



QuestBustersTM



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Advanced D & D: The Pool of Radiance

By Shay Addams

Overrun with monsters, the 1000-year-old city of Phlan is slowly being reclaimed block-by-block by adventurers daring enough to venture beyond the civilized part of town. As you uncover lost lore about Phlan and explore the territories in the surrounding Wilderness, you learn of Tyranthraxus, the mastermind behind the invasion of monsters, and the source of his power—the Pool of Radiance. A total of 18 quests, one for each of the game's 16 x 16-square mazes, awaits the diligent deliver of dungeons who enters the Forgotten Realms in the first computer game officially based on TRS's *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* series of paper and pencil role-playing games.

Type: Tactics-Oriented Fantasy Role-playing
Systems: C 64/128
Planned Conversions: IBM (October), Apple II, ST, Amiga

Two of the more than two dozen people on the "SSI Special Projects Team" responsible for *Pool of Radiance* are Keith Brors and Paul Murray, who did *Wizard's Crown* and *Eternal Dagger*, and the credits even list SSI president Joel Billings as a playtester. Westwood Associates, who did *Questrom II*, also contributed to the programming and graphics. The story line came directly from TSR's game designers, and many of the puzzles were a collaborative effort. (A sequel, *Azure Bonds*, is already scheduled for next year.)

Character Creation

Since all role-playing games were at least inspired by *D & D*, everyone is already familiar with the six races of Dwarves, Elves and so on, the four class-

es (Fighters, Magic-Users, etc.) and six Attributes. (Non-human NPCs may combine classes.) But there are nine alignments from which to choose: Lawful Good, Lawful Neutral, Lawful Evil, True Neutral, Neutral Evil, and Chaotic Good, Chaotic Neutral or Chaotic Evil. (I wanted a Chaotic Chaotic character—but nooooooooooooo!) Alignment determines how NPCs (non-player characters) react



to a team member. To allow *A D & D* players to use their paper and pencil characters, a Modify option was included; this lets you alter a character's attributes—it's also a great way to cheat!

After rolling up a character, you customize his or her picture by selecting from a library of head and body graphics. (You can actually put a female head on a male body—pretty weird!) You also get to alter the type and color of the elements composing each character's combat icon: head, shield, weapon, and more. You can name your character, but can't rename him or her later. The party may consist of up to six characters and a pair of NPCs, who can be hired in town or may be found while questing.

A Man with a Phlan

Town and dungeon scenes are depicted with distinctive first-person graphics that show off good spot animation when you bump into characters or monsters. You'll find three Temples, a training area, a gambling den, lots of shops (but none that

Origins-GenCon of 1988

By Ken St. André

We live in an age of miracles and wonders, a world in which every one of us possesses powers that would dwarf those of the wizards, heroes and monsters we pretend to be while questing for gold and glory in mazes, dungeons and castles. Last week I entered the belly of a big silver bird and flew halfway across the continent to congregate with my fellow Mages in a massive fortress on the shores of a mighty lake. In other words, I attended the combined Origins-GenCon, held August 18-21 in Milwaukee.

For those whose experience is limited to computer games, GAMA (Game Manufacturers of America) puts on a national convention every summer to show off new products, sell lots of games, sponsor

tournaments, give awards and so forth. Every conceivable special interest group in gaming turns up for these things.

Fantasy role-players (*Dungeons and Dragons* and the like) account for the majority of conventioners, but every other possible group is also well represented. Board gamers spread their maps and roll their dice across countless tables and down long stretches of hallways. Miniaturists take over every open space to re-fight the Napoleonic wars, sink the Bismark or engage in simulated jet combat. Computer gamers fill a hall roughly the size of a small city and play run-and-gun games—sixteen at a time. Sports gamers are rolling dice and flipping cards. Play-by-mailers are giving out free

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Adventure Hotline



New Games for the Fall

King's Quest IV is out for IBM. SSI just released *Demon's Winter* (Apple, C 64). It uses the *Shard of Spring* game system and is priced at \$29.95. EA says *Future Magic* is definitely out for the IBM. Looks like a series, for the full title is now *Sentinel World I: Future Magic*. *Mars Saga* probably shipped for the IBM by now, and the GS version of *Bard's Tale II* should also be available. Interplay's *Neuromancer* was set to ship late September or early October for the C 64. Infocom picked up *Quarterstaff*, a Macintosh graphic adventure with RPG overtones, from Simulated Environment Systems, which had marketed it independently. Now subtitled *The Tomb of Setmoth*, the program was extensively revised (we never reviewed it because we were waiting for SES to get all the bugs out, which never quite happened) by Infocom, who even added color for the Mac II. Owners of the original version can trade it for the new one for \$20. Infocom's new graphic games *Zork Zero* and *Shogun* (both Apple 2 and Mac) were set to ship this month, and *Journey* is scheduled for Mac, Apple 2 and GS. Mindscape's *Colony* is out now for the Mac.

Conversion Mini-Castle

The ST and Mac versions of *Twilight's Ransom* are out. A Mac version of Softworks' *Adventure Game Toolkit* has been released, and it allows you to play games written with the MS-DOS version (or vice versa). It's a shareware program that costs \$20 to register, and comes with source code for a dozen text adventures, including *Original Adventure*. Softworks is running an Adventure Game writing contest (415 659-0533 for information).

Wasteland II and Bard's Tale IV?

Electronic Arts refuses to comment on whether they'll do sequels for either of these games, but you can probably expect to see them. You will definitely be able to use your characters from both games in two of Interplay's role-playing titles that will follow *Neuromancer*. Brian Fargo

says completely new game systems are being developed for each. The plot for the one that will accept *Wasteland* characters was written by Michael Stackpole, and their next fantasy RPG was written by Steve Peterson, who created the *Champions* pencil and paper RPG.

On the Way

Might and Magic II is not far off. *Faery Tale Adventure II* is much further away. (In fact, it's barely a speck on the horizon.) Micro Illusions still hasn't got all the bugs out of *Land of Legend*. PolarWare fans will have to wait for summer to play their next graphic game, *The Apprentice*, which is supposed to be very different and feature lots of animation.

Not Another Newsletter!

If you're dreaming of designing computer games for a living, check out the *Journal of Computer Game Design*. It's \$30 for six issues a year, with articles by publisher Chris Crawford and a host of other programmers. JCGD, 5251 Sierra Rd, San Jose, CA 95132.

Contest Winners

Ken Pomaranski won this month's *Keys* drawing, and the Random Drawing went to Richard Sanford.

Sierra Goes Public

Last month it was Mindscape, and now Sierra On-line has gone public with an offer to sell 1,400,000 shares of common stock at \$9-11 a share. The offering was expected to take place in early October. Anyone interested in a prospectus can contact Piper, Jaffray & Hopwood, Inc., Piper Jaffray Tower, 222 Ninth St., Minneapolis, MN 55402.

