spells),

Gully Dwarves, Hatchling black dragons and finally, Khisanth—the large black dragon that guards the disks of Mishakal.

There are also several potions, scrolls, wands, rings and other miscellaneous material such as gemstones, gold ingots and treasure. Many of these are guarded by denizens of Xak Tsaroth. If you see one just lying there in a manner that seems almost too good to be true, be advised that it probably is. You'll also have to dodge hidden traps, stone slabs and rocks that can fall from the ceiling at a moment's notice.

Lights, Camera, Action/Adventure!

This game profits from some really beautiful graphics. In a block that indicates the marching order near the bottom of the screen, each of the eight Companions is displayed. The current group leader is shown in the center of the screen in full living color. All actions are depicted through the group leader. When you're moving, the ruins of Xak Tsaroth scroll past in the background.

From time to time you will walk past a doorway to another area. When this happens, one or more compass points on the lower left of the screen light up to let you know in which directions you can move.

If a monster lurks nearby, you'll see it

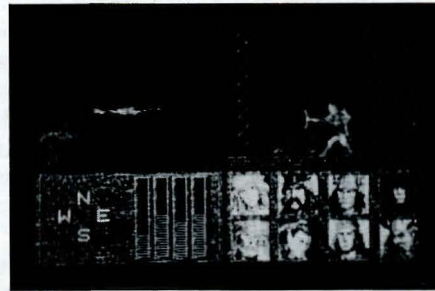
advancing toward your party. Monsters tend to stay in certain areas. If you walk away from one, it won't follow you. But upon returning, you'll find it there waiting to bash in your head (or your kneecap, if attacked by dwarves).

When a party member uses his ranged weapon, it flies across the screen very nicely. Your dwarf can pitch one of his

battle axes at an opponent. Two party members can be seen putting away their swords to draw a bow, while two more use a spear and a sling.

Sound was included, but sparsely. A one-voice theme song plays

IBM version



when the game first starts. You can also hear the clomping footsteps of an advancing monster. There are a couple of "all purpose" crashing sounds related to combat. You hear these when you swing your sword, when you set off a trap, or get killed.

There is a diminished version of this if you fire an arrow. This was a bit disappointing for me. Given the highly realistic graphics, I thought some clanging swords and a few grunts similar to those in *Battle Chess* would have spiced up the game.

Copy protection is of the key word variety that has become so popular in recent months. When you run the game, you're asked to enter the Constitution rating of a party member from the biography section in the middle of the owners' manual. Separate packages contain either three 5.25" or two 3.5" disks in the IBM version.

Conclusions: *Heroes of the Lance* was not really my type of game, but I have no doubt that it will find its audience. The graphics are stunning, and it does stick as closely as a computer can to the *AD & D* rules. If you prefer a real-time action adventure RPG to the more cerebral types like *Ultima* or *Phantasie*, give this one a try—it may be perfect for you.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Key Word

Price: C 64, \$29.95; others, \$39.95

Company: SSI/Electronic Arts



Deja Vu II: Lost in Las Vegas

By Steven Payne

You're in big trouble, pal! Remember the time when you woke up in the bathroom of that sleazy Chi-town bar with no memory and found out you'd been framed for Joey Siegel's murder? Thought you could rest easy after clearing your name? Not a chance! Seems Joey, who was working for Las Vegas mobster Tony Malone, left \$112,000 unaccounted for upon his...er...demise. Now Malone wants his money and has you figured as the thief. He's sent several of his...er...friends to "persuade" you to come up with the dough—"or else."

Deja Vu II is a sequel to *Deja Vu: A Nightmare Comes True*, the first entry in ICOM Simulations' award-winning series of graphic adventures (which includes *Uninvited* and *Shadowgate*). Once again you play former pugilist and second-rate detective Ace Harding. And once again you start off in a bathroom.

This time you've been kidnapped by Malone's thugs, brought to his hotel/casino in Vegas, grilled, beat up, tossed in a bathtub and given a deadline of seven days to hand over the missing funds. Just to keep you on your toes, one of Malone's boys follows you throughout the game, keeping an eye on your actions and popping up every now and then with grim warnings to remind you how little time is left.

The interface will be familiar from all the other ICOM adventures. Onscreen you have separate windows for graphics, text, exits, commands, "self" and inventory. The command window offers eight options (examine, operate, open, close, go, hit, speak and consume) while the "exits" window shows all currently possible (and some impossible) ways of leaving your location. Most items shown in the graphics window are really "there" and can be manipulated with the mouse by pointing, clicking, dragging and so on. Containers of various kinds can be selected and "opened," bringing up a new window that shows their contents. (Anyone remember "opening" the corpse of Joey Siegel in the original *Deja Vu*?)

To get dressed in the opening scene, for example, you can select the pair of pants, drag them to your inventory window and then "operate" them on yourself.

Select and "open" the pants to find your wallet; "open" the wallet and you'll find some important papers. "Operate" the cold tap on itself to run some water in the sink. "Hit" the mirror for the thrilling sound of shattering glass.

There are also plenty of shortcuts. Double-clicking on most objects will give you a description of them. One double-

click on an unlocked door (or the corresponding square in the exit window) opens it, and a second double click takes you through it.

Don't Forget Your Pants!

Make sure you take the pants, trenchcoat

and cigar ring from the hotel room when you leave, because it locks behind you and you'll need the items later. Stop first to admire the artwork in casino lobby, which may give you an important hint on how to win the game. Then head for the blackjack tables and look for an old friend (you may have to prod his memory).

Here, for the first time, you get to see the major enhancement in this second *Deja Vu* installment: the authors have included some of clever animation found in *Uninvited* and *Shadowgate*. The dealer may wink at you before he lays down the cards; later on, you'll watch the trains arrive, gaze at passing scenery through the train window, or see birds flying across the desert.

Speaking of trains, once you've won enough money at the gambling tables you should head directly for the station and catch a ride back to your old haunts. In fact, a better subtitle for this game might have been "A Tale of Two Cities," since you spend almost as much time in Chicago as in Las Vegas.

Back in the Windy City, you'll return to the scene of the crime (changed in subtle ways since the first *Deja Vu*) and visit a number of new locations as well.

This time your taxi driver is deaf, so you'll need written addresses to get where you want to go. Little by little you'll find evidence connecting the lost money with someone back in Las Vegas, where you

must return for the final showdown. You won't end up any richer, but with luck and a clever ruse you may at least escape with your life (and if your printer is on when you finish the game, you'll have something to show for all your "work").

You'll find the same kind of tongue-in-cheek "software noire" humor as in the original *Deja Vu*, and even some of the same characters and locations. The animation and more extensive use of sounds are major improvements, as is the fact that you die less frequently. The game seems easier than the original *Deja Vu*, though perhaps only because I've had more practice since then.

Red Herrings to Go

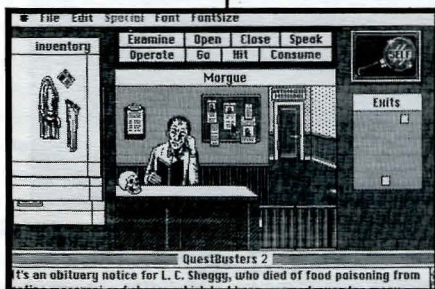
There are only a few really difficult puzzles, the worst coming at the end as you try to figure out how to misdirect your enemies. As before, there is an overabundance of red herrings: many exits that can never really be used and dozens of objects that have no purpose except to clutter up your inventory. There's no obvious reason, either, why some doors open with keys, others need to be jimmied (and only with the penknife) and still others never open at all. I finished the game without ever really figuring out where the money was or why certain crucial objects (such as Sugar Shack's card) ended up where I found them.

