



QuestBusters™



Vol. VII, # 10

The Adventurers' Journal

October, 1990

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Science fiction catches up with fantasy this fall

Stand by for some futuristic questing. Besides *Buck Rogers* from SSI, we'll soon see *Full Metal Planet*, *Starkiller*, *Battletech II*, *Space 1889* and *Space Quest IV*. *Buck Rogers* and *Starkiller* are "sneak previewed" elsewhere in this issue. *Battletech II: The Crescent Hawk's Revenge* puts you in charge of over 50 kinds of Mechs, including the new "OmniMechs" (apparently manufactured by Bob Guc-cionne). The Activision press release promises 27 scenarios and multiple endings as Jason Youngblood goes up against the Clans in the 31st Century. It's set for MSDOS sometime this month.

Full Metal Planet is the third game in Data East's "Draconian" line. You play a space pilot working for a steel company on a planet named for its abundance of minerals. It's supposed to have the same 3-D graphics and sound that made *Drakkhen* and *Chamber of the Psi-Mutant Priestess* so captivating (the MSDOS conversion of these two just shipped). But instead of fighting with swords and psychic powers, you'll command attack boats, space ships, tanks and mining machines. Up to four people can play. *Full Metal Planet* will be available for Amiga and MSDOS gamers later this year.

Space Quest IV will feature Sierra's new "Cinematographics" (see last month's issue for details.) *Space 1889* takes a fresh approach by going back to the future. In a Jules Verne-like setting, Paragon's latest game will likely rely on the *Megatraveller I* game system. Microprose will release Paragon's *Megatraveller 2* in November or January, and the Amiga *Megatra-*

veller 1 in January. Steve "Planetfall" Meretzky is doing a graphic adventure, *Spellcasting 101: Sorcerers Get all the Girls*, for them.

Bored of the Rings?

No, Interplay isn't really doing a role-playing game based on that elusive parody of Tolkien's trilogy. Not yet, anyway, since that would probably put them another year behind schedule on *Meantime* (which rumors indicate has been retargeted as a "fantasy role-playing word processor for dyslexic sailors"). The MSDOS *Lord of the Rings* was set to ship the 15th of this month, and Amiga and C-64 versions will follow next year. *Dragon Wars II* and a role-playing construction kit that lets you create *Bard's Tale* type games are coming out early next year, along with two still-secret projects (look for their first science fiction RPG). In non-adventure games, Interplay is working on the latest in their series of arcade-strategy games, *BattleTiddlywinks*.

Wizardry: the new generation

Calling it "a new generation in the *Wizardry* tradition," Sir-tech Software says *Bane of the Cosmic Forge* is not *Wizardry VI* nor is it even a true sequel. (Woodhead and Greenberg weren't connected with the game at all). Instead, it's the foundation of a new *Wizardry* by David Bradley, who did *Wiz V*. It will introduce a new character creation system for your six-member party, an all-new magic system, full screen illustrations, animated monsters and spells,

and better sound effects. The MSDOS game is set for imminent release, with Amiga and Mac soon. No word yet on a C-64 conversion, but there will be nothing for Apple owners.

Will we see another *Wizardry*? It's not absolutely dead, but don't count on it. You can now play *Wizardry I* on a Nintendo, however.

Megatraveller Upgrade

Earlier upgrades concentrated on bugs, but version 3.0 introduces an enhanced combat system that lets you choose between the customary real-time combat and the option to give all party members combat commands before proceeding with the battle. Veteran role-player C. F. Shaffer calls it one of the best he's ever played. For a free upgrade, send your disks to Paragon Software, 600 Rugh St., Greensburg PA 15601 and request version 3.0.

Back to the books

Fans of Michael Berlyn's science fiction adventures such as *Oo-topos* and *Suspended* can now read his fourth science fiction novel. *The Eternal Enemy* was recently published by William Morrow — in hardback, no less.

The Jetsons jump ship

It looks like *The Jetsons* is the only Hanna-Barbera cartoon we'll see from MicroIllusions. H-B just signed a long-term deal with Taito, the Japanese arcade game company, to produce videogames based on *The Jetsons* and *The Flint-*

stones. They're aiming for the Nintendo and Gameboy.

Accolade goes over the edge

Yes, after successfully launching their first adventure games, Accolade is entering the videogame market with a football simulation and several more titles. They also announced plans to enter the CD-ROM market, intending to "be a broad-based entertainment software company."

Taito goes over the other edge

While Accolade goes after the almighty videogame dollar, Taito (you know, the world's biggest videogame company) is entering the computer game market. *Castle Master* and *Day of the Pharaoh* are being converted from their original Nintendo formats. *Castle Master* should be out for MSDOS, Amiga and C-64

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Six years of QuestBusters!

Next month marks our sixth year of questing through millions of mazes, slaying mountains of monsters and busting quadrillions of quests along the way. To celebrate, we're giving subscribers a chance to obtain *Quest for Clues III* without paying the customary \$3 shipping and handling charges. Anyone with a USA, APO or FPO address who advance orders the book by November 15 can get it for a mere \$25. Since most of you live outside Arizona, you'll save a few bucks in sales tax, in addition to getting extra issues added to your subs (see below).

Shipping on international orders will be slashed in half: \$3 to Canada and Mexico, \$6 to other overseas addresses. (Be sure to make checks or postal money orders payable in US funds, not those funky "backbacon dollars.")

What's that? You want to know what's in the book before you buy it? Complete solutions and relevant maps to these sterling quests:

Arthur (Infocom version)
Bad Blood
Battletech I
Centauri Alliance
Chamber of Psi-Mutant Priestess
Champions of Krynn
Circuit's Edge
Code-name: ICEMAN
Conquests of Camelot
Curse of the Azure Bonds
Deja Vu II
Dragon Wars
Drakkhen
FISH
Future Wars
Gold Rush
Hero's Quest I
Hillsfar
Hound of Shadow
Indiana Jones Last Crusade

News

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by now. So should *Pharaoh* for Amiga and MSDOS. *Where Time Stood Still* is available only for MSDOS.

PowerMonger

Naturally, this is an Electronic Arts title. It's from Bullfrog, who did *Populous*, and ushers in numerous enhancements and innovations. Every character on the planet now has a home, a job and an intelligence level, and your Captains have different personalities. The goal is to con-

It Came from the Desert I
Journey
Keef the Thief
Knights of Legend
Leisure Suit Larry III
Loom
Magic Candle
Manhunter: San Francisco
Neuromancer
Police Quest II
Space Quest III
Space Rogue
Starflight
Starflight 2
The Kristal
Transylvania III
Universe 3
Usurper: Mines of Qyntarr
Windwalker
Wizardry V

Don't forget: with each book you'll get three extra issues added to a regular subscription, two to a First Class, Mexican or Canadian, and one for overseas. And editor Shay Addams will be tied to a chair until he autographs every book! (You also get the extra issues if you order after November 15, but regular shipping rates apply, and Addams will probably have worked his way loose by then.) *QFC III* will be out by November.

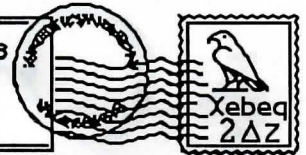
These QuestBusters, who contributed or verified solutions, will get a free copy: Paul Shaffer, Terry Calderwood, Frank Chin, Hillel Kaminsky, Nicholas Blawat, Al Giovetti, Adam Fischbach, Matt Swanson, Richard Rasmussen, Steven Payne, Margaret Wiley, Andrew Phang, Russell Greenspan, Kirk Austin, Matthew Swanson, Perry Davis, Brian Smith, Grant Kushida, Volken Meyer, Joe Terwilliger, Clancy Shaffer, Robert Brogan II, Grant Wieder, Sandy Walton, Walter Luc Haas, Duey Hua, Chris Parrot, Kirk Austin and Harald Smit.

quer the world, and there are 200 lands to take over before you can claim victory. You can play against another person over a modem. For Amiga and ST, *PowerMonger* is set for October.

A tip of the QB helm..

...to Tim Payton, who recently renewed for five years via Adventure Express (saving enough on projected postal rate hikes to buy a coconut plantation on Maui) and to Mike Derringe, Thomas McFail and David Strand, who each renewed for three years.

Letters
to the
Editor



Dear QuestBusters:
Your clue in *The Official Book of Ultima* about using the ALT-213 combination led me to try other ALT-number combinations, which opened Pandora's Box. I ended up teleporting my entire party all over the place using ALT 982, including having them stacked in one place on top of each other both in the ocean and the Ethereal Void. Unfortunately, I also managed to rewrite parts of the *Ultima VI* program. I erased a ladder up on level three of the Pirate's Cave, a ladder down on level two of Hythloth, and who knows what else. Incidentally, I don't know if this qualifies for the QB contest of killing Lord British, but I also apparently erased him Lord British and Nystul — I can't find them anywhere.

David E. Harding

Always use caution when experimenting or trying any off-the-wall tricks with a game, and make back ups of your saved game and program. No, erasing Lord British doesn't count. You must actually slay him in any game after *III*, so he does not reappear in the game.

I enjoyed *The Official Book of Ultima*. But anyone looking for Lord British's crown on top of his castle, as suggested in the solution for *Ultima V*, will have a tough time finding it — since it's actually on the top level of Blackthorn's castle. A couple of the Words of Power were also misspelled: fallaw should be fallax, and malul should be malum.