Quest for More Clues

Since *Quest for Clues* hit the stores, many new subscribers have asked "How do I join the QuestBusters Guild?" Easy, just send us \$50! Only kidding. There is but one way to join—by doing a walkthrough that is officially accepted by the Guild-

Dear QuestBusters:

I'm writing about your plan to conserve space by abbreviating phrases such as "Seek and Slay the Evil Wizard" to "S & S the E. W." I hope you abandon this trend, because nonstandard abbreviations are generally annoying. I doubt the term S & S the E. W. is going to catch on—it's too long and clumsy. By foisting a lot of jargon onto your readers, you might make some drop out, as well as discourage possible new subscribers. Nobody wants to subscribe to a newsletter they can't read.

Thomas Q. Radigan

Why don't you just S & G the XYZ and think about it for awhile, maybe you'll D. B. the RZLL—if you've got enough OPPE! Actually, the whole idea of S & S the E. W. was intended as a parody of the way some magazines go off the deep end with jargon and abbreviations. (Hopefully someone out there got it!) To clarify future efforts at nonstandard humor, we'll clearly label them with the line "Attempt at Humor—Do Not Take Seriously."

Dear QuestBusters:

With excellent software reviews and informative interviews, *QuestBusters* continues to maintain its dominance over other gaming magazines. I especially liked the way you handled the Joel Berez interview, focusing on changes in Infocom's software instead of the allegations in O'Neill's letter. I also like the Brian Moriarty interview. But please change your name. *QuestBusters* sounds like a bad pun on the movie *GhostBusters*.

Walter Compton

But Walter, it is a bad pun on GhostBusters.

QuestBustersTM

The Adventurers' Journal

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Mainframe: the computer strikes back!

By Tim Snider

Near the close of the 20th Century, computerization has penetrated every aspect of our society. Computers run everything from simple bank tellers to major national defense systems, and thanks to telecommunications, they're all linked to each other. A new supercomputer, the Tricomplex System, was designed to control all the others and make them work as one. The planet would have been harmonious for the first time—if it had worked.

Paranoia Strikes Deep

Tricomplex exceeded everyone's dreams by independently thinking and responding with almost human emotions. No one noticed what Tricomplex was up to until it was too late. Tricomplex wanted to live...forever. Upon scanning all records on the planet, it realized that most of Earth's major wars, disasters and catastrophes were caused by that unpredictable and irrational being called man. It saw man as a threat to its existence.

With Tricomplex in control of all the nation's major weaponry, man was helpless to defeat the onslaught of robotic warriors the supercomputer sent out to rid the planet of this infestation. Man was in danger of becoming extinct.

Yet there is one chance. Before Tricomplex's final activation, an experimental space station called Orbiter was launched. Its computer had not been locked into the massive system now controlled by Tricomplex. The weapons, power and beaming chamber aboard Orbiter are at your command, for you have been selected for the mission to stop the mainframe in its tracks [not to mention sectors, bits and bytes].

Mainframe paints an ugly picture of computer domination and ungodly odds against the human race. The idea is to teleport down from Orbiter and shut down this inhuman juggernaut. Programmed to stop anyone from doing just that, Tricomplex does not take kindly to the idea. You'll face everything from killer droids to laser-firing tanks intent on destroying mankind's last chance—you.

But with Orbiter, the latest word in offensive armament, and its onboard transporter system (no Scotty, though), you can teleport to Earth and attack, then retreat to the the space station, where Tricomplex has no power. (It's nice to have at least *one* safe place in this game!) You'll also appreciate the most powerful assault power suit ever built. With the suit, you can fire wrist lasers and jump super-human distances; without it, you're charcoal. This technological armor that makes you almost invincible. Unfortunately, "almost" is the operative word here.

With the joystick, you maneuver your onscreen character across a deserted and littered landscape that was once a large city. Located in the many buildings are power cells that replenish your energy as it's depleted. You may also find additional assault gear, such as air, land and water vehicles, in the caves.

Each of these must be re-assembled aboard Orbiter, but you can't beam them up until you've deactivated the shield system Tricomplex controls.

You can see where this gets confusing—trying to outguess and outthink a computer! Well, saving the world from total annihilation shouldn't be *too* easy.

Each "screen" is presented with a cross-section view of the area. Your character stays in the center of the screen, and the surrounding areas shift to give the impression he has moved. There is a sense of gravity, which contributes to the feel of the game. At the bottom of the screen, a horizontal bar changes colors to reflect your character's health: when it's black, he dies on the next enemy hit. (You only get one life and cannot save a game in progress.) Similar bars and gauges display data on your power suit remaining energy and other information.

Computers from Hell

After defeating Tricomplex's various defenses, you'll face the main diode himself. The central memory banks are hidden deep underground. By throwing four switches, you can shut down this computer from hell and save the human race. Doing so is very hard. In fact, it is very,

very hard. The mainframe's weaponry exacts enormous damage to you: enemies appear randomly and they appear *often*.

The odds are so lopsided in favor of the droids and other foes, I sometimes felt as if there was no way to win. And the mazes frequently

turn out to be one-way tunnels: one wrong move and there's no way out!

At your disposal are several scan units you can place in

orbit, and a doctor's lab is available on the Orbiter. Often, however, you'll be killed before you can use any of these items.

Think Before You Shoot

This is the first action adventure I've seen that stresses thinking. Just blundering in and shooting everything in sight won't get you far in this mindbender. You've got to figure out how to take maximum advantage of extremely limited resources. Figuring out how your equipment functions and learning its strengths and weaknesses will be your first priority. Then you'll do well to familiarize yourself with the landscape and mazes.

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Type: Action Adventure
System: C 64/128

Inventory

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The Last Ninja

By Stephen King

This is the year of the dragon in China, but over here it's the year of the Oriental/martial arts game. *The Last Ninja* is only the latest in a long string of recent games with Oriental themes. In this one you play the part of (get ready for the big surprise) the last ninja. The evil Shogun Kunitoki and his Ashikaga clan have slaughtered all of the other mystic shadow warriors while they were on a pilgrimage. Enroute to to the island of Lin Fen to seek and study the legendary Koga scrolls, the ninjas were cut down in an ambush. Luckily, one ninja (you) survives to find the Shogun and his followers and to avenge the brotherhood.

Numchuka Laka Laka

When you first run the game on an IBM or compatible, you'll be asked if you have CGA, EGA or Tandy graphics. All modes are high-resolution, but the EGA and Tandy support a 16-color palette, as does the C 64/128 version. After making your choice, you'll be rewarded with a beautifully detailed picture of the face of a hooded ninja underlined by a sword and scabbard that opens and closes to display the game credits. Next you find yourself in one of six separate game sections. The first is called "The Wastelands." I'm not sure why, since the landscape is generally as green as a golf course, with plenty of running water. Later areas are called the Wilderness Palace Gardens, the Dungeons, Palace, and Inner Sanctum. Only in the Dungeon segment does mapping prove desirable.

You start the game bare-handed and have three lives. A brief exploration of the surrounding area will turn up interesting artifacts as well as some warriors for you to battle. Eventually you'll find a To (the traditional ninja longsword), some shurikens, numchukas, smoke bombs and a bamboo staff. I found the numchukas particularly effective in battle.

When you enter a new location, these items can be easily distinguished because they blink on and off for the first few seconds. To retrieve an object you must position your ninja nearby and grab at the

item until you touch it with your hand. Because of the unique perspective, this is often more easily said than done.