As in all the ICOM games, there is a wonderful "About..." sequence, though its 51K size makes me wonder if the disk space might have been put to better use. My biggest complaint, however, is that some commands ("speak" and "consume," for example) seemed totally unnecessary to complete the game (and

"hit" is only used in a specialized sense, for blackjack). If the programmers aren't going to let you use these commands, why not redo the command menu and replace them with other op-

tions that are necessary?

Deja Vu II comes on a single copy-protected disk. You can transfer the entire contents to a hard disk, but if you play from the hard disk you will be asked to insert the master floppy for verification purposes from time to time. As before, the number of games you can save is lim-



Type: Graphic Adventure
Systems: Macintosh (512Ke or better required; supports color on Mac II), Amiga, ST
Planned Conversions: GS (May), IBM (April)
Version Reviewed: Macintosh

Sorcerer Lord

By Ken St. André

Who the barbecued babel fish is PSS—and where do they get their game designers? [PSS, it turns out, is a line of games recently bought up by Datasoft.] The February *QB* compared *Sorcerer Lord* to *Defender of the Crown*, but it's more like Chris Crawford's classic, *Eastern Front*—a swords and sorcery wargame that unfolds on a hex-grid map with beautiful graphics but no play balance. The program is ornately packaged, but why doesn't PSS credit its designers and programmers by name? I'd really like to know who ruined what should have been a terrific game.

The story is straight out of Tolkien: an evil demigod called the Shadowlord has bred a race of goblins and plans to conquer the world with them. It's a beautiful world of lakes, mountains, forests, desert, plains and even ice fields. Men and Elves share this world and must defend it against the Shadowlord's goblins. And you, representing the Forces of Good, don't have much of a chance.

I've been playing it for a month on my Amiga. It's very playable, but I defy anyone to win a game on the expert or advanced level.

The only difference is the number of troops the computer forces get. At the beginner level you're outnumbered about five to one; experts are outnumbered fifteen to one, and advanced players will buck odds of thirty to one.

Of course, sheer numbers aren't enough to daunt any true computer gamer—we're used to overcoming incredible odds. But though a designer usually gives the player some sort of advantage, don't look for one here. The enemy has more troops, can fight better and move faster (even over water), and their wizard leaders are quite likely to get better magical recruits than do yours.

Except for zones of control, *Sorcerer Lord* applies all the standard wargaming conventions. Covering six screens, the non-scrolling mapboard is divided into invisible hexes for movement. Units can't move north or south, but the other six compass directions are allowed. Riders, Warriors, Elves, Barbarians, Mountainmen and more—each type of troop unit has its own advantages and disadvantages, which are, however, truly

minute and don't compensate for the overwhelming odds.

Every troop unit that's moving must have a leader, which all have names and ratings in Leadership, Sorcery, Fatigue and Movement. A garrison force without a leader can defend its fortress, but cannot attack independently. You can stack units to amass greater numbers, and armies (while in a fortress) may be combined under a single leader to create bigger or smaller tactical units.

But in fact, only the leader counters have the advantage. You can change Savantor desert Barbarians into forest-running Elves by merely dumping the troops into a garrison, then recruiting them into a new leader's army. While this allows you to reorganize your troops with a certain flexibility, it totally violates the reality of the world of Galanor. This holds true for the Forces of Evil, always played by the computer (so there's no two-player option).

Fortresses, Citadels, Rune Rings—the mapboard is littered with strategic objectives. The good guys have four nations and four separate Citadels, but the only one that really matters

is Yarthros in the far southeast: if the Shadowlord's forces capture it, you lose the game. His Citadel is in the far northwest, and you must capture it to win.

Fortresses and Rune Rings serve as minor targets for the invading goblins. Too bad they have no greater function. Having troops in a fortress gives no protection I could see. If you're facing odds of more than two to one, you may as well resign yourself to getting wiped out—no matter where you are.

Rune Rings supposedly act as a source of magic. Ignoring for a moment the fact that magic is almost totally useless in this game, one would think that possession of these Rings might make a difference. If the Ring belongs to Galanor, it should aid only Galanorians, and vice versa. But no, Rune Rings are impartial and are actually more likely to help the bad guys than the good guys, especially if the numbers are in their favor (as is usually the case).

According to the manual, there are five grades of magic: from Weak through Devastating. Weak is described as having

the weather in your favor, while Devastating means a host of demons fights on your side. These are merely verbal descriptions, however, for most of the time the magic used by both sides turns out Weak and therefore balances out. Only numbers matter. Sometimes the dice fall in your favor, and you'll get Devastating magic against the enemy's Mild.

But does it really matter? No! Your so-called "host of demons" can't kill anyone if you're outnumbered more than five to one. The five levels of magic act as modifiers to the number of casualties your forces can inflict. If you can't kill

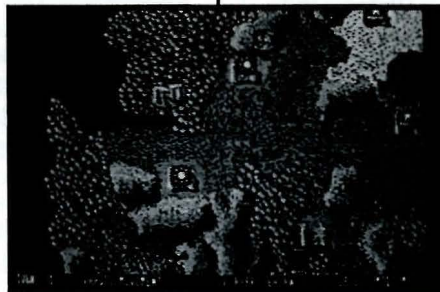
anyone, neither can your demons.

A better method, and one that might have made the advanced games winnable, would have been for the magic to slay an arbitrary percentage of the enemy. Thus, if you had to fight at fifty to one odds, you could still do some damage instead of just being obliterated.

Considering how badly you're outnumbered, it's a shame this game is nothing more than a variation on capture the flag. You have four Citadels and four great leaders. One would think that as long as any of them are still in your possession or alive, you wouldn't be defeated. But, for no reason given in the rules, it's all over if the Yarthros Citadel falls.

The evil Shadowlord is supposed to wait in his own Citadel for his armies to triumph. I've attacked that Citadel—conquered it at the beginning level. And there is no Shadowlord character who corresponds to your own leaders. How awesome *Sorcerer Lord* could have been if there really was a Shadowlord leader, a sorcerer supreme who always casts Devastating magic in combat, one whose death automatically grants you victory. It's just lousy design, friends. From what I've seen, the programmers are fully competent.

Another major flaw is that the designer didn't give the player any kind of big payoff or finalé at the end. Regardless of who wins, the screen turns black and the winner gets a victory message. *Boring!* Considering that the game was done on an Amiga, it's simply a failure of imagination to cop out with a simple message. A Shadowlord victory, for example, could have treated us to an insane-looking sor-



Type: Fantasy Wargame
Systems: Amiga, ST, IBM (512K required)
Version Reviewed: Amiga

FISH

By Shay Addams

Finally, I exclaimed when this package swam across my desk last week, an interactive story based on my favorite character from *Barney Miller*. Or so I thought until the first scene, in which I awoke inside a goldfish bowl—and inside a goldfish's body!

How and why did your fearless editor end up in such a fishy situation? Just part of the job: the job of Interdimensional Secret Agent for England's "Mission HQ." Actually, it was part of the vacation after the job, for the only way I—as Agent 10—could relax after completing my last assignment was by "warping" into the body of a fish and floating around for days at a time.

My vacation ended abruptly when the boss, Sir Playfair Panchax, alerted me that the Seven Deadly Fins, a group of interdimensional terrorists, was on the loose. Since they perpetrate their crimes by warping in and out of other beings' bodies, Sir Playfair figured I could use the same technique to catch them (though if they also warped into fish, a fishing rod might prove equally effective!). Ultimately the story

moves to a watery world in another dimension—the Planet of Fish—to find the parts need to build a

control wheel and foil the Fins, who play in a rock group when not busy destroying civilization as we know it.

One Warp at a Time

Warping is easy. You just swim into one of the three warp holes in the fish bowl, then immediately emerge in a faraway place. You might wind up as a lackey in a recording studio, in a forest, or some other off-the-wall location. And your new identity will be as much of a surprise as your destination. You're always human, at least—and always in for some fun times.