Bill Borre

QuestBusters™

The Adventurers' Journal

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Best Quest of the Month: King's Bounty

This rare and captivating quest, an adventure that delivers extensive replay value, succeeds where others created with that goal in mind bit the dust eons ago. Most such games have been action-oriented affairs such as SSI's *Gemstone Warrior*. Like its predecessors, *King's Bounty* simplifies the role-playing side of the quest. But it retains enough magic, combat and mini-quests to capture more of the flavor of role-playing — and never degenerates into shoot-'em-up action.

Ye Plot

King Maximus sends you after the Sceptre of Order, which is buried in a remote location that varies with each new game. The exact spot is portrayed in a "puzzle map," a top-down view of the area where it's hidden. This map is blanketed with a squirming quilt of animated icons representing assorted outlaws and magical artifacts. Each time you apprehend a fugitive or find one of the objects, that portion of the map is uncovered. It's like playing the old TV game *Concentration*: if you're lucky enough to get a good picture of the area from the first half-dozen pieces of the map that you uncover, you can take a stab at finding the

Type: Simplified Role-playing
System: C-64, Apple (128K), MSDOS (384K required for CGA, Hercules, 512K for EGA, Tandy, 640K for VGA, MCGA; no sound board or mouse support)
Version reviewed: MSDOS
Planned conversions: Amiga (Jan), Mac (this fall)

Sceptre without pursuing more villains. (The game was developed by *Might & Magic* author Jon van Canehem, who's well-known for his challenging and unusual end-game puzzles.)

You can play a Knight,

Paladin, Barbarian or Sorceress. This choice serves as a difficulty setting. A Knight can recruit armies quickly, yet has limited magical ability. The Sorceress is a great spellcaster but a weak leader and therefore the hardest character to play.

After visiting the King and hiring some armies, you waltz into the nearest town to get a "contract" to find a criminal. If you can't find the guy or gal, you

can get a fresh contract in any town with no penalty. You can often take advantage of this option: when you discover the location of one villain while looking for another, simply get a new contract on the one you've just found.

Your character's Leadership rating determines the number of troops he can recruit in the hills, treehouses and other structures that serve as home for Trolls, Orcs, Dragons and the like. These recruitment centers house a set number of troops, which prevents you from buying unlimited armies and forcing your way through the game.

Different types of troops have different movement factors, combat skill levels, hit points, potential damage factors, and morale (which affects their damage ability). Each costs a different amount to hire and expects a weekly salary. If you don't have the gold to pay an army, they take a hike.

Time waits for no Adventurer

Time plays several roles. You have to find the Sceptre within a time limit, or the kingdom is lost and the game ends. The armies in some recruitment centers are replenished weekly, and a message tells you which monster types are again available in plentiful numbers. Each week you're paid a commission by the King, and this amount is increased as you discover mineral deposits and other finds.

Treasure chests of gold may be donated to the peasants to boost your Leadership, or retained to pay your bills. You may also increase the number of spells you can learn, and find new spells and artifacts that enhance your abilities. The Amulet of Augmentation, for instance, boosts your spell power at the same time it reveals a piece of the puzzle map.

Spells are also sold in towns, each hawking a different one. Unlike the locations of the castles, the towns' whereabouts are scrambled with each new game, as are those of the artifacts, treasures, recruitment centers, spells and so on.

There are no logical puzzles other than the puzzle map. In towns you can get free information on which, if any, villain rules the nearby castle. Touching signposts along the way will reward you with curt

one-line clues. You can't engage people in conversation or interact in any way except to attack them.

To Arms!

Combat consists of simplified tactical battles involving ranged weapons and spells in addition to bumping into an enemy to attack him. Unless cornered, you can usually avoid battles. Once you decide to attack, the combat arena fills the screen. Some shrubbery or ponds may dot the arena, where your armies begin on the left and the foes on the right.



Apple Version

Combat is easy to master, since there are no weapons to equip or spells to memorize. Spells are cast by punching "U" for use magic, then picking one by pressing a letter. Besides the combat spells, adventuring spells allow you to teleport to castles, summon up a bridge to cross rivers and perform other useful feats.

From Continentia you'll sail to three more continents, though you can't reach others till you find the right maps. When you find the map to Forestria, for instance, its name appears in the sailing menu, and you are zapped directly there at the press of a key. Sailing around the continents is depicted with an animated ship that has oars on the side like a Roman galley. When your ship hits land, the ship remains in the sea and your team's icon hops ashore.

These and other visuals are presented in a cartoon-like style and entertainingly animated. With 640K you get 256 colors and exquisite detail on an MSDOS machine. The Apple version profits from double hi-res graphics and exceedingly swift animation. Sound is deficient in both versions, with just a few noises here and there and no sophisticated music.

A useful automap shows the areas you've visited and the coordinates of your current location. It pictures castles as white squares, but the little reddish ones may be towns, monsters or other game elements that must be visited to identify. The combination of automap and x/y grid system makes it easy to get and keep your bearings.

The 65-page manual includes two reference charts you can photocopy and use to record the locations of the towns,

By Shay Addams

Teleport to next page

The Jetsons: The Legend of Robotopia

When I think back to the \$3.50 I wasted on *Jetsons: The Movie* this summer, I get sick. The whole film is nothing more than a Tiffany video put to music and starring the Jetsons as themselves. The original Judy has every right to be angry at Hanna-Barbera for substituting Tiffany for her in hopes of scoring a commercial success.

Instead, everyone who grew up watching George and the bunch after school felt the same way I did about the movie,

King's Bounty

Teleported from previous page

spells and other items whose locations are randomized. I didn't discover this till halfway through my first quest, but they proved especially useful on the next one. The manual also serves as "type in the word" copy protection.

Everything is keyboard-controlled, and the numeric keypad is used for movement. Mouse support would have been nice but isn't really necessary. The auto-map, character, army and other statistic screens are briskly displayed when you punch them up, facilitating efficient gameplay. Up to nine games in progress can be saved, depending on disk space.

Conclusions: A major distinction between *King's Bounty* and typical role-playing games is that you aren't as inclined to get attached to your armies, who are nameless and very expendable. Another is its streamlined approach, with no armor, weapons or magical reagents to collect and experiment with. Gameplay is well-balanced, with a variety of monsters and magic that keeps you on the edge throughout the quest.

Replay value is one of this game's strong points, but it's also the kind of game you'll want to play again. It took ten hours to finish my first quest, and I started another right away. *King's Bounty* is recommended as lightweight fun for role-playing fans looking for something to do between quests (or even as a brief respite during a major expedition). The multiple saved games feature (up to nine, depending on disk space) means you can compete with others to see who can finish fastest and/or with the highest score, so it's also a great family game.

Skill Level: Adjustable

Protection: Keyword

Price: \$39.95

Company: New World/EA

and it flopped. (I'm anxious to see if I'll really get my Kool-Aid Jetsons space car.)

If you're about to put down this review, hold on a second. My diatribe has a purpose. Because if you really want to experience the spirit, futuristic gadgets and wackiness of *The Jetsons*, you need not look any further than your Amiga. Yes, *The Jetsons* is the only one of the Hanna-Barbera products MicroIllusions worked on that actually made it out the door. And boy am I glad it did, because it took the bad taste I had for the movie out of my mouth.

A strange interface

The Jetsons has a really strange interface that works very well for the game. Though there is a lot of text to read, the player never has to type a word. Instead, interactive graphics enable you to click on objects in the main picture window or "stage area" as they call it, icons in the command buttons and inventory areas, and conversation and action options in the actions area.

In addition, a layout area shows a small overhead map view of your surroundings, with "clickable" exits highlighted (like in *Deja Vu*), and a cast area contains pictures of the characters in the current room. All of this together might sound like a rather complicated interface, but in reality it fits together smoothly. The designers aimed at creating a high-tech interface for a future-based game and they hit the mark.

Interactive graphics galore

One of the major thrusts of MicroIllusions in recent months has been in the graphics and video areas of the Amiga market. For this reason, I expected nothing less than outstanding graphics. I was not disappointed. The picture window contains countless "clickable" objects in almost every location and animation.

When George is flying around the city in his space car, for example, you can click on buildings in the scrolling background to see what they are and to send George in for a landing. All this happens without any lag in the animation. Similar effects are achieved with Judy's floating

diary, Orbitty (Elroy's pet) and Mr. Spacely's floating space phone that follows George around to catch him when he screws up. So as you can see *The Jetsons* is graphically ahead of the pack.

One of the artists was Disney veteran Heidi Turnipseed, well known in animation circles. Turnipseed worked most recently on designing *The Animation Studio* from Walt Disney Software. *The Jetsons* is another fine example of her work.

The story sends George on a trip to the planet Robotopia for Spacely Sprockets. His mission is similar to his role in the movie, to protect Spacely's investment in the planet and find out what is at the heart of a

number of strange occurrences that are driving people away.

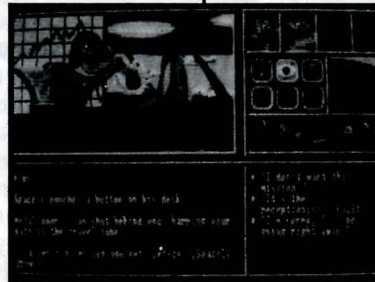
Robotopia was originally inhabited entirely by robots. Now the place is a resort planet. Aborigibots, the natural inhabitants of Robotopia, have been causing a lot of trouble and building a mile-high wall. As George, you must discover the source of the aborigibots' anger and try to appease them before it's too late. Otherwise, you lose your job and might as well head over to Cogswell's Cogs for a new career.

Feel free...

One of the nicest things about *The Jetsons* is its open-

ended geography. You are not confined to just a few locations. You can go from place to place at will, as long as you get to where Spacely wants you next in a reasonable amount of time. Puzzles are object-oriented and strongly situation-oriented, with the choices George makes from the actions window as important as the objects he collects.