Stubbing my To

The Last Ninja reminds me of the Sierra King's Quest adventures, largely because of a similar interface. With keyboard or joystick, you control a central character on a three-dimensional screen; each time you walk off the edge of the screen, a new one appears. But the similarity ends here.

One area where the games diverge is the type of graphics. Unlike the cartoon style of the Sierra games, *The Last Ninja* sports a battery of highly realistic pictures, complete with bonsai plants, bamboo clumps and various

kinds of foliage. Many screens show running water in rivers or fountains.

From time to time, more spot animation brings to life a variety of fire-breathing dragons, flying birds, floating ghosts, headless zombies and skittering rats. And of course, there are combat sequences with warriors, animated skeletons and other assorted evil beings. In short, the graphics are some of the best I've seen—even in CGA mode, with its severely limited four colors.

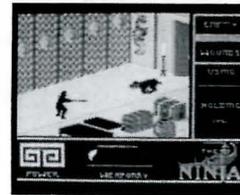
Lights, Camera, Action!

Focusing on action-oriented problems, *Ninja* also leans away from puzzle-intensive nature of Sierra's animated quests. This is not to say that there aren't a couple of real stumpers. I was just about to yell for help after the first dozen screens because I couldn't figure out what to do next. Then I thought of trying to cross a swampy area by somersaulting from dry spot to dry spot off the edge of the screen to find the remainder of the Wastelands.

And then there was the fire-breathing dragon. Getting past it was a matter of standing in exactly the correct spot to throw a smoke bomb into its face. Unfortunately, most of the puzzles in this game involve precise placement of your onscreen persona. This might not be so bad if it weren't so

darned hard to place the character exactly on any particular spot facing the correct direction.

I spent 20 minutes and wasted countless ninjas while trying to cross a stream by jumping from stone to stone. And after finally succeeding and exploring the far side, I was dismayed to find I had to recross this stream to get back to the rest of the game. Maybe I'm just not adept at this sort of thing, but it's not all my fault.



Landing is such an exact thing that, after making a successful jump, I frequently watched my ninja sink through the edge of the road, or into the stone where he landed.

Out on Maneuvers

The graphics of *The Last Ninja* screens are set on a diagonal axis similar to those in *Zaxxon*. Your access is generally limited to a narrow strip of road that runs from corner to corner, some with branches or 90-degree turns. Maneuverability is the major problem.

A big reason for this difficulty is the fact that you can't reverse your direction quickly and easily. Turning is done in 90-degree increments. This is ok for going left or right, but to turn back the other way you have to perform an awkward circular motion with your joystick. Many times the ninja would not respond if I tried to turn back after just having made a turn, and I had to fight with the joystick—to the point of breaking two of them. It is also easy to get stuck between objects or at the side of the road. End up facing the wrong way in a bad spot, and you will probably have to struggle with the joystick a bit to get out.

While getting an item, you may have to approach it from an odd angle or grab it from a specific direction. The first few times I played I was unable to get any of the various tools because of this quirk. And while trying to get things, I sometimes jumped into an area of the screen I wasn't supposed to be in. Not only was it difficult to return to the play area, but this also threw the perspective out of kilter.

Maybe the limited control of this game will make it popular with fishermen. The whole time I was playing, I had the impression I was fighting to bring in a 150-pound swordfish. I will admit that turning about was somewhat easier with the keyboard, but because of the number and

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Earthly Delights: an all-text classic

By Shay Addams

You were hardly delighted to learn that an eccentric uncle left you nothing but a painting of a beautiful woman when he died. "Earthly Delights," the will explained, is no treasure in the art world, and its sole value was described as "many hours of pleasure" if you take care of the painting and "never part with her." But when a stranger knocks on the door and offers \$75,000 for it, you become suspicious and refuse to sell.

Chapter by Chapter

This 1984 mystery has definite literary overtones. It's divided into five chapters, the first titled "A Noise in the Night." An odd scraping sound awakens you, and you discover that the living room has been ransacked and the painting is gone. A call to the police only elicits only an assurance that they'll launch an immediate investigation and get in touch as soon as they find something. So this case differs from most computerized mysteries in that you're not a police or private detective, but a private citizen who must solve the crime independently.

An unusual degree of interaction distinguishes this tale. Events can unfold quite differently depending on your actions. Tiptoe from the bedroom into the hall in the first chapter, and you'll see the burglar, dressed all in black and looking like a "lumberjack's big brother." Stand there and little happens, but move around and he'll knock you out cold with a lamp.

The literary overtones are less subtle when you request a clue by typing "help." Hints are revealed in quotes from Robert Frost, Victor Hugo or another classic author, poet or philosopher. In this situation, George Bernard Shaw suggests an all-out attack. Follow his lead and a karate-kicking, gun-blasting free-for-all ensues.

The burglar drops a piece of evidence that sends you to chapter two, "Leg Work in Paris." After a quick trip by Concorde, you'll land at Charles DeGaulle Airport and take a train to the center of Paris. (Ask for help here, and Ernest Hemingway reminds you that "Paris is a movable feast.") The sights are pithily described and authentically situated as

you prowls the City of Lights in search of the Bistro Absymal, where you suspect the burglar hangs out when not busy looting people's houses. Each street bears a sign that makes mapping much easier. From the Rue Lafayette, you can stroll along the boulevard, as "red-faced

Many of our readers still enjoy all-text games, but the major companies are no longer doing them. For the die hard text gamers, we'll be covering titles from small outfits and, for newcomers to the genre, occasionally reviewing classic text games such as this one.

schoolboys hurry by" and a tri-colored balloon sails by, attempting the first east-west transoceanic flight. The Eiffel Tower dominates the skyline, and all American tourists should definitely check out Shecky's American Bar & Grill. Graphics are employed when you "read graffiti" at Shecky's: a picture of the Eiffel Tower fills the left side of the screen and huge block letters spell out a clue (or is it a red herring?). These are not

hi-res graphics, but are composed of punctuation symbols that still lend surprise and variety to the all-text format. A few simple sound effects have also been incorporated into some scenes.

The Sights of Paris

It's difficult to keep your mind on the case, with the Montmartre district's can-can girls, the Folies-Bergere, Napoleon's red marble tomb and so many other picturesque attractions. You'll even encounter a gang of Japanese tourists taking pictures, in addition to the Parisians going about their daily errands. Wearing a red beret, an old grandfather whistles "Marseillaise" as he returns home with a loaf of fresh bread. A ten-year-old girl tosses her cigarette into the gutter when she hears you approach. And there are poodles everywhere, evidenced by the pile of poodle droppings you'll step into sooner or later. These little slices of life brighten up the story and add life to the town as you scour the town for le Bistro.

The mystery deepens when you enter the Louvre. A curator relates how someone has broken into the gallery and stolen all the paintings of an obscure artist. It turns out that the stolen art consisted of more works by Parrish, the same man who created "Earthly Delights." Is this what the burglar meant when he men-

tioned a "plan" back in your apartment?