In each new location, you'll have to solve a major puzzle (and intermediary minor ones) within a certain number of moves, or be warped back to the fish bowl. In the recording studio, for example, you've got to make coffee for the boss. In another scene, you'll encounter a

rock group hanging out in an abandoned church, where you've got to restore a gargoyle to its niche in a subterranean altar. This puzzle is rather unusual, for it has a two-stage solution. Even when you know what to do, you can only complete a few of the necessary tasks before being warped back to the bowl. Then you can return and finish the job.

So what we've got here is a variation on the classic "find stuff to make a device" plot (used so well in *Leather Goddesses*). You've got to find three items, such as a gold disc and a grommet, needed to make a "regulator" device. After successfully solving each warp's main puzzle, you'll obtain one of the three items. (Upon your return to the bowl, the related warp will have vanished.) Collect all three, and you'll open a major warp to the world of Fish, where you've got to collect yet more odds and ends to construct a device that will save the planet from destruction by those deadly dorsals.

Graphics and Prose Style

Graphics are done in a more contemporary style than those in *Magnetic Scrolls'* previous releases. They look smoother and possess more perspective and softer colors, but still lack animation. As in *The Pawn*, you won't see a fresh picture for each scene. Each new picture usually stays onscreen for the

next four or five moves, so there are only a few dozen in all.

Clues are hidden in the abundance of text, so this is really an illustrated text adventure—well-suited for gamers who pine for the traditional Infocom-style adventure. Just toggle off the graphics, and there you are.

As you warp from one world to another, the *Magnetic Scrolls'* warped sense of humor emerges as the game's trademark. Instead of being told "you can't go in that direction" when I tried to walk west in the recording studio, I was told: "This is as far as the studio goes—on a first date, anyway." And the volume on the amplifier in the studio goes all the way to eleven, a *Spinal Tap* joke.

Adventuredom's most unusual light source, this game's torch is "one of those rubber ones that looks like a marital aid but isn't." And when you examine the

ceremonial cord from the altar, you learn it's "really good for strangling virgins after a bout of custard wrestling." The prose is graphic enough to please the most devoted all-text fan: when you're attacked by the gang of hippies, a "guitar hits you with a twang like the opening chord of *A Hard Day's Night*."

Trolling for Parsers

The *Magnetic Scrolls'* parser is still state of the art, accepting multiple commands, full sentences, pronouns and so on; it also enables you to cursor back and forth along the command line, to delete a word or character in either direction or

insert new ones. Even the parser possesses a sense of humor: the parser asked "Are you talking to yourself again?" after I typed in a word it didn't understand (the word, incidentally, was understand), and when I answered

IBM version

no, it replied, "Well, it sounded like it."

On mouse-based machines, you can pull "scrolls" up and down to reveal menus containing common commands such as save. The picture, too, may be moved up and down with the mouse.

You can change the text size to double the usual size, which makes it a lot easier on the eyes. It will print the text as you play. Sound effects take the form of synthesized speech for some characters. In the Amiga and other versions for computers with function keys, all ten may be set up with macros for your most commonly used commands (as in *Beyond Zork*).

The small manual is packaged as a set of memos and a dossier with background on the Seven Fins and details on warping; it's stapled together at one corner for an authentic look. In addition to scores of cheap laughs, it provides coded clues for many puzzles. First you type in the word "hint," then a series of letters that the program decodes into a clue (but if your score isn't high enough, you may not get an answer).

Conclusions: This adventure poses some challenging multi-step logical puzzles involving object manipulation and timing. Guild member Paul Shaffer (whose solution greatly speeded up this review, which otherwise might not have appeared until June, 1993) as "one of *Magnetic Scrolls'* weirdest, but one of the most enjoyable." He even preferred it

Continued on page thirteen



Type: Illustrated Text Adventure
Systems: Amiga, IBM (640K required for EGA graphics—no CGA support—256K required for text-only), ST
Planned Conversions: C 64
Version Reviewed: Amiga

Walkthrough: Leisure Suit Larry II

By Terry Calderwood

Los Angeles

Eve's House (D1)

Walk into garage. Walk east in garage until you can't be seen. Take dollar bill. Walk to KROD (A1).

KROD (A1)

Look (note info for future reference). Walk to dumpster (A3).

Dumpster (A3)

Walk to hole in fence. Look through hole. Walk to Quickie Mart (A4).

Quickie Mart (A4)

Talk to girl. Buy Lotto Ticket. Enter any six three-digit numbers. Walk to KROD (A1).

KROD

KROD (A1)

Enter building.

Lobby (B2)

Show ujdifu to girl. Write down the num-

bers given to you by the receptionist. (Girl asks for your ticket numbers.) Repeat the numbers given by receptionist. Enter the Green Room through the north door.

Green room (A2)

Sit down on bench. (Man enters.) Follow man through west door.

The Dating Connection

Enter anything when asked questions. (You win the game.) Return to the Green Room.

Green Room

(Man gives you cruise ticket.) Sit on bench. (Woman enters.) Follow woman through east door.

Lotto Room

(You win a million a year for life, get money from girl and walk back to lobby.)

Lobby

Leave building. Walk to Eve's house.

Los Angeles

Eve's house (D1)

Look in trash (twice). Take passport. Walk to Century Plaza (C2).

Century Plaza (C2)

Look man. Walk to Molto Lira (B2).

Molto Lira (B2)

Read sign. Take swimsuit at back of room. Buy swimsuit at front of counter. Walk to drug store (B4).

Drug store (B4)

Walk to west side of far left shelf. Look shelf. Take lotion. Buy lotion. Walk to Quickie Mart (Map A4).

Quickie Mart (A4)

Walk to soda dispenser. Take soda. Buy soda. Walk to barber shop (D3).

Barber shop (D3)

Talk to man. Sit in chair. Get haircut. Walk to music store (B2).

Music store (B2)

Talk to girl. Get microfilm. (Look-alike KGB agent shows up.) Walk to dock (D4).

Dock (D4)

Give ticket to man. (Note: Deck F, Cabin 1.) Climb ramp to boat.

S. S. Love Tub

Lower Deck

Walk east to enter Larry's cabin.

Larry's Cabin

Take fruit. Read note. Walk to east side of room. Open door. Go east into Mama's cabin.

Mama's Cabin

(Don't get too close unless you have saved the game and want a laugh.) (Listen to Mama's speech.) Walk west to Larry's room.

Larry's Cabin

Close door. Wear suit. Walk south to leave room.

Lower Deck

Walk west to stairs, then up two levels.