Spacely constantly pesters you throughout the game. (If only George could find the nerve to tell off Spacely, this game would be even more fun.) Despite Spacely's hounding, you have a little time to drop by Elroy's school to see his science project, go to the mall and do some shopping to prepare for your new assignment and do a little bit of investiga-



Spacely spouts off

Type: Graphic adventure
System: Amiga (512K)
Planned conversions: none

By Russ Ceccola

tion in other places. I found the ability to go to different locations at will the most challenging part of the game because, while I was revelling in all of the Jetsons' wackiness, I still had to get things done.

The Jetson sense of humor

Regarding that space humor, *The Jetsons* is chock full of it. From the beginning of the game, when you're late for work because Orbitty has taken your autowaker apart, to the layout of Judy's bedroom, the first family of outer space offers plenty of chuckles and giggles.

Rosie the robot maid, the other Jetsons, Orbitty and even Astro all appear in the game at one point or another. A supporting cast of characters such as Audry Andromeda, Spacely's secretary and the inhabitants of Robotopia rounds out the adventure. I rediscovered my love for the Jetsons when I reviewed this game. If only I got home a little earlier from work, I could watch the series just like I did when I was a kid — after a long day in the real world.

Few docs, lots of sound

There's not much in the way of documentation. The instructions are contained in a mini-comic book that leads up to the adventure. This was a nice touch to round out the package.

The music and sound effects throughout the game are lifted right from the show. The swoosh of the transporter tubes and the pings of the space car are unmistakable. Indeed, the only thing missing in the audio department of the game is the "Meet George Jetson, etc." voice-over on top of the theme that starts out the game.

Unfortunately MicroIllusions has suspended conversions of the game due to legal considerations, so the proposed MAC II and MSDOS versions are most likely lost in space.

Conclusions: Humor, interactive graphics, puzzles, sound and music: this one has it all. It's one of the best computer games based on another medium and is highly recommended to those who like the subject. If MicroIllusions could only finish *Jonny Quest*, *Scooby-Doo* and *The Flintstones*, I could complete my transformation into my former self of age seven. I'm still that age mentally. However, after playing *The Jetsons*, one question still plagues me after all these years: is Judy's hair naturally white, or is it died — and will we ever get to see proof?

Skill Level: Beginner

Protection: In package

Price: \$49.95

Company: MicroIllusions

Les Manley: In Search for the King

Since our July look at this game was based on a beta version, we asked our expert in 3-D animated adventures to comment on the final release of this MSDOS graphic adventure.

In Accolade's new three-dimensional animated adventure, you take the part of Les Manley, a minor employee of a failing television station. So minor, in fact, that your main task seems to be rewinding video tapes by hand to avoid wear and tear on the machines.

Your boss hopes to bolster ratings by offering a million dollars in cash to anyone who can provide proof that they have found "The King," an aging, overweight rock and roll legend.

Even though the general population knows that The King is no longer with us on this mortal plane, sightings of him are regularly reported in the national tabloids, one of which is included with your game.

Sounds like a sure-fire plan! Build ratings by offering a million dollars that you know you'll never have to pay. But Les has a lunch hour coming up, and just knows that he can find The King before returning for his afternoon rewindings.

Polyester-suited splendor

You might get a distinct feeling of "Deja Vu" when you take on the mantle of Les Manley. There is no getting around the fact that the character seems to have been inspired by a certain leisure-suited lieutenant of three-dimensional adventuring. The game plays in nearly identical fashion to any of Sierra's 3-D adventures, with many of the same strengths and weaknesses.

Like Sierra, but different

Arrow keys can be used to move the character around the screen, or you can use the joystick or mouse if you prefer. The parser is also roughly equivalent to the one in the Sierra adventures, with possibly a slight edge in vocabulary.

The average standard of graphics is typically better than you will find in the current batch of Sierra games, though they peak at about the same level.

All the 16-color graphic standards are built in, from VGA down to Tandy. CGA graphics are also available. You need 640K for the top end graphics.

A large range of sound boards is supported, including Ad Lib, CMS, Roland MT-32 and LAPC-1, and the Casio CT460. For people without add-on boards, the internal PC speaker and enhanced three-channel Tandy sound are included.

More fun and Les Manley

Les is an average bumbler, a graduate of the Lawrence school of videotape rewinders. But he does have a certain charm all his own.

The plot is not as full bodied as 3-D adventure players are used to, but what *Search For The King* lacks in plot, it makes up for in style and humor.

From the phoney "National Inquirer" newspaper in your game box to the "King" look-alike contest and the final surprise ending where you actually get to see the King himself, it is loaded with tongue in cheek laughs.

More Copy Protection

One of my main disappointments was the copy protection. This bane of gamers everywhere seems to go in cycles, and we are back to the old "squint till you die" methods again.

Search For The King includes some pictures of parts that you would find around a TV station. You must match the on-screen pictures with the ones in the manual.

This is tough enough, since video monitor and printed page rarely look the same. To make it tougher, the pictures are covered with a random pattern of red ink, so you need a red plastic filter to even see them. Luckily, you are only asked to do this once per game, and then only when moving to the next major area.

Conclusions: In spite of its derivative nature, I found *Search For The King* an entertaining diversion. Graphics and sound are just great. If Accolade puts just a little more meat and potatoes into the story next time around, they'll have a sure-fire winner!

Skill Level: Intermediate

Copy Protection: Keyword

Price: \$59.95

Company: Accolade



A 3-D Delight

By Stephen King

War of the Lance

SSI is certainly making the most of their A D & D license. They have role-playing games, arcade games, a dragonflight simulator — and now a fantasy wargame of epic proportions. Like the RPGs, *Lance* will keep you busy for 30 to 50 hours.

When I was a teenager, just getting into games, I spent days happily wrapped up in wargames like Avalon Hill's *Battle of the Bulge*. But about ten years ago I gave up on wargames. They simply take too long to set up and play. One good thing about computer wargames: they set up real fast. They can still take forever to play, however, and I kind of miss the feel of rolling my own dice.

Every computer wargame I've ever seen rolls the dice invisibly as part of the program — all you ever see are the results. You move your pieces into position and choose a strategy, and the program does the rest. Doing such things as hiding the hexes and the dice rolls does add to the general feel of realism, but it also takes an element of fun out of the game. It's a tradeoff we'll just have to live with.

Three games in one

Lance is very complex, with armies spread over one huge irregular continent and six major islands (or maybe it's two

continents and a land bridge).

Each game turn, equivalent to two months of game time, consists of a message and eighteen phases of

Type: Fantasy Wargame

Systems: MSDOS (512K required; EGA CGA), Apple (48K), C-64

Planned conversions: none

action.

Some of these sub-turns are handled automatically by the computer, but some must be handled individually by the player. If you spend five to ten minutes on each of several sub-turns, you could easily spend an hour or more on each game turn. There are also eighteen different types of combat units, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses. To go into any detail about how each unit performs would take too much space. You'll just have to read the manual and experiment with them in play.

In addition to the tactical combat game, there are two other games built into *War of the Lance*: a quest and a diplomatic game. In the diplomatic game, players attempt to win the allegiance of

26 separate nations. Some will naturally ally with the evil Draconians, and some will come in on the side of the good Elves and Men. (Highlord is bad and Whitestone is good, but if it's a two player game, that may just be a point of view.) Until these neutral nations commit to one side or another, they're a real pain in the neck. You cannot move your forces into neutral territory.

And a quest to boot!

There is also the Quest for Magical Artifacts challenge, in which your champions move around in a sort of abstract game. They don't actually fight or do anything, but you get victory points and magical benefits that help you attain victory in battle, things like the Dragon Lances that can ultimately win the war for the forces of Whitestone — if you can keep those heroes alive and questing.

I'd like to compliment designers David Laundry and Chuck Kroegel for the nice look of the game, and for the excellent AI for the computer opponent. Even in its easy mode, the program was more than a match for me in my first attempt.

They also came up with a brilliant tactical display of the individual battles.

When it comes time for swords to clash, you get to see the maneuvers and blows of the good guys and bad in a special combat window. If you're in a hurry to get to the next turn, you can forego the battle display and just get the results. Nice game design, guys!

My only gripe is that the IBM version only supports plain vanilla MSDOS machines. Graphics come in CGA and EGA, and light blue and purple get boring real fast on my Tandy. There is also no sound. Judging from the manual, the MS-DOS version of *War* is a port from a C-64 design, which I'd probably enjoy more since I'd get 16 colors and sound in that version.

Conclusions: *War of the Lance* is a solid effort in fantasy wargaming and a delight for fans of Weiss and Hickman's Dragonlance series. It is not quite as much fun as SSI's *Sword of Aragon*, mainly because you don't have the fine tactical control of your units that you have in *Sword*, but if you like Dungeons and Dragons, the world of Krynn and computer wargames, then you shouldn't miss SSI's *War of the Lance*. The game has great depth and complexity, and will be a real challenge to beat the computer Highlord player, plus it can be played head to head with a friend.

Skill Level: Difficult

Protection: Keyword

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

Company: SSI/Electronic Arts

Adventurous Vacations Excalibur: the Hotel

Ever wondered what it would be like to check into a real fantasy land for a few nights? Then visit the Excalibur Hotel on your next trip to Las Vegas, for it seems to have been built with adventure gamers in mind.

Ok, so the exterior is a rip-off of Disney's FantasyLand, with towers and turrets climbing into the sky. It's the interior that's truly fantastic. Embellished with lions and heraldic symbols, the carpets make you feel like you're walking around inside *Ultima VI*. (I never expected to actually walk on tile graphics.)