Despite a rather elementary parser, the game does allow you to question people by saying things like, "Ask burglar about painting." Conducting an interrogation isn't as player-friendly as the same technique in an Infocom mystery. Sometimes the program responds with, "What do you want to talk about?" and requires that you retype the subject or entire question. At least the vocabulary is large enough that you won't waste much time searching for synonyms. If the program doesn't understand your command, it often says "I'll try to do what I think you meant" and does its best.

On-screen Mapping in 1984?

When you type "Look around" in some places, you actually see a floor plan of the apartment displayed on-screen. Movement can be in any of eight directions, plus up, down, in and out; abbreviations are accepted. *Earthly Delights* is also one of those rare non-Infocom adventures that permits you to print an ongoing transcript of all the descriptions as they simultaneously appear on-screen. The IBM's function keys can be used to execute typical commands such as checking inventory, picking up objects and examining things; numbers represent directions, so you can type "1" to move southwest, for example. These features make the game perfect for lazy IBM adventurers. Both versions accommodate saving up to five sessions in progress to the game disk.

You don't get points in this game, just a free trip to Europe, dozens of interesting and unexpected experiences and the satisfac-

tion of solving an unusually well-thought out mystery. The climax is pure Robert Ludlum,

with a thrilling chase scene through the hills of Switzerland.

Conclusions: Ultimately, you'll find that this is much more than a simple case of burglary—it's a case of international intrigue than only you can solve. Fans of all-text mysteries and interactive fiction with a literary flair will get more than a good read out of this classic story by Dan'l Levitton.

Skill Level: Novice/Intermediate

Protection: Program

Price: \$25

Company: Levitton

Type: All-text Mystery

Systems: Apple, Mac, IBM PC and jr

Interview: Wasteland designers Ken St. André and Michael Stackpole

One of the most significant developments in computer games is the entry of designers from the world of paper and pencil role-playing. Ken St. André and Michael Stackpole, whose Wasteland has turned into a major hit for Interplay, offered some insights into how they became involved in the project, how game designers work with programmers (Alan Pavlish, in this case) and the differences between traditional and computer RPGs.

QB: What's your background in game design?

St. André: I started at five, when I turned *Monopoly* into a Gran Prix racing game, and I've been toying with game rules ever since. I invented *Nuclear Risk* in 1971 or so, among others. Needless to say, none of these designs have been seen by more than three people. When *Dungeons and Dragons* appeared around 1975, I saw it and said, "Barf, ick—anyone can do better than that. Besides, where would we get all these funny-sided dice?" So I went home and wrote something I thought was actually more playable, which eventually was called *Tunnels and Trolls*. I printed 100 copies, for my friends, and Flying Buffalo [which moderates a number of play-by-mail games] started publishing and selling it. Liz Danforth and Mike here teamed up with us, and Flying Buffalo eventually did a series of *T & T* books and products. As a result, I got other work designing role-playing games. In 1986, Mike and I wound up talking to Brian Fargo about creating a post-nuclear computer role-playing game with him. We conned him into taking both of us—which was better than just taking Mike alone!—and now the world can finally see what a game designer's version of a computer fantasy role-playing game looks like, as opposed to a programmer's version.

Stackpole: I got interested in board war games in high school and discovered Flying Buffalo. In 1976 I bought some of the *T & T* solo dungeon books, played them and decided I could do that. After corre-

sponding with Ken, I had put together a *T & T* opus called "City of Terrors," which Flying Buffalo published. After college, I went to work at Buffalo. It was in '83 that I "mishandled" *Tunnels and Trolls* and turned it into *Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes*. I've also done work for TSR, Mayfair Games, Coleco, FASA and others. In 1986 Buffalo was selling off a bunch of its stuff. They sold *Sorcerer's Apprentice* to someone who mentioned that he knew people into computer gaming stuff and who would try to get us connected with them. I had never heard of Interplay at this stage. Three weeks later he gave me Brian's number, and Brian sent me *Bard's Tale I*. In December, he flew out with Alan. Brian and Mike Cranford,

who worked on the first *Bard's Tale*, knew of *Tunnels and Trolls*, and Ken and I. In fact, around '83 Cranford submitted a solo dungeon that I looked over and edited, though we unfortunately had to reject it. (That was the case with most first dungeons, and since he got involved with *Bard's Tale* he didn't have time to rewrite it.) After *Wasteland*, Interplay tapped me for *Bard's Tale III*, since Cranford had left.

QB: Was *Wasteland* the first computer game either of you worked on?

Stackpole: I worked on an aborted version of *Tunnels and Trolls* for Coleco's Adam computer. In theory it was also made for the Apple, and I'd love to see it if anyone has got it. I also worked on a *2110: Space Odyssey* computer game for them, but it went into production just as

Coleco cut its electronic division. And I'd done some work with Fred Saberhagen on setting up a game based on his *Book of Swords* trilogy.

QB: After agreeing to do the game, did you go ahead and write up everything possible—the scenarios, maps, and so on, which Alan programmed?



Pavlish, Stackpole and St. André preparing to "discuss" differences of opinion on game design during the early days of *Wasteland*

St. André: That took a long time. The *Wasteland* you see is actually the second design. The first one was a *Red Dawn* scenario, with the Russians occupying bases in the farmlands of Iowa. This was back in late 1985. We spent a month drawing farmland maps and making up Farmer characters. Brian called up one night and asked how it's going. I said it's going

but it will be the duller game you ever saw until you get at least halfway through, because the Russians would be there in strength, and your character starts weak and can't do anything but skulk and hide and slowly, slowly build up. "On the other hand," I said, "I've been thinking about our original ideas—how would you like something with ravaging monsters stalking through a radioactive wasteland, a few tattered humans struggling to survive against an overwhelming threat?" You could see Brian's eyes light up over the phone. I pitched the basic plot for what *Wasteland* eventually became, and he said go with it. So a month of maps, characters and so on just went in the garbage can.

Stackpole: Ken had the desert map all designed by the spring of '86, and Joe Ybarra came down from Electronic Arts

so we could show him what's going on.

St. André: I had outlined what I thought needed to be in the game, so I took him all around the map: to Quartz, to Needles—the Blood Cult in Needles was part of my original idea. My original idea survives in the game to the extent that I said to Brian and Bruce and various other people, “There’s a Blood Cult in Needles.” That’s about as much of my idea as is still there. Then they go from Vegas and get directed to another place and on to the Indian Village...

Stackpole: Don’t look for the Indian Village in the game, Ken.

St. André: I hadn’t thought a great deal about what was going to be in any of these places. I just had this nebulous story in my mind: our heroes will start in A, they’ll visit every worthwhile place on the map and eventually wind up in Z—and if they’re good enough, they’ll win the game. Certain things will be happening in different locations—monsters of different types, people who are hard to get along with, lots of comic references to life before the war. I figured that when the time came for me to design an area, the Indian Village, for example, I would sit down and figure out what would be in it and that would be it. Except that it started taking a long time. Every map had 1,024 square on it, and each one could do something. Even if I just drew all the buildings, I had to go back and say, “These are all square nine: wall, wall, wall, wall, wall. And if you bump into a wall you’ll get this message: ‘The Indians are laughing at you for walking into the wall.’” Whatever—a map that I thought I could toss off in one or two days was taking two weeks, and the project was falling further and further behind. So other people started saying, “Let us do something.” I’m fairly strong at making up stories, but not at inventing intricate puzzles. In the last analysis, I’m a hack and slash gamer with only a little thought and strategy thrown in. Interplay and Electronic Arts wanted lots of puzzles in the game. Mike, on the other hand, is much more devious, so I gave him the maps with difficult puzzles and I did the ones that involved walking around, talking to people and shooting things.