Top Deck

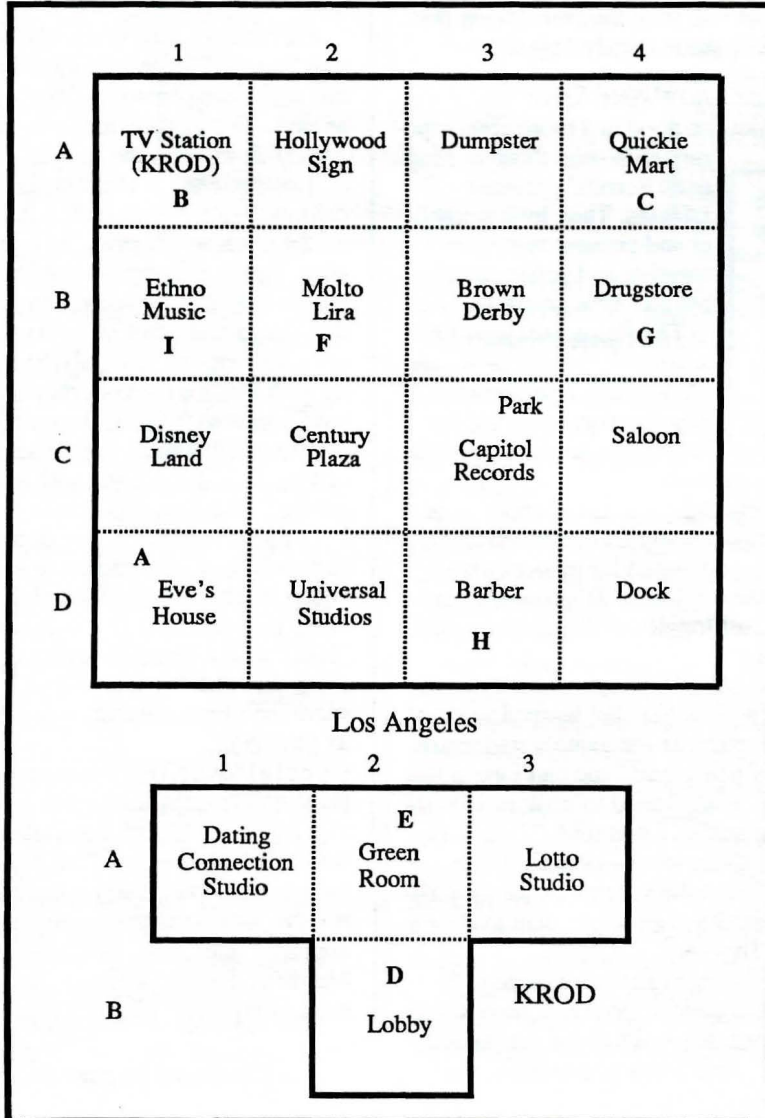
Leave steps and walk east to pool area.

Pool Area

Walk into pool. Swim. Dive. Swim to bottom of pool. Take top. Swim to surface. Leave pool. Walk to empty deck chair. Use mpujpo. Sit on deck chair. (Girl talks to you—ignore her.) Stand. Return to Larry's cabin

Larry's Cabin

(Save game.) Open door on east wall. En-



ter Mama's cabin.

Mama's Cabin.

Open nightstand. Look in nightstand. Take kit. (If mama appears, restore game and try again.) Leave room.

Larry's Room

Wear clothes. (Leave and don't return; after several trips, mama gets you.) Return to top level and go all the way west.

Barber Shop

Walk to chair. Sit down. Get wig. Walk east, then all the way up the eastern steps

Bar

Walk to west end of bar. Look. Take dip. (Don't order drink.) Leave bar.

Top Deck

Go to west set of stairs and walk up to bridge.

Bridge

Walk to east side of room. Npwf iboemft (starts lifeboat drill). Walk back to eastern set of stairs.

Top Deck

Walk up to green line (halfway from top deck to bar) and go west to lifeboats. Get in lifeboat.

On Lifeboat

(The lifeboat leaves, and you must perform the next two steps before the scene changes.) Xfbs xjh. Fbu ejq. (After the scene changes, you fish with sewing kit, then reach an island.) Swim ashore.

The Island

Landing Beach (A2)

Walk west to nude beach.

Nude Beach (A1)

Talk to woman. (Don't follow girl.) Walk east to landing beach (after short wait).

Landing Beach (A2)

Walk south.

Garden (B2)

(You wander through the garden.)

Restaurant (C1)

Talk to man. Tip the man. Sit in the chair. Walk to the bar. Look at the food. Take the knife. (Don't eat your food.) Leave the restaurant.

Garden (B2)

(You wander around.)

Guest Room (C2)

(Don't follow maid.) Look in the nightstand. Take the matches. Walk into bathroom. Take the soap. Leave the room.

Garden (B2)

(You wander around.)

Barber

shop (C3)

Sit in the chair (you get blonde hair). Leave barber shop.

Garden (B2)

(You wander around some more.)

Landing Beach (A2)

Walk west to nude beach.

Nude beach (A1)

Look at the rocks. Take bikini bottom. Walk east to landing beach.

Landing Beach (A2)

Walk south to garden. (Repeat steps to get to guest room.)

Guest Room (C2)

Walk behind bathroom into dressing area. Xfbs cjljoj. Stuff top with tpbq. Back to garden and wander to barber shop.

Barber Shop (C3)

Sit in chair (get waxed). Back to garden.

Garden (B2)

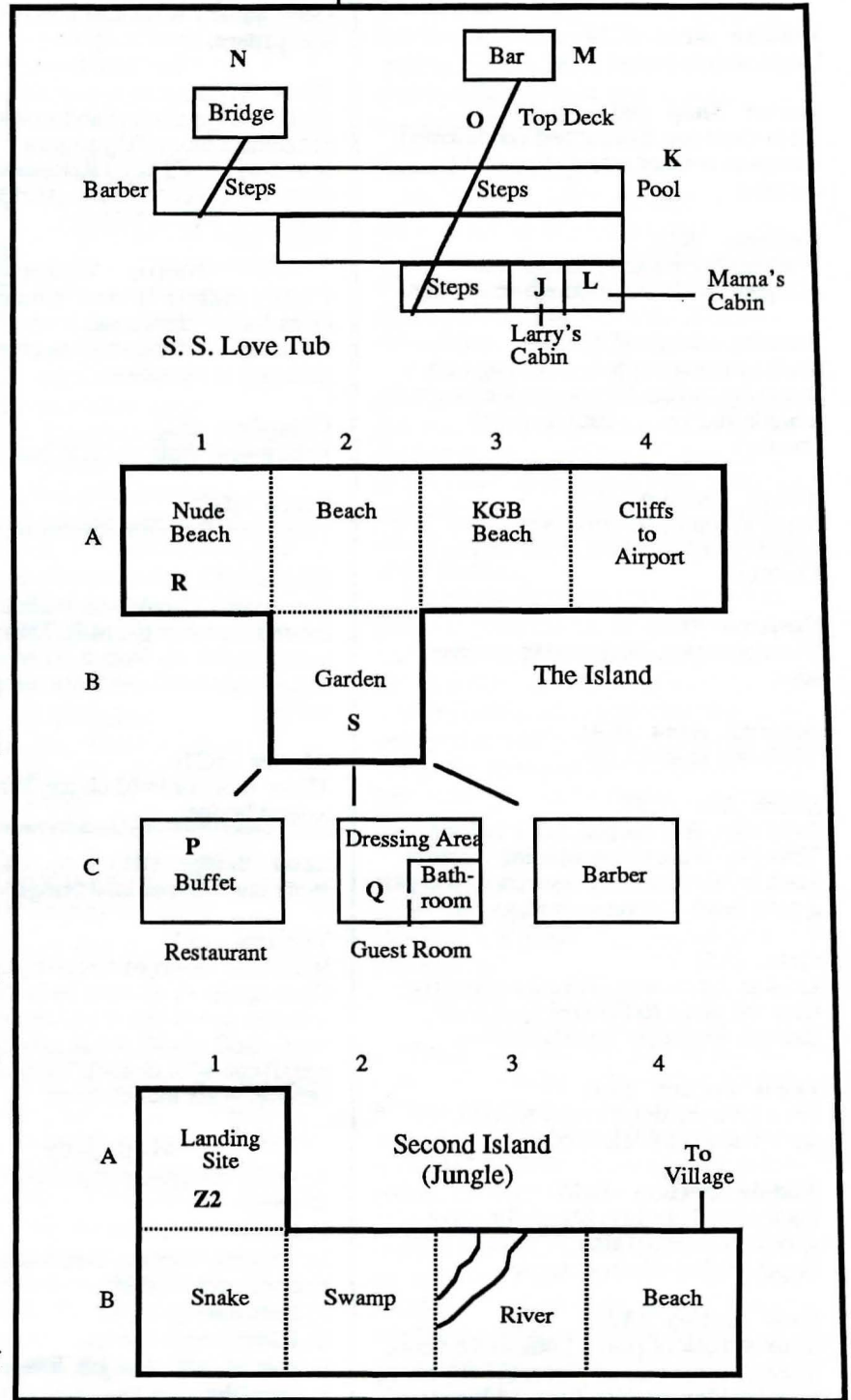
Look flower. Take flower (wait till you're close to the palm in center to get the flower.)