When you head for your room, it feels as if the walls are scrolling past as you walk along. The stroll through the hall is like walking around inside *Bard's Tale*. At first the textured walls appear to be made of big stones, and the patterns change as you round the next bend.

The rooms are suitably appointed. Paintings of castles and knights hang from the walls, the bedspreads display a fleur-de-lis pattern, and even the chairs are medieval (yet comfortable) in style.

The casino is bedecked with a huge neon dragon and jousting neon knights, authentic suits of armor stand tall in niches and alcoves, crossbows and maces hang from the walls, and the dealers, waitresses and other employees are attired in period costumes. (It's a funny thing about wearing medieval costumes: you either look perfectly natural or like a complete clown.)

If you haven't seen enough jousting knights by nightfall, stick around for the dinner show. Called "King Arthur's Court," it features real jousting in an oval, earth-filled arena surrounded by seats on three sides. Of course, the knights use break-away lances, but they still put on a good show. Until I saw them decked out in armor and riding horses, I never realized how much knights of olde were basically just cowboys in cuirasses.

One tip: unless you like eating rock cornish hen with your fingers, sneak some flatware into the show. To instill a sense of medieval atmosphere, they make you eat the way they did in ancient England.

This was the most fun I've ever had in Vegas, and the only time I've actually bought a coffee cup with the name of the hotel on it. The place was packed with families, and there are plenty of non-gambling activities for the kids. If you've ever dreamed of visiting Camelot, this is your chance — just be sure to take a knife and fork!

By Shay Addams

By Ken St. André

Punished by "The Punisher"

I wonder if even a single Marvel comics fan would rather play the *Punisher* computer game than read a stack of *Punisher* comics. After several hours of crime-fighting in the streets of Manhattan, I'm almost ready to swear off computer games completely and go back to my first love — comic books. The comics are a lot more fun than *this* game.

You take the part of Frank Castle, an ex-SEAL whose family was gunned down by mobsters. Vowing revenge, you created the grim costume of the Punisher and set out to hunt down every gun-happy criminal in New York. Judge, jury and executioner, you have a simple solution for what to do with the teeming criminal low life of the Big Apple — kill them! Compared to you, Rambo was a milk-livered pantywaist.

A souped-up superhero

Your super powers are entirely technological: a souped-up van, a warehouse hideout, a bulletproof super suit, and the best weapons money can buy. A secret organization known as the Trust cheerfully pays you to eliminate criminals as only you can. The other superheroes of New York, Spiderman, for example, don't

think much of your methods, but do admit that you're hard on the bad guys. To the cops of Manhattan, you're just another outlaw.

As the game begins you have a great opportunity.

For a mere \$500,000, an informant has offered to lead you to the Kingpin's hideout. Wilson Fisk, known as the Kingpin, is an enormous sumo wrestler of a man who controls most of the organized crime in Manhattan, and he's the man you would most like to capture or kill.

However, you are not a rich superhero, and you only have fourteen days to acquire the half million, or the Kingpin will change hideouts and you'll miss your chance. To come up with the money, you will have to obliterate countless street thugs and bust up numerous criminal operations, at least one or two a day. Your

contact from the Trust will feed you targets and pay off when you take them out. You can also confiscate any money the criminals have.

Do or die

And that's the game — a mere framework for you to wreak as much violence as you can on the scum of New York.

In the process you also risk being shot up or slain. You have to fight like a mad dog to collect enough money to find the ultimate villain. Then you have to fight even harder to kill or capture him. The designers said they

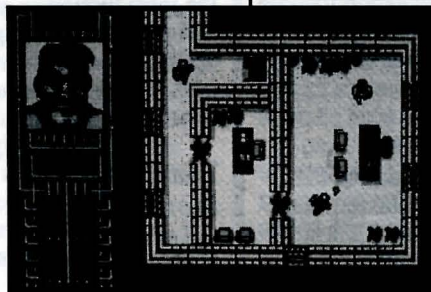
hoped to design a game that you will enjoy as much in the hundredth hour of play as you will in the first. I feel certain that they have accomplished their goal — but perhaps not the way they intended.

There are basically three types of combat in the game: driving the combat van, walking the streets or buildings, and swimming underwater in the scuba scenes. These are all arcade sequences in which your success depends on good hand-eye coordination and mastery of a number of unlikely joystick and fire button combinations. Or, you can do everything from the keyboard. In either case, you may find yourself struggling more with the slow-reaction time or general kludginess of the machine (unless it's a fast one) than with the villains.

Disappointing graphics

Since the game is based on the comics of the Marvel universe, you would expect it to look like a comic translated to the pixelated screen. Lurid is the adjective that first comes to my mind. For the most part, Marvel's comic art is a great deal better than the images they put onscreen for you in the game. The streets of New York are surprisingly empty, and the buildings have neither windows nor doors. The thugs all look like rejects from a Jimmy Cagney movie, but without the character.

Gameplay was slow and boring, just one gunfight after another, with really poor transportation sequences in between. Any driving game you ever played was



Seek & slay the evil Kingpin

probably faster and more fun than the van sequences in *Punisher*. This may be why the designers give you the option to accelerate time. The whole thing would play a lot better on a Commodore 64, or even a Nintendo, than MSDOS.

Obviously the excitement is supposed to come to the game in your head, based on your knowledge of and love for the malevolent Marvel myths. Both Commodore and Nintendo handle sound better than most IBMs without expensive sound boards. In fact, one can't help wondering if the game was designed to be an easy Nintendo port. It seems to be targeted squarely at users aged twelve and under. Paragon does support both Ad

Lib and Covox sound boards, but it's not exactly a Mantovani score, so don't rush out and buy one just to hear their music.

Superb Manual!

The documentation may well be the high point of the game. You get a start-up card with all your game commands on it and instructions for installing to hard drive or to floppy disk. If you use floppies, you should copy the originals and play from your backups. The only copy protection is the old look up a word in the manual routine.

There is also a 32-page *Punisher* player's manual that includes detailed instructions for all the different game segments, from driving the truck to swimming the East River. It is routinely illustrated with digitized comic scenes that have been pasted onto the page by some desktop publishing program. The manual is clear, concise, and competent — nothing to brag about, but at least twice as interesting as the actual game.

Finally, there is a top secret Bureau of Federal Investigations dossier on the Punisher. The dossier consists of various documents, memos, and newspaper clippings recounting something of the origin and comic book history of the Punisher up to the time of the game. If you are not a Marvel true believer, you may enjoy it quite a bit, as it is quite well done — an excellent prop for a role-playing game. (If you are already a Punisher fan, then it will just be so much rehash.) Too bad *Punisher* is more of an action arcade adventure than any kind of role-playing ex-

By Ken St. André

Teleport to next page

Sneak Previews: Buck Rogers, Secret of

Several software companies sent us demos of games that are under development but which were not yet even far along enough to send beta versions. This is probably to get as much coverage as possible before Christmas, by which time these games will be on the shelves. (EA did, however, ask for feedback on *Star-killer* for possible inclusion in the final release, but ignored my suggestion to turn it into an all-text, parser-based version of *Asteroids* for the Timex-Sinclair.)

Buck Rogers:

Countdown to Doomsday

SSI's demo didn't show much of the game, just a few full-screen illustrations and some semi-animated scenes. These looked more suitable for a continuously running display in a computer store than for a preview aimed at reviewers, so all I can say is that the graphics looked great.

The game will employ an "enhanced version" of the *A D & D* engine that finally matured into a playable game system in *Silver Blades*. Whereas *Pool* and *Blades* used two menus for tactical combat commands, *Buck* will be easier to

play with just one. You'll also be able to control your NPCs in ways impossible in the *A D & D* games, and there are over 40 skills for your characters to master.

For the first time, VGA graphics — in 256 colors — will be implemented in the system, and you'll hear music as well as sound effects throughout the quest instead of just during the introduction. SSI promises full sound board support, but so far only guarantees Ad Lib.

The Secret of Monkey Island

Lucasfilm Games put together an "interactive demo" of their upcoming animated adventure, so it was

possible to play through the first scene instead of just glimpsing selected illustrations. *Monkey Island* might wind up as a comical version of *Treasure Island*. Your character is Guybush Threepwood, a



Yo ho ho and a bottle of...

Do you have a cousin named Sven?

As in previous Lucasfilm adventures, you speak to people by choosing one of several statements or questions that are listed after you select the "talk to" command with a click of the mouse or by hitting the appropriate key.

Other aspects of the interface, such as the twelve verbs and moving the cursor around the picture to read the names of interactive objects and characters, remain essentially intact.

In the initial puzzle, you have to find some magic words before a troll will let you pass. The magic words turn out to consist of a two-part phrase that is discovered by solving several related puzzles. All are well-designed, clever and effectively implemented.

In one puzzle, you must get your hands on a fish: a red herring being eaten by a sea gull. (Finally, a red herring that isn't a "red herring" after all!) A bit of dexterity is needed to grab the herring. You must walk to the end of the pier by using the mouse, then quickly punch "p" to pick up the item before the sea gull, frightened by your actions, returns to his dinner.

The three-dimensional effect of the illustrations is exceptionally pronounced, for your character walks farther back into a scene than in most such games. Lucasfilm artists have done another excellent job this time but still appear to be limited in the number of colors that can be shown onscreen in a particular scene. In *Loom*, for example, dithering was employed so artists could pick the most suitable colors for each scene, even though they couldn't use as many as they probably would have otherwise.

The Punisher

Teleported from previous page

perience!