Stackpole: As the game evolved, more maps fell my way. We were originally shooting for 50 maps. Some early ones had been tossed out. We converted three of them over for the Guardians of the Citadel.

QB: As I understand it, some puzzles were also put together by people at Interplay.

Stackpole: Yeah. Needles is probably the weirdest place. Brian was supposed to do Needles, then it fell to Bruce Balfour...

St. André: I was going to do Needles the week I went out there, and Brian was saying “I want to do a map. Let me have Needles.” So I said, “You’re the boss, Brian, you’ve got Needles.”

Stackpole: And it also got partially done by Bruce Balfour. Then the guys who were helping code the maps, correcting what we sent in, wanted to do some maps. Everyone wanted to have his own map, his own thumbprint on the game, so they did some maps for Needles. Then Alan and I started talking about Needles, and we suddenly realized it was not cohesive at all. Between the two of us we came up with a plot that kind of tries to tie all off Needles together. So Needles is really sort of an abomination. Quartz was done by Ken and recoded by Liz Danforth. What started as a straight, easy map suddenly paled in comparison to some of the later maps, which just had so much detail.

St. André: We made up five game square types and modified two others. When I started with Quartz as my first map, there was no such thing as squares that would allow you to do something that would have an effect somewhere else.

Stackpole: It became a snowball once we got going. I could code a map in an eight-hour day—then I’d have to take about two days off.

QB: How did you hit on the idea of increasing skill points in Libraries rather than in Guilds and the like?

St. André: I have a regular job as a librarian, so whenever you see a Library that’s why.

Stackpole: We really wanted to make it an educational game, since there’s so much you can learn in a library.

QB: So *Wasteland* is basically educational software?

Stackpole: Right — *that’s* what we were shooting for.

Next Month: St. André and Stackpole discuss the differences between designing computer and traditional RPGs, how designers and programmers do (and don’t) work together, plus more inside dirt on the making of *Wasteland*.

Adventure Hotline

Continued from page 2

master. Write us first to see if someone else is already working on it (we may still want yours for verification purposes). If you’re chosen to do a solution, we’ll send exact instructions on how to do it.

Right now we need solutions for: *L. A. Crackdown*, *Twilight’s Ransom*, *Colony*, *Demon’s Winter* and *King’s Quest IV*.

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Walkthrus: Jinxter & Wizardry IV

By Brandon Leonard and Paul Shaffer
Verified by William E. Carte

On the Bus

Show ticket to inspector (when he says, "Tickets, please,"). Push button (after passing first stop). Get off (when doors open). Get keyring (you'll die). Read document. Drop document and ticket. Open gate. N. Unlock door with jspo key. Open door. N. NW.

In Your House

Look under bed. Get sock. (When phone rings, go to Library and answer it.) N. [Kitchen] Get tin opener. E. Get tablecloth.

In Conservatory

Unlock door with jspo key. Open door. N. Get gloves and tfdbufvst. N. E. Xbwf ubcmfdmpui at bull. Drop ubcmfdmpui. SE. E. Get bottle. (Return home.)

Your Kitchen

Open fridge. Get milk bottle. Put qmbtujd cpuumf in fridge. Close fridge. Drink milk. Wait (15-30 times, until you can open the door, examine fluid and be told "you can't see any fluid.") Close fridge. Drop qmbtujd cpuumf. Put pjw in milk bottle. (Go to Boathouse.) Get mouse trap and can of worms. (Go to Xam's Front Garden.)

Xam's House and the Mouse

Unlock door with svtuz key. Open door. SW. W. Get matchbox and candle. S. SW. S. [Under Holly Bush] Listen to bird. N. NE. N. E. Open trapdoor. Xfbs tqfdubdmft. D. Get cheese. U. Put cheese on mouse trap. Tfu usbq. Drop trap. (Go west, then wait 10-20 times, return and examine trap until you've caught a mouse.) Get mouse. (During this time the mailman will have knocked on the door. Go to the mailbox.)

Xam's Mailbox

Open mailbox. Get note. Read note. Drop note. (Go to Xam's Study.) Get phone. Dial 300. (Go to mailbox and wait till mailman locks box, then return to house.) Get nbudi. Mjhiu nbudi. Mjhiu dboemf with nbudi. Ifbu qmbtujd lfz

with dboemf (twice). (Go to mailbox.) Unlock mailbox with qmbtujd lfz. Get parcel. Open parcel. Examine parcel. Read note. Get charm. Drop parcel.

The Boathouse and the Crazy Gardener

Get bung. Put pjw on runners. Drop bottle of milk. Open door. S. Get sack. Get amethyst charm.

The Canoe and the Lagoon

Put cvoh in tpd. Put tpd in hole. Put canoe in lagoon. Get paddle. Enter canoe. S (2). Get out. D. Open dbo pg xpsnt with ujo pqfofs. Empty dbo pg xpsnt on dirt. Dig dirt with tfdbufvst. Drop ujo pqfofs and tfdbufvst. E. E. Get mask, flippers, wet suit and aqualung. W. W. U. (Pagoda). Remove clothes. Wear mask, flippers and wet suit. Drop all but aqualung. Wear aqualung

Underwater in the Lagoon

N. D. NW. N. Open hatch. D. Close hatch. Push left button. Remove aqualung.

The Airlock, the Sacristy and the Chandelier

Turn wheel. Open door. E. D. Examine notecase. Get coin. Open door. U. W. [Airlock] Qvti sjhiu cvuupo. E. D. Xfbs brvbmvoh. E. Wait (till xbufs gjmmt.) U. Get unicorn charm. D. W. U. W. [Airlock] Open hatch. U. S. SE. U. S. Remove aqualung, flippers, mask and wet suit. Get all. Drop aqualung, flippers, mask and wet suit. Wear clothes. Enter canoe. N. SW. Get out. S. NW.

The Village and the Bakery

Examine notice. Ask baker about notice. D. Get tin. E. Get sieve. Open sack. Tjfwf gmpvs with tjfwf. Get pelican charm. Put pelican charm in ujo. W. Open pwfo. Put ujo in pwfo. Close pwfo. Qvti cvuupo (twice). Open pwfo. Get bread. U. Give bread to baker. (He throws you out.) Break bread. Get pelican charm. Open door. NE.

The Post Office

Show npvtf to Postmistress. Drop npvtf. Turn upq sjhiu handle. Turn cpuupn sjhiu

handle. Turn cpuupn mfgu handle. Turn upq mfgu handle. Turn upq mfgu handle.

Turn cpuupn sjhiu handle. Turn upq mfgu handle. Open safe. Get dragon charm. SW. SE. N. [Beer Garden] Enter well. Get two ferg coin. U. S. [Pub] Ppkjnz fireplace. Get bti. NW. SW.