Landing Beach (A2)

Walk east to KGB beach.

KGB beach (A3)

Walk past KGB agents.



Cliffs (A4)

Cross cliffs. (You get a free point each time you fall but lose them at the end of the game.) (You see the airport. Change clothes before scene changes).

Airport

Terminal entrance (D2)

Walk up to Krishna. Give gmpxf to man.

Counter (C2)

Continued on next page

Walk west to waiting area.

Waiting Area (C1)

Go north into barber shop.

Barber Shop (B1)

Sit in chair (get haircut and conditioner). Return to counter area and go east to customs.

Customs (C3)

Walk up to customs agent. Show qbttqpsu. Walk east through short door.

Security Area (C4)

Walk to conveyor belt. Take bag as it passes by (repeat till you get the bag with a bomb and you go back to ticket counter).

Ticket Counter (C2)

Stand in line (after bomb explodes). Talk to girl (you get ticket). Walk east to Customs.

Customs (C3)

Show qbttqpsu. Walk east to security area.

Security Area (C4)

Walk east to snack bar.

Snack Bar (C5)

Read sign. Buy special. Look in food. Take pin. Walk to top vending machine. Look at machine. Buy insurance (you get a parachute). Get on walkway.

Gate (A5)

Look at the counter. Take the pamphlet. Give the ticket to the man (you walk through north door and into plane).

Front Section (A1)

(You give the ticket to the woman, then walk into the middle section.)

Middle Section (A2)

Look seat. Take bag. Stand. Sit. Give qbnqimfu to man (after he talks to you). Stand. Walk to the rear section.

Rear section (A3)

Walk to back of plane. Look at the doors. Walk to south side of plane. (There's a door here but you can't see it.) Wear parachute. Qjdl mpdl. Turn handle. Open door (you are pulled from the plane). Pull ripcord (quickly!) (You get stuck in a tree.) Use lojgf.

Jungle

Landing site (A1)

Look at the ground. Take stick. Walk southwest, just north of bush. (Avoid the tree; it contains killer bees.) Crawl. Walk south.

Python (B1)

Walk south (until snake starts to move). Use tujdl (quickly!). Walk east to swamp.

Swamp (B2)

(Save game.) Walk east across light yellow pattern.

River (B3)

Walk to edge of river and swing on vine. (This must be quickly executed three times, so use F3 key.) Release vine. Take vine. Walk east to beach. (Girl takes you to chief in Native Village).

Native Village

Chief's hut (F1) and Chasm (E1)

(You follow chief north to chasm.) (Listen to chief.) Walk south to chief's hut, then east to campfire.

Campfire (F2)

Take ashes. Walk south to beach.

Beach (G2)

Take sand. Return to chasm area.

Chasm (E1)

(Save game.) Look tree. Walk north to the end center of the path. Throw vine. (If unsuccessful, try from a different location.) Walk north (after you cross the chasm).

Glacier (C1)

Throw thoe (or btift) on ice. Walk north to land bridge.

Land Bridge (B1)

Walk north across land bridge.

Volcano (A1)

Walk near center of screen by crevice. Open upojd. (You must be in the correct location, stated above and shown on map.) Stuff bjstjdl cbh in upojd. Mjhiu bjstjdl cbh with nbudift. Drop upojd in crevice. Walk into elevator.

Map Key

A: dollar bill (garage), passport (in trash)
B: note
C: Lotto Ticket, soda
D: winning lottery numbers (receptionist)
E: cruise ticket (man)
F: swimsuit
G: lotion
H: haircut, wig, wax job, haircut, tonic
I: microfilm
J: fruit, note (Larry's Cabin)
K: top (bottom of pool)
L: kit (nightstand)
M: dip
N: handles for lifeboat drill
O: lifeboat
P: food, knife
Q: matches (nightstand), soap (bathroom)
R: bikini bottom
S: flower
T: Krishna
U: bag with bomb (conveyor belt)

Continued on page fifteen

The Magic Candle

Continued from page 1

On the Land

Outdoors, an arrow points out your group's position on the aerial-view map. When you approach a group of monsters, a skull and crossbones flashes to indicate their position. This effect highlights other discoveries, such as dungeon doors tucked away in the mountains—one of the game's many creative fine points.

Interiors of the six towns and villages are depicted from a fresh outlook combining an aerial view of the streets with pictures of stores, houses and other buildings that are seen head-on, as in a graphic adventure (see screen shot on page one). Castle interiors are portrayed from an oblique-angled, overhead view that provides a 3-D effect. None of the graphics are as slick as those in *Questron II*, but they're better than those in *Wizard's Crown*—which makes them about average. However, *Magic Candle* offers a far more substantial fantasy world than either of these and many others, with lots of things to do, places to go and people to meet. In a way, the art reminds me of Grandma Moses' work: a primitive technique that radiates a uniquely appealing charm.

As in *Zilfin*, much of this game's character derives from its many "specials." You'll be trudging along a road through the forests, when the main map is suddenly replaced with a picture showing your team stopped at the edge of a canyon whose bridge is out. If you use a rope, it materializes and spans the gulf, and in an animated sequence, your characters slide hand-over-hand to the far side. And when Dalin the Dwarf goes to work to earn a few gold coins at the blacksmith's, you see him walk around to the anvil and start pounding it with his hammer.

Chanting for Dungeons

When you step on a square next to a dungeon, a message says "You see an entrance," then a flashing door appears. After typing in the magic words with the Chant command, you'll see a first-person view picture of the area and a door that slides up to allow access. There are ten dungeons and a total of 54 levels.

Sound effects are significantly better

Continued on next page

Police Quest II

Continued from page 3

be. Don't forget to hand over all the evidence you find to the man at the booking counter. It will take all the resources of Lytton's Police Department to catch up to Jessie Bains, who seems to continually stay just one step ahead of you.

Sights and Sounds

Police Quest

II is Sierra's third game incorporating the new double-resolution graphics. I compared *The Vengeance* to its predecessor and once again noted a dramatic difference in the two formats. The first game is somewhat cartoony, and everything is very square-edged, while this one flows much more evenly, and the animation looks far more natural.

Besides the standard graphics, you can choose from two different CGA versions that use either of two or four colors. But if you don't already have a 16-color graphics card by now, it's time to start thinking about one. The games are much more enjoyable when played at their best.

This is also Sierra's third game to harness the extended audio capabilities of the Roland MT-32 and AdLib sound modules. The music on the Roland was rich and full in 32-voice splendor, and the sound from the AdLib was also quite nice—except for the car scenes, when it tended just a bit towards harsh. This is where the mellow base capacity of the Roland really made a difference.

Some of you who read my *King's Quest IV* review may have been as excited as I was by the implication of realistic sound effects just around the corner. In *Police Quest II*, the first steps towards this have finally been taken. Realistic sound effects were worked into several places, from the low rumble of the jet liner to the firing of the tear gas projectiles. Another enhancement was a slow fadeout of the background music in many places, rather than the jarring halt we have come to expect.

Boom 'Em Danno

Like the original, *Police Quest II* was written by Jim Walls, a retired California Highway Patrolman. It comes with six 5.25" disks and three 3.5-inchers. I tried

it out on a 4.77 MHz machine and found a detectable difference in playability, but it wouldn't be enough to keep me from playing the game if that's all I had. I would draw the line at swapping six disks, but I think it could be played with a minimum of frustration if you used the 3.5 inch micros.