Crash Gordon

One other thing bothered me a lot about this game: it has a tendency to crash. The software doesn't seem to have any error-catching routines at all. If you're playing from floppy and you forget to turn the latch down on your disk drive after switching disks, the program will crash and you lose everything. I spent as much time rebooting the game as I did playing it. As a point of game design, players should not be able to crash the program by making some simple mistake or by hitting the wrong key — it is just sloppy programming that causes such frustration.

If you haven't taken enough punishment in tracking down the Kingpin, boy, oh boy, has Paragon got an offer (or two!) for you. For a mere \$7.95 more, you can get an additional *Punisher Eternity Disk* that includes: 50 brand new missions devised by the original *Punisher* game designers, a Mission construction set that lets you design as many missions as you can imagine, new villains, more graphics, and an extended playing area. As they say, the Punisher's work is never

done!

Also in the box is a coupon worth \$90 (so they say). Featuring Spiderman's likeness and called Medalist money, you can use this coupon to get (almost) free copies of two other games from the Medalist line — such "winners" as *Destroyer Escort*, *Savage*, *Wizard Wars* and *Xenophobia* for a mere \$3 for shipping and handling — offer expired Sept. 30, 1990. What a deal!

(Seriously, folks, it's a terrible deal, especially for the designers of those other games, whose products are being used to help sell another recent Paragon superhero game — but who won't get a penny in royalties when their games are given away.)

Conclusions: Considering that the theme of the game is vigilante violence as a panacea for crime, and that the target audience is most likely impressionable adolescent boys who just want to shoot guns, *Punisher* has to be the most objectionable product of the year from Paragon. I find no redeeming social, philosophical or technical value in it. Not recommended for anyone!

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Keyword

Price: \$39.95

Company: Paragon/MicroProse

Monkey Island and Starkiller

Most of the information about the plot, characters and puzzles emerged in a session with the fortune teller. She sees visions of the upcoming game, predicting you will meet two beautiful women on Monkey Island, fall in love with one and fight with the other. She also says that to escape Melee Island, you must pass three trials: Swordplay, Thievery and Treasure.

Promising characters such as "the pirate LeChuck" and already delivering delightful dialogue in the demo, author Ron Gilbert is on his way to winning an award for funniest game of 1990. This one was supposed to be ready to roll in September, so it may show up by late this month. It looks like an unusual entry in Lucasfilm's line of 3-D adventures, perhaps their shot at the *Space Quest* audience.

Merc Worlds: Starkiller

From EA, this one is designed and programmed by Karl Buitter, who did *Sentinel Worlds: Future Magic*. Apparently he chose to do an entirely new science fiction RPG rather than continue the *Sentinel Worlds* series. This game was the most complete of the three, allowing me to fly the space ship, round up a crew, solve a puzzle and explore some of the planets in the four-system region. In all but the first areas, dialogue hadn't been installed for NPCs, so I didn't get far.

Starkiller casts you as a male or female member of a group of interstellar mercenaries. Your initial goal, as laid out in a data library of optical disks, is to defend a Water Colony in the Ciberan section from imminent attack by Ariel, an Energy World. You must also plumb the mystery of electronic probes interfering with shipping lanes. This leads to a larger plot involving the Typhon's actions of galactic aggression.

As I discovered and read additional optical disks, more of the plot was unveiled. Early on I responded to a Mayday from a friendly ship and found a disk telling about a new, potentially dangerous type of ship. More information came in over the airwaves, and I soon picked up a message from HQ about the Typhons takeover of the Rouyn system.

Your ship, maneuvered via mouse or arrow keys, zips around the stars and planets like a hornet on hyperdrive. In *Starflight*, the same action is more like moving a piece on a board game, one hex at a time. Instead of using fluxes to leapfrog through the stars, you travel through stargates to different systems.

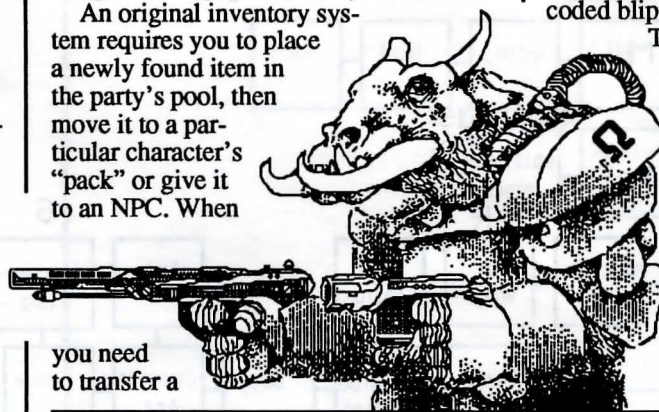
After orbiting a planet, you pilot a hovership that skims the terrain in a se-

quence whose oblique angle view is reminiscent of *Zaxxon*. When you enter a building, the display switches to an aerial view of tile graphics decorated with props such as aquariums and consoles.

Visually brilliant

The first-person illustrations of NPCs are among the most realistic I've seen. Their conversations are convincingly crafted and, depending on your menu choice, branch off along different trains of thought. The documentation says they "know" if they've talked to you before and respond accordingly, making them dynamic personalities rather than the static figures that populate many RPGs.

An original inventory system requires you to place a newly found item in the party's pool, then move it to a particular character's "pack" or give it to an NPC. When



you need to transfer a

weapon from one character to another, it must first be moved into the pool. I didn't encounter any problems in the few days I fooled around with the game, but got the feeling this could get unwieldy. Still, it's too soon to say with any certainty.

An assortment of colorful icons depict weapons, armor and other inventory items. You don't get to grab them and move them around, but their detailed renderings add a lot to the futuristic setting. The only puzzle I saw was simply to collect an item and deliver it to a former merc so he'd join my party.

Space battles are conducted in real-time, as are hovership dogfights. In space, the radar screen shows color-coded blips of ships, planets and the like.

This, like the rest of the action, is lightning fast. It looks like this is the game *Starflight 2* should have been, offering subtle interactions, an engaging story and the thrill of piloting your own space ship in real-time action.

Like *Buck Rogers* and *Monkey Island*, *Starkiller* is set for MSDOS machines first and no conversion plans have been announced.

Adventures Through Time

Aurum software is a brand new company in the adventure game world. Their first offering has a neat plot and premise, an easy-to-use (though sometimes finicky) interface, simple graphics and great packaging. It doesn't excel in any of these areas, but the game shows a lot of promise for the future. I thought it was pretty daring to subtitle the game "*Vol. I*" when the reaction to it could have been negative. Despite this bravado, I will be more than happy to see another game similar to *Scavenger Hunt*. I spent an enjoyable Saturday playing it, only breaking myself away to watch *The Smurfs* and *Night Gallery*.

A "hodge podge" interface

Scavenger Hunt takes a lot of elements from different types of game interfaces and throws them all together. At times, it feels like a Lucasfilm game; at others, like an ICOM game. In any case, it is easy to control your character.

The top half of the screen is the main window, showing a side view of your

character in the current location, very similar in look and feel to *Labyrinth* and *Maniac Mansion*. The character can jump, move left, move right and enter doors. To perform these actions, you can use arrow keys or gadgets.

The bottom left half is the text entry window. The game has a fairly good parser that I still managed to throw for a loop now and then. Plus, it didn't recognize curse words! We reviewers always try out a parser with these. Anyway, the parser gets

you what you need from the game. The only criticism I have is that the objects in a room

should have been set apart from the rest of the room description.

The bottom right half of the screen is a set of boxes that you can click on to perform certain commands like go, look,

Type: Animated Graphic Adventure
System: Amiga (512K)
Planned conversions: none

By Russ Ceccola

Continued on page 12

Walkthrough: *Les Manley in Search for the King*

New York

In General

You may ask anyone about anyone else or anything. Frequently this produces clues or lead to other things to ask about. Certain "ask about" questions are pertinent in specific situations, and these are noted in the solution.

Look in toolbox. Get reporter's ID. S. E. Walk to elevator. Press button. Look guard. Look dream. Get dream.

The Scarf

N. E. E. Go up steps. Ring bell. Show ID. Walk to couch. Sit on couch. Ask about **xfbuifs**. Ask for **tpeb**. Show scarf. **Tqjmm**

Circus Pass

W. [Outside trailer] Knock on door. **Btl** for **xpsl**. S. Get shovel. Work. Drop shovel. N. Knock on door. Talk. **Btl** for **ujdlfu**. E.

Madame Zarmoska

Walk near wagon. Look wagon. Walk on steps. **Ljtt** Zarmoska. Look candle. Take wax. Touch lizard. Take card.

Luigi and Helmut

Go to Strongman (southwest of the platform). Look man. Give **xby**. Wait. Take rosin. N. Give **esfbn** to Helmut. Get Helmut. W.

The Cape

Walk to Test-o-Strength. Look man. Walk to concession. Get popcorn. Enter Big Top. Drop popcorn. E. Give **sptjo** to Trapeze Artist. Get cape. W. W.

Mail-A-Midget

Return to mailbox outside Bus Terminal. Open box. Put Helmut in box.

Going to Las Vegas

Return to Test-o-Strength. Look man. Stand on platform.

Las Vegas

The Desert

Open mailbox. Get Helmut. E. S. Answer phone. N. Open thermos. Drink water. W. W.

N.