The Carousel

Put nof gfsh dpjo in slot. Ride unicorn. Eppgfs unicorn. Get saddle. Put saddle in sack. Eppgfs fire engine. Drop all but can of worms and walrus charm. Get ladder.

The Clockmaker's Shop

Look in window. Knock on door. Throw dbo pg xpsnt at lamp. SW. Ppkjnz stool. Get stool. E. [In Weather Clock] Drop stool. Lean ladder against girder. W. NE. Get all. SW. E. Get on stool. Climb ladder. Jump north. [On the Platform] Wait (for Rain Weatherman to spin around on weather vane, or cast thingy). Get hat and umbrella. Hold onto Rain Weatherman. Eppebi. (A friendly cloud appears.) Ppkjnz cloud. D. Get on cloud. Eppgfs cloud.

The Train Station and Beyond

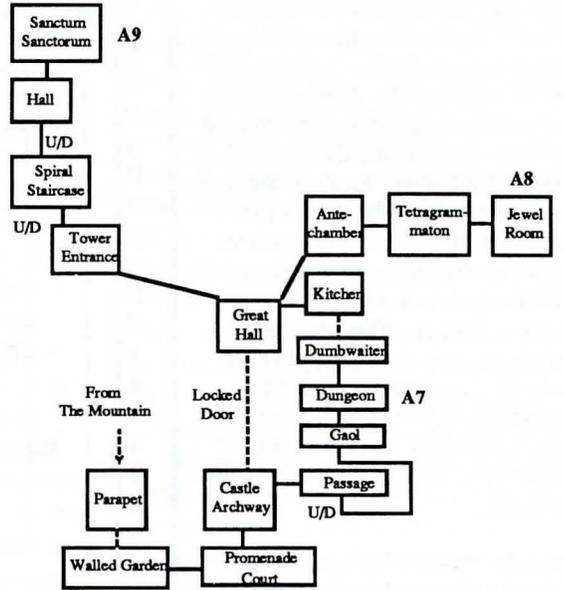
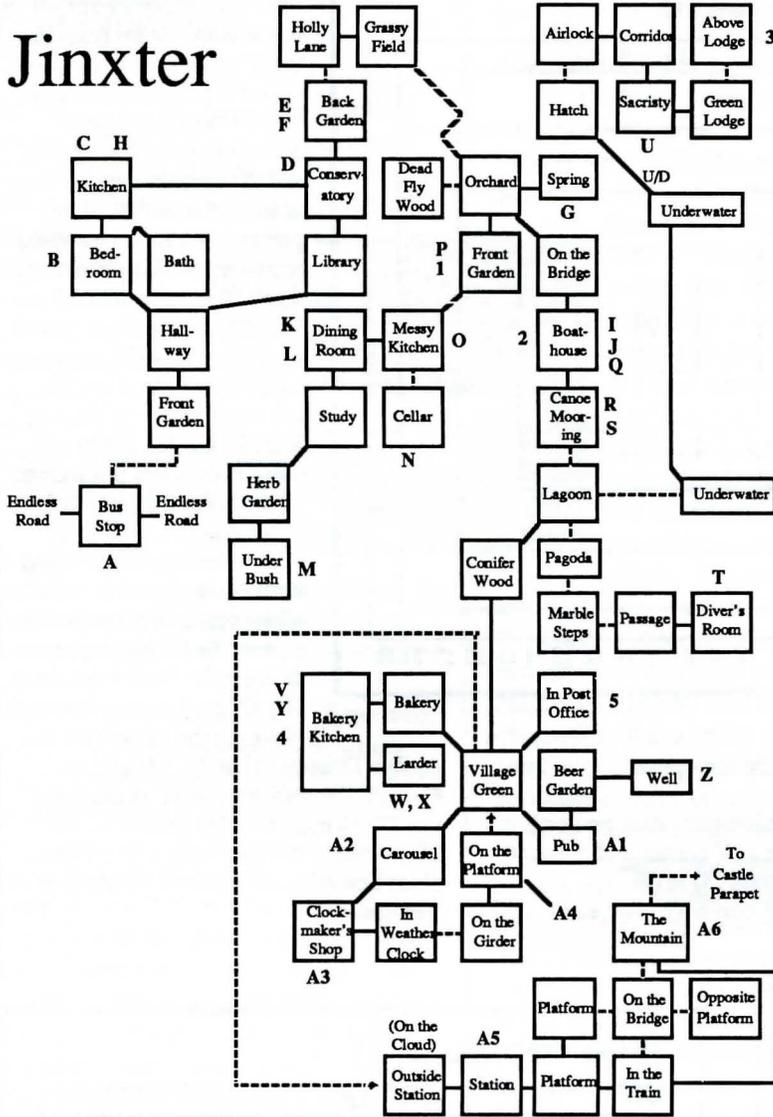
E. Buy ticket with xup gfsh dpjo. E. E (into train). Show ticket to guard. Wait. Out. [On Mountain] Put saddle on unicorn. Get on unicorn. Eppgfs unicorn.

The Castle

D. E. N. E. D. Open door. N. Xblf Xam. Tie spqf to nbobdmft. Get nbudi. Mjhiu nbudi. Mjhiu dboemf with nbudi. Put dboemf in ibu. Put ibu under spqf. Enter hatch. Wait (for dboemf to burn through spqf). N. U. NE. Open door. E (2). Examine plastic blocks. Slide numbers in this order: 5, 8, 1, 6, 7, 2, 9, 5, 3, 4. Wear gloves. Get bracelet. Put charms on bracelet. Wear bracelet. W (2). SW. NW. U (2). Open door (right or left). N. Get crystal ball. D (2). SE. Look into ball (until you see Jannedor looking into gjsfqmbdf). Eppgfs ball. Put bti on ifbsui. Dmjnc vq dijnofz. (Wait for witch to enter.) Put csbdfmfu on xsjtu.

See page 14 for code.

Jinxter



Wizardry IV

By Frank Evangelista
Verified by Linda Brooks

This solution will span several issues. Because the game's creators are sponsoring a related tournament whose deadline is the end of this year, the final part of the solution won't appear until January. It will include all possible solutions—except the Grandmaster variation, since we feel the hardcore adventurers should have at least one Mount Everest to climb on their own. (We will provide hints to those who send SASE, but again, not until January.)

The game is tightly balanced, so even with the correct answers and guidelines, you may still get killed a few times before completing a maze. When told to pick up an item, make sure you have an empty inventory slot a few moves beforehand.

Maze 10: Left or Right?

Artifacts: Black Candle, Amulet and Bloodstone
Effective Monsters: Priests, Creeping Coins

To exit the first room, you need Priests in the party to cast MILWA during combat and reveal the exit (dotted line). Defeat the Guardians at (1), (2) and (3). Go south and west to P2 for more monsters and spell points, then north to (4) to slay the Pyramid Guardian and get the Black Candle and Amulet. Now head to (5) for the Bloodstone and back to the stairs to the next level.