Copy protection is a variation on the key word method. A mug shot is displayed at the game's outset, and you've got to find the correct picture in your owner's manual and type in the suspect's last name.

Conclusions: *The Vengeance* is well worth your

time. It is a good, solid game in a proven format—with graphics and sound that are better than ever. You almost have to develop the eye of a real police detective to catch some of the more subtle clues on the screen. Truly, another triumph for Sierra.

Skill Level: Advanced

Protection: Key Word

Price: \$49.95

Company: Sierra

The Magic Candle

Continued from previous page

combat, though I was never successful at doing so.

Magic Books

Spells are listed in four books of magic, which contain six spells each. Wizards and Elves will possess one such book right away, and you can buy more books from Wizards in different towns. (Men trained as Rangers may also cast spells.)

Fear, Fireball and other standard offensive and defensive spells are reinforced with some resourceful incantations. Cast during combat, the Assess spell cycles through each monster and reveals its Strength, Agility, Stamina, Armor and Shield. The Locate spell shows you the location of all monsters in the area. Vision turns a door to glass, enabling you to peer into a room and prepare to meet its inhabitants instead of just blundering in and getting your head whacked off. And if a party member does get killed, the Resurrection spell can be used in the combat arena (after the battle is over), so you won't have to trek back to a Temple.

Before you can cast a spell, it must be learned in Camp, an Inn or on a voyage. This takes a little real time but isn't as inconvenient as a similar routine in *Pool of*

Radiance. That's because the Switch/Divide feature lets you divide the party into two or more teams and leave the spellcasters in a safe place to learn their spells while everyone else explores part of a castle or nearby forest.

Puzzles and Stuff

Magic words to Chant, objects to find and use, names of people to track down for yet more clues—a diverse collection of puzzles awaits the intrepid adventurer who enters this realm. Count on lots of note-taking. Mapping won't be as laborious: you've got auto-mapping in the dungeons, and most areas are small enough that you can usually recall where to find the Supply Store or Guest House. The number and placement of clues is fair and well-balanced; strategy tips on combat and the game's early phases are included in the manual.

It's a four-sided program. Up to four games in progress can be saved on side four, and you get to type in up to 25 letters as a name or a note—"Get gold, find Tonton"—to remind you what to do next time you restart. Another considerate feature is the ability to return to the ongoing game after you've hit the Quit command (many RPGs insist you save at this stage). You don't have to reboot to keep playing after a save. The IBM version will include information on swapping the 5.25" disks for 3.5" versions, probably for a minimal fee.

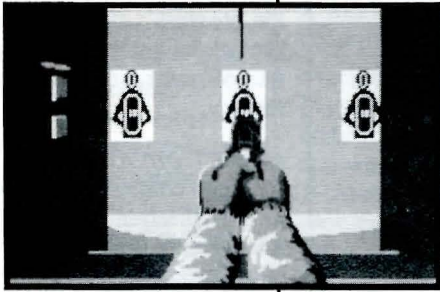
Conclusions: The leap from *Rings of Zilfin* to *The Magic Candle* is like Lord British going directly from *Ultima I* to *Ultima IV*, a major achievement for the author. Yet many of the most entertaining and singular elements of *Zilfin* are what give this game its character—the mushrooms, specials, those Zorlim and their animated spells and sound effects. Atabek managed to make combat enjoyable without allowing it to overshadow the puzzle-solving side of the quest, and the game system is easy to master (though the game itself will prove much trickier). *Magic Candle's* cohesive, unified design offers the experienced orc-slayer a rewarding fantasy, while its countless original touches and innovations, combined with a charming, individual graphics style, make it an entertaining one. Not just recommended, *Magic Candle* is our "Best Quest of the Month."

Skill Level: Variable

Protection: Key Word

Price: C 64, \$39.95; others, \$49.95

Company: Mindcraft/EA



The Magic Candle

Continued from previous page

than the typical beeps and clicks heard in Apple games, but there's no music. There is lots of spot animation, such as camp fires burning and braziers glowing. Time, day and night pass at the rate of five (game time) minutes per move, but you don't see related effects, such as the sky darkening, except when sailing.

Auto-mapping & Teleporting

The View command drops a mini-map showing one-fourth of Deruvia's total surface into a corner of the screen, so you can get your bearings by comparing it with the full-color map that comes with the game. And by using a certain item in the Magic Bowl found on each dungeon level, you'll see a map of that level—though it won't show which squares you've already stepped on.

Besides a teleportation spell, you can teleport by using certain objects in various combinations to reach different destinations: cube, sphere, cube sends you from Sodogur to Pheron, for example. Ocean travel also demonstrates Atabek's ingenious knack for presenting a universal activity in a fresh style. Rather than steering your ship across a scrolling ocean, you view a split-screen showing the crew on one side, the animated ship on the other. Night falls, clouds appear, and other special effects fill the ship's window until the ship docks. This is like being in Camp, so your team can spend the time productively by learning spells, fixing weapons and so on. (Unless they are Dwarves, who get too seasick to do anything—an amusing character trait that helped bring these mythical beings to life for me.)

Conversing for Clues

When you "Ask" someone, the menu's first choice lets you type in a word or so and hope for a response containing a keyword that, used in your next question, may lead to yet another clue (often telling who to visit in the next town, what to say to him, or other vital information). This is like conversing in *Ultima IV* and *V*, but here you can choose two other menu options that let you request Advice or Rumors and usually get at least one useful tip (I liked this mainly because I was able to get something out of most people, even when I didn't yet know the key words to trigger more esoteric revelations). Much of the game's plot emerges in conversation, such as when a lad proclaimed "Giant eagles have stolen the Prince!"

Other advice is available when occa-

sional messages say you've just encountered a Travelling Monk or Knight and asks if you want to talk to him. (These will be familiar to *Zilfin* fans.) Many characters have schedules, like their counterparts in *Ultima V*. Someone told me a ship's Captain would arrive at 1900, so I knew to come back then. Stores shut down at night, as do the town gates.

Another *Zilfin* element, the use of herbs and mushrooms with weird names (like Sermin, which restores Energy) is part of this game system. Other herbs cure poison, endow someone with super-strength, or temporarily boost sword skill. These may be bought in towns or found. You don't buy and sell goods to make money, as in *Zilfin*, but characters with professions such as Gem-cutter and Tailor can get part-time jobs at shops in many towns.

So what does everyone else do while Dalin slaves away in a sweatshop? The Divide option permits you to move everyone into a new party, then Switch to that one and send it somewhere else. This endows the inventive adventurer with an array of potential strategies.

A Fluid, Power-packed Interface

Commands are displayed in a menu that initially looks like a *Questron* menu running horizontally rather than vertically. But as soon as you move to a new location, a major difference crops up: the menu choices change, replacing options that can't be used in the new area with new ones. This flexibility gives you a total of 44 main commands, such as Sell, Buy, Use, Transfer items and Eat. That's a lot of power, opening the way for a multi-faceted game of extraordinary scope in terms of activities.

You make menu selections with a joystick, cursor keys or by pressing the key matching the letter alongside each option. Each menu's default menu item is highlighted, which saves time in executing orders. To walk, you just lean on the joystick or proper key. To choose a new active character (who performs the selected action), punch the new one's number.

You don't walk out of doors from one scene into another, even when the location is depicted with a first-person picture of the entire room, as in a graphic adventure. Instead, you choose the Exit command from the menu, then select one of the directions listed in a sub-menu.

One snag annoyed me: you can't transfer weapons from one character to another, just arrows (or gold, food and other items) The ability to Pool all of any item to one character and then Distribute (divide one guy's stuff among the team) is

convenient, but you can't do so in a shop, where you've got to transfer things directly from one party member to another.