The Lobby

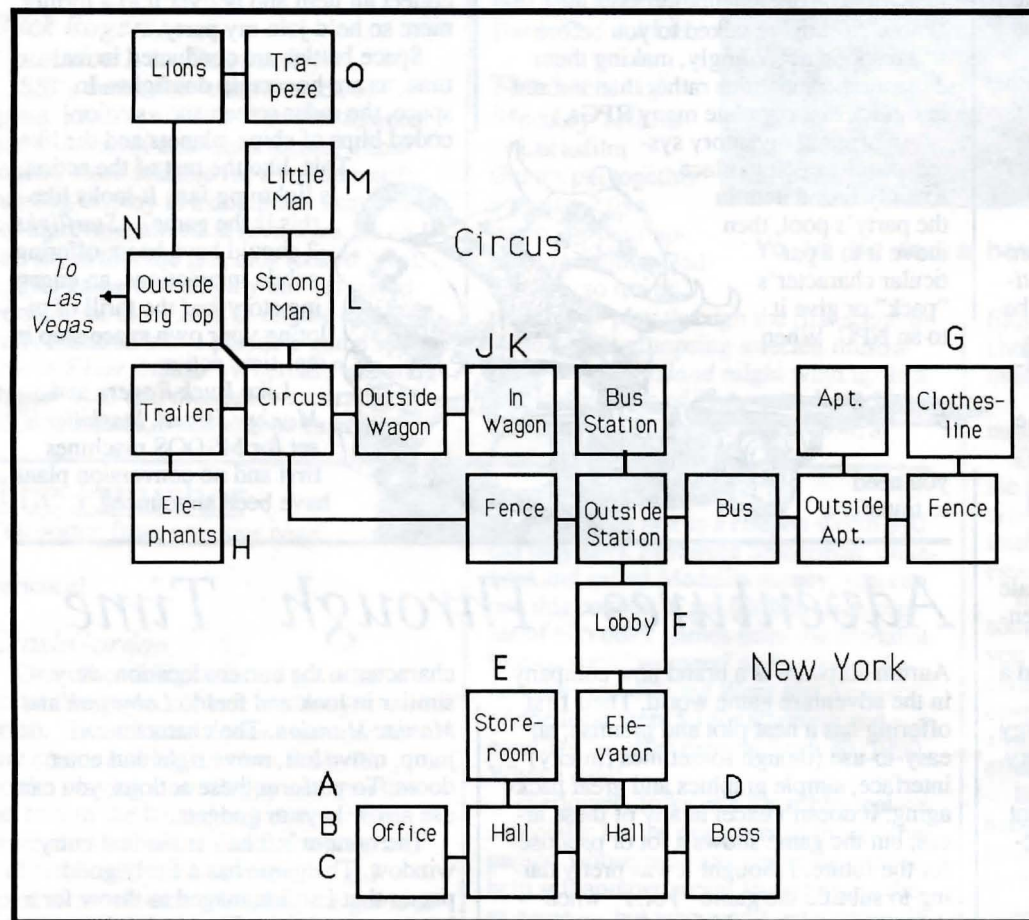
Stand near Bernardo. **Qbhf** Fabulous. NW to pool.

The Pool

W. Sit on lounge. Look woman. Wait. Get sunglasses.

The Typical Room

Go east four times to the elevator. Enter. Press button. E. N.



Starting Out

Listen to radio. Walk behind desk. Open drawer. Look in drawer. Get thermos. Get lunch bag. Open lunch bag. Look in lunch bag. Drop jar. Get jar. Open jar. Look in jar. Close jar. East. Open thermos. Fill thermos with water (at the fountain). E. E. Watch TV. Walk to desk and stand near keys.

Getting the Keys

Btl boss for **sbjtf**. Wait till Stella diverts boss's attention. Get keys. W. W. Unlock and open door. N.

tpeb on **tdbsg**. E. Climb fence. Get scarf. West (five times).

Circus

In General

To enter areas, stand near a person or object and "look man/object." If you get a "not a good spot" message, move around till you find a good spot.

By Fred J. Philipp

The Bathroom

Look sink. Get floss. Exit bathroom. Look sign. Get sign. Turn sign over. Look sign.

The Skeleton Key

Go near cart. Look cart. Sit on bed. Wait. Stand. Walk to door to hall. Put **tjho** on door. Walk near cart. Wait till the maid turns her back while making bed. Get key.

Penthouse

Return to elevator. Press button. West, then north to the top of the Hot Tub.

Hot Tub

Look tub. Look inside tub. Look drain. Look inside drain. **Ujfgmptt** to **ifmnuv**. **Mpxfs ifmnuv** into drain. Get **gmptt**.

The Suit

Go into the cleaners and give receipt to Susie. Get suit.

Leaving Las Vegas

Leave hotel. Look. **Ijudiijlf**.

The Kingdom

Close Gate

South. Walk to building in northeast corner. Bump into building and walk east until you're outside Red's Bar. Enter phone booth. **Xfbs tvju**. Enter bar. **Tjoh**. Wait outside bar until you're told the gates are open.

The Banana

Enter gate and walk to Mansion steps. **W**. [Foyer] **N**. [Dining Room] Look table. Look on table. Look fruit bowl. Look in fruit bowl. Get banana.

Secret Passage

Go upstairs to bedroom. Walk east to wall. Open **cvsfbv**. Look in. Press button. Wait. Slide down pole. Wait. Release pole.

Sandwich

Walk to east side of counter. Open counter. Walk inside and go to the east side. Look under counter. Get bread. Peel banana. Make sand-

wich. Exit through door to dining room.

The Alarm

Tube on bearskin rug. Look inside mouth. Put **ifmnuv** in mouth.

D: Keys

E: Reporter's ID

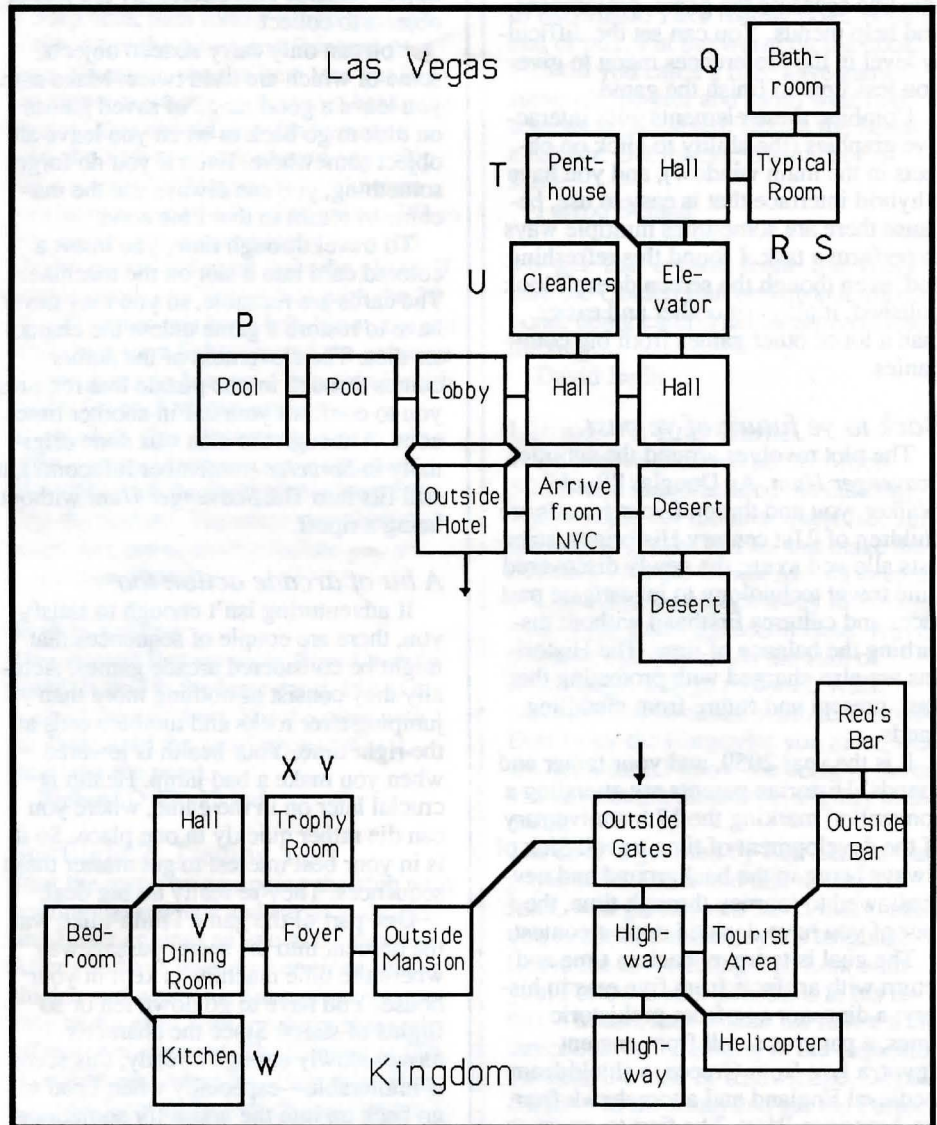
F: Dream

G: Scarf

H: Shovel

I: Ticket

J: Wax



Trophy Room

Walk behind rope. Get guitar. Look guitar. Fix guitar with **gmptt**. Look case. Get microphone.

Last Act

Return to Red's Bar and go inside. Sing. Sit back and watch the show.

Map Key

A: Lunch bag

B: Jar of peanut butter

C: Thermos

K: Resurrection card

L: Rosin

M: Helmut

N: Popcorn

O: Cape

P: Sunglasses

Q: Dental floss

R: Sign

S: Skeleton key

T: Receipt

U: White suit

V: Banana

W: Loaf of bread

X: Guitar

Y: Microphone

Adventures thru Time

Teleported from page 9

take and open. Finally, a status line in the middle of the screen shows your character's health, your score, the time and the year. Clicking the right mouse button on this line accesses the game, preferences and help menus. You can set the difficulty level in the preferences menu to give you less time to finish the game.