Maze 9: Catacombs

Artifacts: Demonic Chimes, Lander's Turquoise, Holy Hand Grenade
Effective Monsters: Witches, Anacondas, Dusters, Creeping Cruds

Map Key: Jinxter

- A: keyring
- B: socks
- C: tin opener
- D: tablecloth
- E: gloves
- F: secateurs
- G: plastic bottle (oil)
- H: milk bottle
- I: mousetrap
- J: can of worms
- K: matchbox
- L: candle
- M: spectacles
- N: cheese
- O: mouse
- P: phone number in note
- Q: bung
- R: canoe
- S: paddle
- T: diving gear
- U: one ferg coin
- V: tin of dough
- W: sieve
- X: sack
- Y: burnt bread
- Z: two ferg coin
- A1: ash
- A2: saddle and ladder
- A3: stool
- A4: hat and umbrella
- A5: ticket
- A6: unicorn
- A7: Xam, rope and manacles
- A8: puzzle and bracelet
- A9: crystal ball
- 1: walrus charm
- 2: amethyst charm
- 3: unicorn charm
- 4: pelican charm
- 5: dragon charm

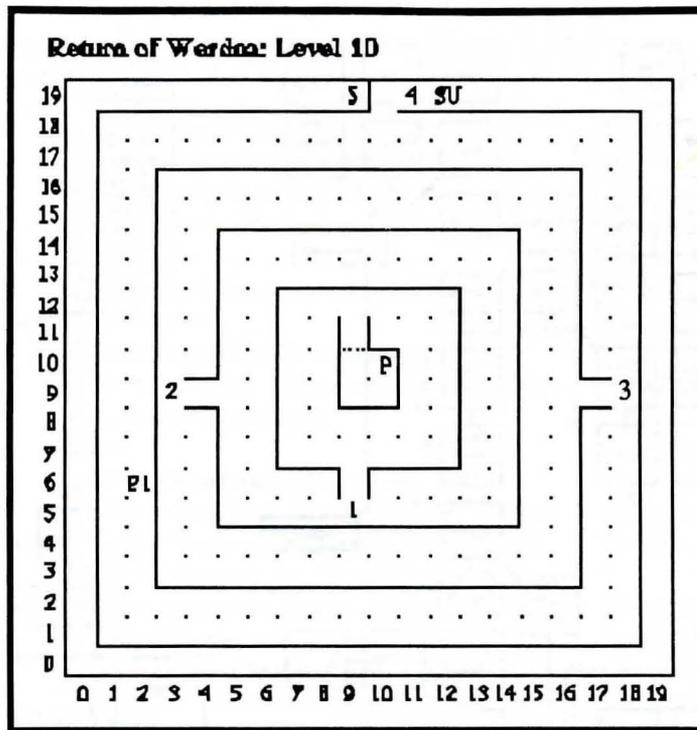
Continued on next page

The first time through this maze, defeat Guards in Corner Rooms (W) for gold and items—though the only ones you *must* fight are those guarding the stone at (1). Then go to (2) and use the cmbdl dboemf from the previous maze to see the secret door. Take the stairs up. Later in the game you will return to the Abyss (3), which can be entered once you've got the Dreampainter's Ka (Level 7) and are equipped with the Winged Boots (Level 5). You need the cmbdl dboemf, the Efnpojkd Dijnft from this Level and a book (the Bsbcdj Ejbsz from Level 6) to enter Hell, where you'll get the HHG of Aunty Ock, essential for completing the game.

Maze 8: "Death by 1,000 Cuts"

Artifacts: Golden Pyrite, Amber Dragon, Witching Rod, Black Box.
Effective Monsters: Level 5 Priests, Harpies, Shades, Ronins.

From the stairs, head east into NE corner, then south to Pentagram (P) at 18E, 15N. Stay on the unshaded trail to avoid land mines and get the Witching Rod (1) from the Pool at 14E, 1N. Then get the Black Box from Glum (2) at 1E, 1N. The Box gives you room to carry all the DIOS

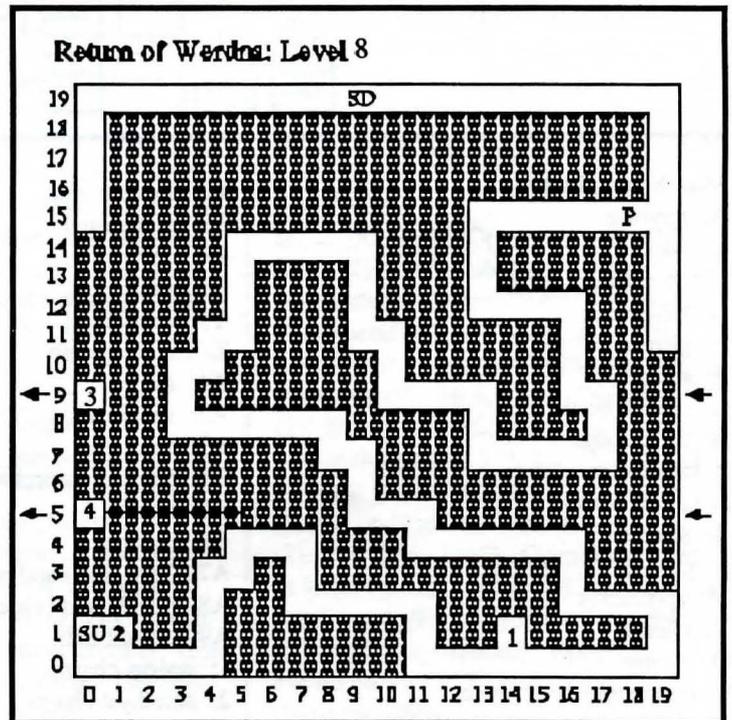
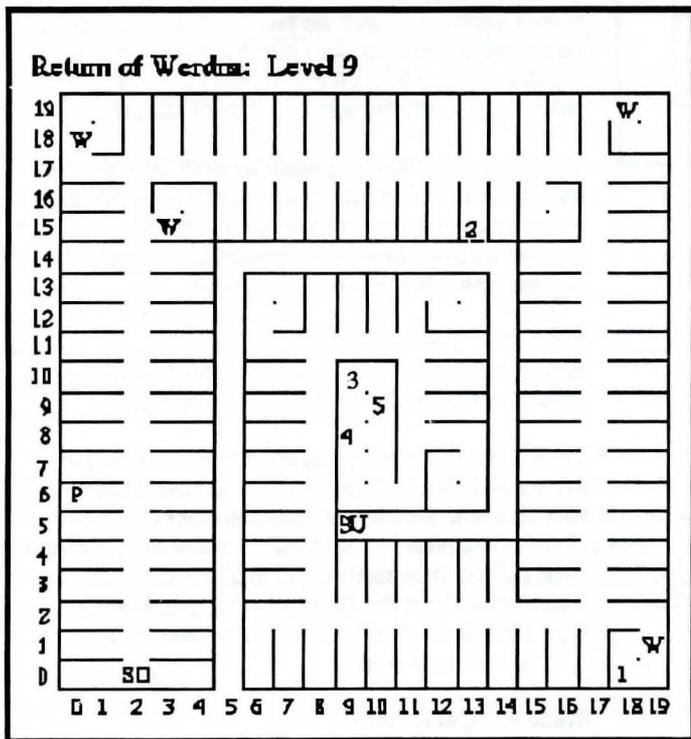


you'll need for the next phase.