But there's also an added benefit of this interface: you don't have to memorize keystrokes or look them up on a reference card, which is so often the case with an RPG that has lots of commands. And the program's fluid network of windows provides a quick, unobtrusive presentation of stats that doesn't intrude on the fantasy.

In the Combat Arena

When combat proves inevitable, four or five different monster types pop up in a minimally illustrated combat arena. You get to arm and position your crew before the onslaught, for each one's icon is individually controlled in battle. Then the Zorlim, Orcs, Hibliss and other fiends attack, and you respond. To target distant foes with a spell, you position a cursor over the target, while closer ones may be hit with swords and so on. Some monsters are animated, and quite amusingly so, like little cartoon characters that munch and chomp at your team. A simple one-line combat report describes each blow, and many actions—especially offensive spells—are effectively animated and reinforced with sound effects. The combat delay is easily adjustable.

In another minor but entertaining innovation to the combat system, your guys and the monsters frequently jump out of the way to dodge a thrusting sword or arrow, then move back into their original position. Often this means you have to surround a monster to make sure he can't duck your attacks. And that if one of your guys is standing on the opposite side of a monster that dodges your arrow, it could hit your man (or another monster).

The Zorlim or other leader types are shrewd foes, lurking in the rear and blasting your team with spells. These tactical considerations will give "armchair squad leaders" opportunities to exercise their skills—at the same time, combat is easier, faster and more fun than similar systems used in *Pool of Radiance* and *Wizard's Crown* (though hard-core tactical fans will probably prefer the *Crown* system). After a victory, you send someone around to search each body for loot, but can't do so during the battle.

Leave the combat arena without resurrecting a dead party member, and his name vanishes from the roster. He can be replaced with a fresh volunteer, or a clone (just duplicate your save game disk now and then). You can attempt to flee

Continued on next page

Sorcerer Lord

Continued from page 6

cerer capering on a stack of skulls while a sea of crimson washes over the map and blots it out. A grand finalé like this would certainly have called for a good artist and would have eaten up more memory, but could have added a lot.

It felt odd to play an Amiga game that won't let you use the mouse or joystick (same for other versions). Every movement command is input via number keys, which makes it easy to make mistakes when placing and moving your forces. If you play very slowly and carefully, read all menus and consult the accompanying map, you could avoid such mistakes—but I play a little faster and looser than that, so I usually make at least ten errors per game. And mistakes in movement are final—once a movement point is spent, you can't get it back.

There are a few sound effects, but no music. I always turn them off, preferring silence to hearing the same digitized death scream and tinkling "movement" noises over and over. *Sorcerer Lord* takes about three hours to play, but you can save a game at the end of each turn (and do so on your game disk).

Conclusions: I've been looking for a good Amiga game. This could have been it, but failure of the imagination of the designers, or perhaps the producer, spoiled it. I recommend it only for masochists who enjoy being victimized by their games.

Skill Level: Variable

Protection: None

Price: \$34.95

Company: Datasoft/Electronic Arts

Deja Vu II

Continued from page 5

ited only by disk space. The package comes with general instructions as well as machine-specific reference cards.

Conclusions: There seems to be a difference in attitudes toward the ICOM Simulations adventures. Most Mac users I know are crazy about them, yet some of the GS users who've played the recent conversions don't seem to like them at all. Maybe it's that the Mac users are more comfortable with the mouse-driven, point-and-click interface in games. I can only say that I've played both *Deja Vus* and thought they were both great. So if you enjoyed the first installment, you should love this one, too; in the immortal words of the great philosopher Yogi Ber-

ra, "it's like *Deja Vu* all over again!"

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Program

Price: \$49.95

Company: ICOM/Mindscape

FISH

Continued from page 7

over *The Pawn* and *Guild of Thieves*, and I agree. Also, this one does have a *real* ending, unlike the disappointing (and to many people, insulting) conclusion of *Jinxter*, which sent you right back to the opening scene in which you cannot avoid being run over by a bus. Recommended.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Key Word

Price: IBM, \$39.95; ST, Amiga, \$44.95

Company: Magnetic Scrolls/Activision



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Waiting for Duffy

Duffy's helping John Tower write a new resume, so contact these people if you can help.

Wizard's Crown: Can't get good party started, need tips. Joseph Smith, 69-43 B 210 St, Bayside, NY 11364

Ultima 5: How does Lord Kenneth help me get Sandalwood Box? Matt Danbenspeck, Rte 2 Box 466, Tuttle, OK 73089

Ultima 5: How do I get through Dungeon Hythloth to Underworld? Where's the Sandalwood Box? How do I get out of first room in Shame? P. Gardner, 2038 New York Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11210. Same questions, plus will playing harpsichord help me? R. Loveland, 7721 Sundial Lane, Orlando, FL 32819

Neuromancer: Where is Commlink 4, what are passwords for Chiba Tactical Police and SEA? P. Meehan, 2555 Giant Oaks Dr, Pittsburgh, PA 15241

ChronoQuest: Help!!! T. Page, 96 Haddon Pl, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

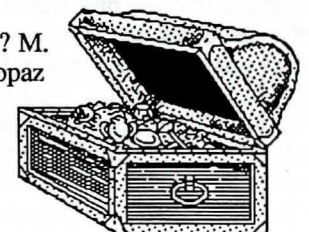
M & M 2: Can't get out of Dawn's Mist Bog Cavern with element orb! Where's "long one?" What's Molecular Chamber (Lux's Dungeon, lvl 2) good for. Beliaeff's? **Wizardry 5:** What's the Playhouse Mystery Theatre about? Jigsaw Bank & Trust? Where's Loon? S. Kunz, 211 E Ohio #610, Chicago, IL 60611

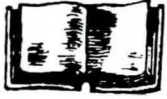
King's Quest 4: How do I get bridge for unicorn? Get out of whale? What to do after the five ghosts? About Oge? D Bartram Jr, Box 2398, APO NY 09009

Wizardry 3: Desperate help needed for level 6, especially the riddle. P. Tayco, 3569 Boston Ave, Oakland, CA 94602

Original Adventure: Need help in Plover Room, Mirror Canyon, window pit, green dragon, reservoir. Christopher Dox, 975 Laurel Ave, St Paul, MN 55104

Fool's Errand: How do I capture the flying question mark in the Three Ships section? M. Groff, 279 Topaz Way, San Francisco, CA 94131





Keys to the Kingdoms



Neuromancer

Link Codes and Passwords (all coded)

Name Code Passwords

Cheap Hotel Difbqp 1: hvftu

2: dpdlspbdi

Panther Moderns Dibpt 1: nbjomjof

Consumer Review Dpotvnfsfw

1: sfwjfx

Asano Btbopdpnq 1: dvtupnfs

2: wfoepst

World Chess Xpsmedift 1: opwjdf

2: nfnfcs

Psychologist Qtzdip 1: ofx np

2: cbczmpo

Regular Fellows Sfhgfmmpx

1: wjtjups

Tactical Police Ljftbutv 1: xbssbot

2: tvqfsubd

Free Matrix Gsffnbusjy 1: DGN

Central Justice Kvtujdf 1: vtf

I. R. S. JST 1: uby jogp

2: bveju

S. E. A. TFB 1: tpgufo

2: qfsnbgspu

Gentleman Loser Motfs 1: xjmtpo

2: mptfs

Tozoku Zblvzb 1: zbl

Copenhagen U. Csbjotupsn 1: qfsjpmpt

Eastern Seaboard Fbtutfbce

1: mpohjtmboe

N. A. S. A. Wpzbhfs 1: bqmmp

Fuji Electric Gvkj 1: spndbset

Musabori Nvtbcpsjoe 1: tvcbv

Hitachi Biotech Ijubdijcjp 1: hfoftqmjdf

2: cjpufdi

Hosaka Iptblbdpsq 1: gvohflj

2: cjptpgu

Bank Gemeinschaft Cbolhfnfjo

1: fjousjuu 2: wfscpufo

Mike Spears

Might & Magic II

An easy way to earn items and experience: drink from Magic Fountain west of Atlantium to boost abilities to 100, then fly to D-2 and go to 6, 8. Kill Mandagaul, the Court Mage and Bowman for 6,500 points, gold and magic items.