Combine these elements with interactive graphics (the ability to click on objects in the main window), and you have a hybrid interface that is easy to use, because there are sometimes multiple ways to perform a task. I found this refreshing and, even though the screen doesn't look polished, it plays smoother and easier than a lot of other games from big companies.

Back to ye future of ye past...

The plot revolves around the subtitle, *Scavenger Hunt*. As Douglas "Buck" Walker, you and three of your friends are children of 21st century Historians, scientists allowed to use the newly discovered time travel technology to investigate past races and cultures firsthand without disturbing the balance of time. The Historians are also charged with protecting the past, present and future from meddling hands.

It is the year 2059, and your father and friends' Historian parents are attending a convention marking the 17th anniversary of the development of time travel. Sick of always being in the background and never allowed to journey through time, the four of you have decided upon a contest.

The goal is to travel back in time and return with artifacts from five eras in history: a dinosaur egg from prehistoric times, a papyrus scroll from ancient Egypt, a lyre from Greece, a shield from medieval England and a tomahawk from the American West. The first to return to the present with these objects is the winner.

Now, this is a fairly original plot as far as computer games go. Some might argue that it reminds them of *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, but I beg to differ. Bill and Ted are stupid Southern California teenagers, whereas you and your friends are children of scientists and raised to follow in their footsteps.

The challenge is a personal test for each of you to prove that you can accomplish it with the same amount of care and forethought shown by the Historians. I truly enjoyed the story and, after I finished the game, wanted more. Though I had just gotten used to the time travel machine, I still wanted to do a lot more ad-

venturing.

The puzzles in *Scavenger Hunt* have solutions that range from very simple to downright nonsensical. They kept me on my toes, and I only cheated and referred to the "reviewers only" hint sheet a couple of times. Most of the puzzles are object-related. There certainly are lots of objects to collect.

You can only carry sixteen objects, some of which are used twice. Make sure you leave a good range of saved games on disk to go back to when you leave an object somewhere. Even if you do forget something, you can always use the machine to return to that time zone.

To travel through time, you insert a colored card into a slot on the machine. The cards are reusable, so you may never have to restore a game unless the character dies. The cleverness of the author comes through in one puzzle that requires you to confront yourself in another time zone. Although the idea was done originally in *Sorcerer* (remember Infocom?), it still fits into *The Scavenger Hunt* without being a ripoff.

A bit of arcade action too

If adventuring isn't enough to satisfy you, there are couple of sequences that might be considered arcade games. Actually they consist of nothing more than jumping over rocks and tumbleweeds at the right time. Your health is lowered when you make a bad jump. Health is crucial later on in the game, where you can die rather quickly in one place. So it is in your best interest to get master these sequences. They're really no big deal.

One part of the game I didn't like was the descent into the secret passageway where the time machine is kept in your house. You have to go down ten or so flights of stairs! Since the character moves slowly enough already, this scene is intolerable—especially when I had to go back up into the house for something I'd forgotten. Fortunately, the game will accept typed-in commands even when the character is moving.

The graphics are very simplistic but also very descriptive and revealing. Objects look like they should and most can be selected within the picture. Sound is almost nonexistent. If atmospheric music had been added, I would have enjoyed *Adventures Through Time* so much more.

Packaging includes a United Earth (world government of the 21st century) sticker, time machine operator's license, function key command template and Historian's Handbook (copy protection on that ugly brown paper). The copy protection comes into play right outside the time machine room.

Conclusions: Overall, I was very impressed. I expected a lot less from a new company, but was thrown for a loop. If mine and other criticisms are taken into account, *Vol. II* could be exceptional. Until then, I'll just have to play other time-traveling games!

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Ugly brown paper

Price: \$49.95

Company: Aurum Software

MSDOS Conversion

Future Wars

I looked over the VGA graphics version of this slick animated adventure from France, which was just converted from the Amiga original (the game, not France). It's an entertaining time travel story in which you, an innocent painter, get caught up in the middle of a war being waged by earthlings and aliens of the distant future.

The graphics are brightly daubed with color but not quite as polished and don't have the aura of fine art that graced the Amiga original. At least the text is easier to read in the menu overlays that cover the picture. It employs the same system of interactive graphics, which lets you choose a verb, then watch the names of interactive objects appear behind the verb in the parser window as you glide the cursor around the screen.

I had just as much trouble getting the cursor to stay on some of the small items (since they're barely a pixel or two wide) while I clicked the mouse button. And the program will wear out your mouse hand by making you get close to an onscreen object before you can operate it or use something on it (unlike Sierra and Lucas-Film games, in which the "go to" command is implied and your character "realizes" he must walk over to an object in order to use it.)

One convenient enhancement for MSDOS allows you to change the backup drive to A, B or C at any time. However, the game froze on me when I tried to restore a game saved on A while playing from B. To avoid problems, save on the same drive you're playing on.

The music from the Amiga game sounds equally exciting when piped through a Roland, and the program also supports Ad Lib and the PC speaker.

Conclusions: Despite a few annoying trivialities in the game design and several far from logical puzzles, this is recommended for fans of animated adventures. It is still one of the best European quests and a lot of fun.



Keys to the Kingdoms



Secret of the Silver Blades

Don't have your Cleric (or other character equipped with a non-edged weapon such as a Mace or Flail) fight Giant Slugs, as they will do zero points damage. Storm Giants aren't affected by Lightning Spells, and Frost Giants are not affected by Ice Storms or Cone of Cold. You can slow down Golems with a Lightning spell, but Fireballs will heal them. If you tire of combat, reduce the play level. This lowers the number of hit points of the monsters, not the number of encounters. Remember to increase the play level before tackling the Dreadlord — just to be fair!

Teleport gates are really handy for shuttling between town and the mine. Some locations are: 3, 0 in the Mayor's home goes to 1, 1 near the Well of Knowledge; 5, 48 in Red Dragon's Lair goes to 7, 1 near the Well; 10, 6 in Black Circle Headquarters goes to 14, 14 near the Well; and 2, 15 in the Temple of Tyr goes to 3, 3 near the Well. Note: the teleporter on level eight is broken and teleports you somewhere on level nine.

Les B. Minaker

New Verdigris: When in the Armoury (14, 6), buy mirrors to reflect the gaze of Basilisks and Medusae. The canaries will warn the party of bad air in the mines. Be sure to restore all hit points before entering area 15, 10. Upon entering that room, all party members will suffer about 30 points damage each, then have to fight three Cockatrices, two Medusae and three Fire Giants. **Black Circle HQ:** area 14, 6 is the Armoury for the Black Circle. Treasures include a Quarterstaff +2. Area 8, 4 contains a secret door. To enter it, the party must have the key from 10, 5. The key will glow, then the party must look or search to find the door. **Temple of Tyr:** An entire hoard of treasure is stored at 15, 13. Some items include two Shields +3, Chain Mail +3 and a Dagger +3. **Answers to riddles seven and eight:** xjoe and gjsf (see last month's issue for answers to other riddles).

Brian James

To duplicate powerful items and gold: save the game, then deposit all such items in the New Verdigris vault. Go to the Training Room and drop (erase) the characters. Then load your saved game and return to the Vault; you'll have two of each item. This process may be repeated as often as you like.

Brandon Doan

The Kristal

After several flights in space, you'll come across the ship of the pirate who kidnapped the Princess. Fire at it till it enters a warp hole, then follow it into the Dark Void. After the pirate and Princess pass your character, use the item you got from the Princess when you first met her in the Palace. You should now find yourself with the Belt and back aboard your ship. Set a course for Magno, but make sure you have at least 40 Psychic points. When you arrive, you automatically lose 100 Health points and must fight the pirate. If you're good, you'll beat him with the 20 Health points you have left. If not, try and find more easy fights around the universe before going to Magno. (You gain Health points for each victorious battle.)

A combat tip: the easiest way to win a fight is to just keep using the overhead blow (joystick pushed up, and keep hitting the button). The other guy almost always runs out of energy before you do.

Andrew Phang

Witch's Brew

The treasure that reviewer Russ Ceccola couldn't find is the huge pearl. It's in the ooze in the cauldron. Stir the ooze with the ladle until the pearl is caught in it, then take the pearl.

Richard D. Goodkind

Starflight 2: Trading Tips

Start the game by equipping the ship with nothing but engines and cargo pods, getting better engines as you make money. After you have level five engines, add shields and weapons. Save often, as it's easy to die even with top defensive and offensive equipment. The G'nunk at 159, 30 sell Phase Inductors. They want Data Crystals from 7, 51 (which you can get by trading Livelong from 125, 95. The Djaboon at 161, 53 sell Amusoballs. Godmasks are found at 54, 195. Get a Field Stunner at 184, 148 for Dreamgrids. Planetary teleporters are traded at 242, 164 if you have some Grow Goo. The Sentients at 106, 73 and 12, 157 will not trade.

Caryn Neumann

King's Quest IV: Ye Beginning

Go east twice, then north and cross the bridge. Look under the bridge. Get Golden Ball. Go west and enter the house. Clean house. After dinner, clean up. Get pouch of diamonds. Leave house. Go south. Enter mine. Give pouch of diamonds to Dwarf with lantern. Get lantern (hold onto it for the Troll's cave later on).

Leave mine. Go east and look for worm. If it's there, take it and go west to the ocean. Go north three times, knock on the door and enter the house. Give diamonds to fisherman. Take fishing pole. Walk to end of pier. Put the worm on the hook. Fish till you catch a fish. Save game. Jump off the pier and swim west two screens to the island. Search the beach for a feather. Get feather. Swim back to shore.