Grant Kushida

In dungeon below Middlegate, you'll find goblets at 0, 7 and hirelings at 0, 15. To get a castle key, travel by portal to all five towns and donate at the temples, then go Flick a Farthing at 15, 15 in Middlegate. Find Mr. Wizard, possibly the best hireling, at D-3, 1, 14. Save two more hirelings at the Atlantium jail. Save Red Duke and Dead Eye by fighting over 240

orcs in Ambush Valley at D-1, 14, 1. Seek guests in Atlantium and at the castles. After your party is level 7+, fight castle guards in Woodhaven to get mucho experience, gold and up to +6 equipment. Get Lloyd's Beacon spell through a secret door next to the entrance in Corak's Cave at 7, 11. Find Corak's soul in the Lost Souls' Woods at C-1, 10, 15. Clerics can reunite it with his body in Corak's Cave at C-2, 5, 11.

Robert Breezley

Questron II

To activate auto-mapping, find the Scroll of Scalma on the third level of the dungeon on the east coast, where you'll also find the Onyx Key (opens Twilight Tombs) and Agate Key (opens area in Fortress where chest with Ruby Key is found). After finding the Ruby Key, you can obtain the Eternal Flame and talk to King Kelfar. To boost intelligence, visit Simon in the Fortress.

Ted Aicher

Wizardry V

The Ruby Warlock wants something from the Hurtle Beast room before he'll let you pass. Say dvq to him after the first visit, and he'll let you pass. (If you can't make it, try the secret door west of the stairs.) Don't kill him or anything that doesn't attack you, or your good characters' alignment will change. (Evil characters can be converted back to good ones by changing your tactics.) If you've slain a dungeon dweller before getting information from him, you can pay to have him resurrected at the temple. Greet each inhabitant with "Hail" and offer gold or an item if you get no response. Cast Katu if all else fails. Swimming ability is very important for magic users. A pool on level seven recharges spell points, but you need to dive to pool level 10. Many pools have objects on the bottom that are vital to victory. The duck will give you information on how to increase swimming ability, and you can buy something on level three that will greatly enhance it.

Fred P. Andoli

Heroes of the Lance

Don't fight the magic-using Bozak Dragonias hand-to-hand; instead, select web from the magic-user menu. Have your character duck to avoid most of the Dragonians' missiles. When the web hits,

you can slay him at your leisure. (But be ready to duck, for the monster launches a singel magic missile upon dying.) Hatching dragons can't be hit in the head, only near the hindquarters. A web will freeze dragons, but it must be angled downward in order to hit. To aim spells, Raistlin must be selected. Use the blue crystal staff sparingly, or it runs out later in the game.

Nathan Franklin

Mars Saga

Hire a police or marine right away. At the restauraunt, hire a scientist, medic and four police or marines. Focus on learning automatic weapons and medical (so one can use a compress). Later get experience in arc guns. Get experience in programming, then hack the computer till you get into the wargames and mines. In the early stages, go to the mountains in Primus and get a job from Cybil Graves. Go to the Police Station and get a bound. The man you're looking for is in a mine shaft toward Progeny.

Mark Lain

King's Quest IV: GS Version

It's impossible to escape the ogre while carrying the magic hen when the system speed is normal. Go to the control panel and change the speed to fast, then reset speed to fast after leaving with the hen. Pick up the floating bottle and read the note before climbing the whale's tongue (you must climb diagonally, from the outer edge toward the center).

Lonnie E. Kuntzman

Police Quest II

Airplane: To disarm bomb, search uvscbot and qpdlfut of efbe ijkbdlfst. Open upxfrm ejtqfotfs and follow instructions. **Sewer:** To get past poison gases, quickly go east, then south. Go south again, then west and get the gas mask from the red box. **Control Room:** Dbmn nbsjf epxo. Untie Marie. Raise gun. Ijef cfijoe qjqt on left side of screen. When Bains walks about even with the qjqf, shoot him.

James Tan

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Macintosh—\$15 for Ultima 3 w/super characters, maps, backup disk and QuickKeys macro for assorted tasks. Uninvited, \$15. R C Stone,

ACO USA FSB 9800, APO, NY 09742-4822

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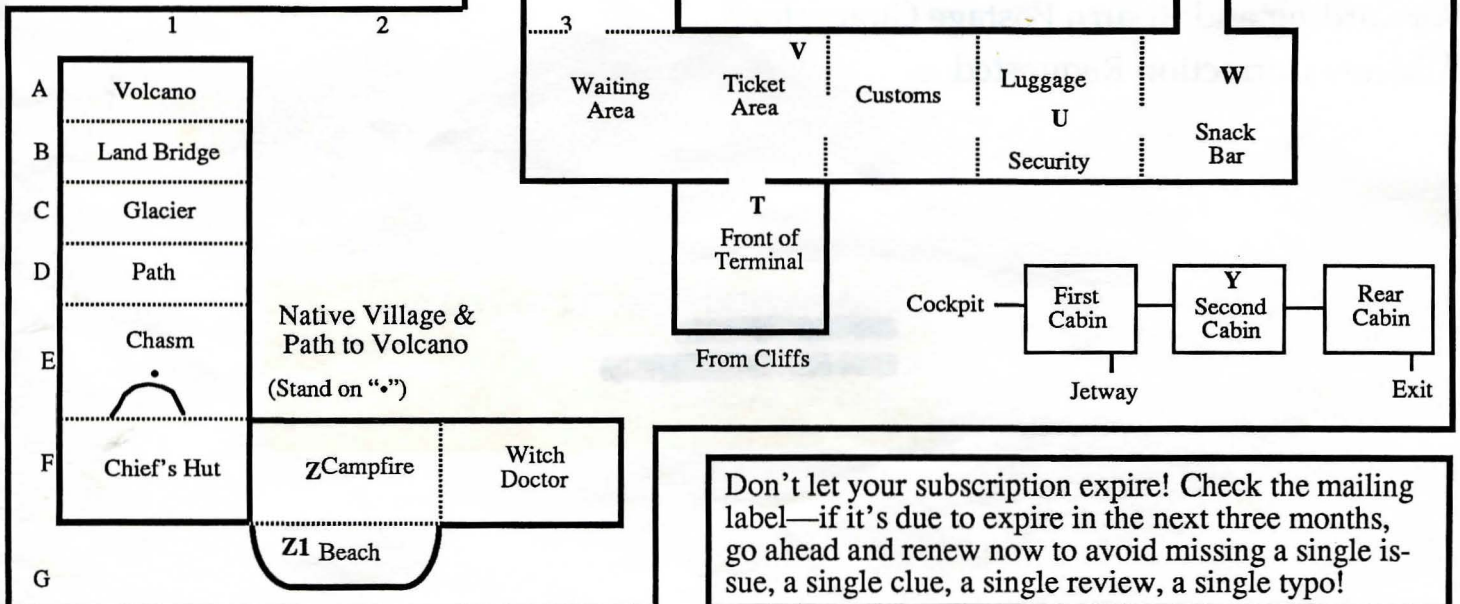
Want Ultima 2. Will trade Bard 1-3, Rocket Ranger, Ultima 1/5, Times of Lore, Wasteland. Have more, send list. Mark Houston, 303 Windsor, Park Forest, IL 60466

Continued on next page

Leisure Suit II

Continued from page 10

V: ticket
W: pin (in food), parachute (top vending machine)
X: pamphlet
Y: bag (seat)
Z: ashes
Z1: sand
Z2: stick



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