J arrod Boland

To get the crown from the frog: take the Golden Ball and drop it into the pond, being careful not to get too close to the frog.

David Inglis

Ultima VI: End Game

Once you've gathered all the Moon Stones and manufactured the balloon, you're ready for the final quest [see July for how to get the Stones and make the balloon]. Use the Orb of Moons to create a Moon Gate one space away to the southwest. Enter the Moon Gate. Travel due south till you reach the Hall of Knowledge, a large pyramid. Walk around it and continue south to the coast. Don't slay the Gargoyles you meet, who are important. Follow the coast to the east to a cave in the mountains slightly to the north.

The cave is guarded by Beh Lem, a Gargoyle child. Enter and talk to Captain John, who gives you a scroll that enables you to speak the Gargoyle's language. Leave the cave, taking Beh Lem with you. Follow Beh's directions to his father's house, then follow his father's instructions. After talking to the Inquisitor, travel to the Hall of Knowledge. Dispel the field to the south and get the Purple Lens. Create a Moon Gate two spaces away and to the northwest. It takes you to Moonglow.

Go north to the Lycaem and follow the trail to the east, where you'll find a the Lensmaker in a building. If you have a Glass Sword (search in Trinsic), he'll create a second lens for you. Create a Moon Gate two spaces to the east and go to Yew. Follow the trail east till you reach a dock. Take the skiff to Lost Hope Bay and go all the way south. You'll find a trail leading to the Cyclops' House. Talk to Cyclops. Search dungeon for Vortex Cube. Once you have the Cube and the two Lenses, return to the land of the Gargoyles. Travel to the north and follow the trail that dead ends by the

mountains. Cast Wind Change and use balloon. Enter Temple and talk to Shrine. If it says you're not focuses, this means your Karma is too low. You can raise it by talking to Iolo and saying Spam, Spam, Spam, Humbug to access the cheat menu and edit your character [or you can just play for a long time and be good]. If you're sent on a quest, the answers are **dpfy**, **bmm mjgf** and the mantras are **psvobo**. Create a Moon Gate one space away to the southeast. Enter the Shrine and follow the directions written in the Codex. Once it is all set up, use the Vortex Cube.

Brett Stauffer

Useful teleports: these use the Alt 214 technique of holding down the Alt key and pressing those numbers in succession on the numeric keypad (don't enter commas, spaces or other punctuation marks; the 0s are zeros, not letters). Paws: 16B, 22A, 0; Buccaneer's Den: 242, 275, 0; Ye Lycaenum: 37B, 1A7, 0; Nicodemus' Hut (for spells, etc.): 148, 0CC, 0; Hawkin's final resting place: 09B, 0E6, 4; Hythloth: 3B4, 3A3, 0; Sin V'raal: 329, 0EF, 0; Captain John: E3, F0, 4; Temple of Singularity: 7F, 31, 5; Stonegate: 258, 119, 0. [See September Keys for more.] **Just for Fun:** after winning the game, talk to the Wisps and get the Armageddon spell. If not level eight already, use Iolo's cheat menu to attain it, then stand in front of Lord British and cast the spell.

Michael Noth

Escape from Hell

City on Edge of Eternity: Get Stalin and Kahn to join for now. Get (and keep) Laptop Computer. In northeast corner, get Garbage Can Lids and equip for defense. Kill the Screamer in the Courthouse to get his Mirrored Shades. Give it to NPC north of the Fire Pit to get a Trench Coat. Loot Minos' Estate in the northwest. **Limbo:** go southwest and pick up Ach Chu (first give Stalin's useful items to Khan, then drop Stalin). Check homes for useful items. Get Bow training in Library. **Training Camp:** Head north to the tridents. On the way, see Quasimoto for shovel. Hit tridents. In graveyard, use shovel for useful items. To master Lockpicking skill, stand near door and use lockpick (will boost to ten). When ready, hit the building in the northwest and loot chests for Hell Guard Pass. **Recruitment Cave:** head east, south, east and north to the cave on the map. In the southeast room you'll find the Demonic Shield. Leave and head south to Lucifer's Landing.

Fred J. Philipp

Drakkhen

When creating characters, enter your first character's name as 31415927. When asked to repeat it, type SUPERVISOR. Finally, name the character as usual. This will give you higher stats than usual. After finishing character generation, reboot the game as normal. Now whenever you're standing outside, you can press the control key to access a special menu. The left half of the menu lets you select places to go, the right handles monsters you can encounter. Experimentation will prove useful.

David Mullen

Conquests of Camelot

In Gaza: don't hire Jibar; go with Hazm. Don't drink from the first lake, don't fight with guards at city wall. **In Jerusalem:** don't chase thief who steals your purse. If you need money, sell your mule to Mohammed. When buying apples from the Seeress, buy the Apple of Truth. **In Catacombs:** get medallion from mummy by using sword.

Thomas Chambers

In Catacombs: use sword to get Amulet and approach sliding door to obtain Golden Apple. Find Galahad (you'll get bitten) and give him the healing potion (from the beggar before the entrance to the Catacombs). Place apple in hand of Venus and pass test to escape, using Lodestone to determine directions.

Charles D. Jones

Chronoquest II

When starting out, pick up the anchor from the seaside and examine rocks to the right of the screen to find some coins. Get the trunk from the village; you'll need it in Stage XIII. Stage X contains the sword (useful against the snake in Stage XI) and the sheath. To enter the house in Stage III, examine the door carefully to find a key. Give it to the Blacksmith, who will modify it. Use the key to enter the door. Be polite to the Guardian inside, and he'll give you a gold compass. Once you arrive in Stage XIII, examine the door to the tavern and you'll find the horseshoe. To get past the Musketeers, challenge them by using the glove.

Andrew Phang

Megatraveller 1

When creating characters, make one skilled in energy weapons. It also helps to give one character a high skill level in gambling. Once you start playing, kill the three assassins waiting for you outside the bar on Efate. Then go directly to your ship and fly to Llun (in the Efate system) and land on the planet. Go to the starport

and select the buy command. Go down to the word "Null" and hit the plus key to buy it. You'll instantly receive a billion credits! After getting the money, outfit each character with a Battle Dress, PGMP, and nine of type of grenade. Upgrade the ship's computer to Model 3, buy all necessary programs and a Jump 2 drive. Follow the instructions given at the outset of the game, and you'll have an easy time of it.

Nick Rodolakis

Code-name: ICEMAN

After the briefing in Washington, don't forget to take your orders from the table. Before descending the elevator, walk over to the guard and "get id card." He gives you the wrong one, so type it again. Use ID card to open the secret compartment in your briefcase once you're on the sub. The safe combination is 23448803. The briefcase combination is 762134.

David Inglis

Ancient Land of Ys

Daan Tower: to pass through the Musical Room, retrace your steps out to the column hall. Use the hammer to strike the second column to the right. The column will be smashed in half. You can enter the tower only after defeating the final monster in the mine. Magical items will not work against the major monsters, so always save before fighting one. You can't read a book till you get glasses from Mara.

Caryn Neumann

Future Magic

There's a weapons shop on Ceyjavik: land at 2112, 480 to buy weapons and ammo. Don't board pirate ships till your team has high hit points, strong armor and weapons and lots of ammo. To boost Attributes, find the corresponding Health Spas inside towers on Caldorre. This costs 1,000 credits per lesson.

David Inglis

Keys to the Keys

Each month *two* contributors to Keys get the game of their choice. The winners are 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 winners: David Mullen and Charles D. Jones

To decode clues,
count one letter back.



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Trade or sell your old adventures with a free ad. (Adventures only, no pirated software, limit of 10 games per ad. Please state system.)

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ST

Want The Witness, Suspect, Planetfall, Zork 3, Infidel, Cutthroats, Enchanter, Suspended.

Waiting for Duffy

Duffy's eating sand for breakfast, so contact these people if you can help.

M & M II: how to get thru barrier in Corab's Cave? Out of Dawn's Cavern with Orb? Dolores Buck, POB 53, Benedict MD 20612

M & M II: What's final word? Dragon Wars: how to finish off Namtar? David Escobar, 1079 Fuchsia Dr, Sunnyvale CA 94086

Dragon Wars: how to restore city of Yellow Mud Toad? Bard I: where's review board? Smurfy, 1400 Banana Rd Lot 126, Lakeland FL 33809

Borrowed Time: how to prevent being killed on steps? Hollywood Hijinx: how to get in house? R. E. Whitley, 1651 Madison Ave C-3, Anderson IN 46011

Neuromancer: need password for Central Justice. How to get past Larry in Microsofts? L. Perez, 420 Douglas St, Elgin IL 60120

Manhunter SF: what do I do with man with the pipe? What's message from Jewel of Heaven and what does it mean? How to enter Laundromat, get anything at The Shop? Any general help? Randy Hovdestad RR 1 Metcalfe, Ont., Canada K0A 2P0.

Journey: how to open gate in 2nd part? After leaving cave, how to get through forest without Fire Essence; can you save Bergeron? Cutthroats: after meeting on Lookout Point, how do I get out to sea? Brad Nolan, 8 Longmeadow Rd, Lincoln RI 02865

Transylvania (ST): where is cross? Sue Medley, 9 Warwick Rd, Sidup, Kent, England DA14 6LJ

Knights of Legend: need help. N. Andreassen, 5742 Princeton Pl, Ypsilanti MI 48197

Future Magic: need clues on Sentinels, how to get NPCs to talk; who can use Laser Rifles; what are unnamed materials on planet surfaces, how to get rid of them once aboard ATV? LTC Anthony Giasi, USAE SHAPE-POL Div, APO NY 09055

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