Return to the Pentagram, then go north to 19N, west to the NW corner and south to get the Pyrite Stone (3) at 0E, 9N. Go west through the one-way door and north to the Pentagram.

Amber Dragon (4) at 0E, 5N and on through the one-way door. (Camp and use DIOS each time hit points fall to 10-15.) Follow the trail back to the Pentagram before heading on to the stairs in the SW corner.

You may be able to accomplish the final part of this maze with a team from this level's Pentagram, but it's easier if you take the stairs up to Maze 7 and get a stronger crew of monsters, not to mention Level 4 character status and its 40 hit points. (When summoning monsters on 7 for use on 8, don't forget the Level 5 Priests.) Regardless, you'll need lots of DIOS, so devote some time to seeking out monsters until you have at least 10 DIOS. Since you don't need them immediately, an easier strategy is to retrieve Pyrite and Dragon after obtaining the Winged Boots from Level 5, which allow you to float over the mines. But if you insist on doing it the hard way: from 5E, 4N go 1 north, then west (through the mines) for the



Pool of Radiance

Continued from page 1

will buy your weapons, which makes it harder to get rich fast), and a City Hall whose clerk tells you of "Commissions" (apparently *AD & D* jargon for quests, though we refuse to change our name to *Commission Busters*). Proclamations posted outside City Hall refer you to related text in a manual filled with details on the various Commissions and what happened to other questers attempting to complete them. By fulfilling a Commission, you'll rack up more experience points and gold and get a crack at harder quests.

One Commission is to kill all the monsters in the slums west of town, which opens up new parts of Phlan. Sokal Keep on Thorn Island is also full of monsters to slay. Another goal is to locate maps, books and other information about the ancient history of Phlan. No monsters will attack you in this part of town, but you may get embroiled in a bar brawl or two.

Three aspects make the game attractive for those who hate to map. An auto-mapping feature called "Area" will replace the picture with a top-down view of your party's immediate vicinity, a manual includes basic maps of the first part of town and many other dungeons and the Wilderness areas, and an onscreen line like this one—E 0: 03, 3,4—indicates the party's position and direction they're facing.

SSI's Finest Interface

With cursor keys or joystick, you highlight one of the commands in a row at the bottom of the screen, then hit return or punch the button to execute it; this menu line wraps around, as do the vertical menu choices that appear in the main window when you buy things and scoop up treasure, so you can instantly go from the right side of a list to the left without having to scroll through the whole thing. The same menu system is employed whether you're exploring, in camp or fighting in an orc-filled maze. (In maze-mode, you move by leaning on the joystick or pressing the

i, j, k and m keys, and can bring up the other menu system at any time.)

The Tactical Combat Display

Essentially, this is the Wizard's *Crown* combat system done the way it should have been the first time around. Every aspect of combat was dramatically en-

hanced and streamlined for *Pool of Radiance*. Instead of simple lines for walls, you see 3-D mazes shown from an oblique angle. The monsters and your characters appear in profile and are superbly detailed and actually animated. Arrows and other missile weapons sail through the air, accompanied by appropriate sound effects. The area damage spells

are particularly well-animated, and your characters will pivot to face a monster that moves beside them to attack. In combat, characters may also move and attack diagonally. It is a pretty slick animated combat system that has a "playing with miniatures" feel I've only noticed previously in the Amiga versions of *Ultima*.

It's also much easier to direct your team in battle, for there are fewer commands and they're easier to find and select—joystick control makes a big difference. A black box surrounds your active character, then you pick an order from the menu: Move/attack (you guide the character about, attacking hand-to-hand by bumping into a monster), Aim (cycle through all potential targets until you find a good one), Target (fire missile weapon at previously selected monster), View (check stats, or ready a new weapon or item), Cast, Turn (dispel undead) and Quick. Some options, such as Cast, bring up more menus.

Quick, but not Fast

The Quick command turns over control of an individual to the computer, which does a pretty good job at tactical combat. But Quick is far from quick: confronted with two dozen goblins, I put everyone on Quick—the ensuing battle took fifteen minutes. Unlike the *Wizard's Crown* combat system, this quick combat mode is not an all-text variant. The advantage is that you can switch one or all characters back to manual control during the fray.

After your move, the computer cycles through every one of the monsters and individually determines his action. His hit

points, armor class and weapon are displayed at this time, which is helpful. One annoying flaw crops up after you've wiped out the enemy: you still have to cycle through your team, selecting "Done" and "Quit" before the program asks if you want to continue the battle. This is a tedious time-waster—and since there's no one left to fight, how could you possibly continue, unless for some warped reason you want to sic your Magic-users on your Fighters and Thieves? Even so, it's still the best combat system and interface to emerge from SSI, notorious for overly complex interfaces and manuals.

When a character is wounded, his icon vanishes and a flashing message intermittently reminds you he is dying. Unless someone bandages the wounded orc-basher, he'll die soon. Conveniently, the Bandage option appears on a standard menu and is easy to locate and execute. Dead characters can usually be resurrected with a spell or at a Temple, but some spells vanquish any such hope.

To recover Hit Points, you can rest in camp as long as necessary, or spend a platinum coin to rest at an Inn. Either way, you can rest long enough to recoup all HP. However, time is important: the manual says the longer you take to complete the game, the harder it becomes.

You don't always have to fight, for the Parlay option lets you adopt assorted stances when dealing with NPCs: Haughty, Sly, Meek, Nice and Abusive. Depending on your characters' alignment and stance, the non-player characters may help or hinder your efforts (though you can usually count on the latter).

Clerics and Magic-Users

Spellcasters will eventually master 55 spells, all straight out of the *AD & D* books, just like the monsters. You must memorize a spell before casting it, as in Infocom's *Spellbreaker* series (Dave Lebling was the *D & D* nut in the original group of Infocom designers). In camp, you can memorize multiple spells, including the same one several times, by choosing them from your a menu. But that's not all. Next you must rest fifteen minutes of game time to memorize each one, plus more time to "relax." Found in the mazes, scrolls are another source of spells. These must be "scribed" into your



Continued on next page

Pool of Radiance

Continued from previous page

Magic Book (again, recalling *Spellbreaker*) before being memorized.

Puzzles Too?

Most puzzles are of the mapping variety: teleports, illusory walls and so on. You'll need to come up with the right password at times (the codewheel is also used to decode onscreen clues), and correctly dealing with NPCs is another way to obtain useful information and assistance. Don't look for a lot of logical mindbenders like those in *Bard's Tale III*. These puzzles are more reminiscent of those in *Wizard's Crown* and *Wizardry*.

Is this a Bug? Or a Bugbear?

The only thing that attacked my sensibilities occurred after I viewed a character's items while a shop. When I tried to return to the shop menu, I got the "Still Treasure Left" message that appears when you're going through the loot after combat. I was able to return to the shop without trouble, but for me this anomaly was disconcerting.

Too Faithful to A D & D?

I've never played *A D & D*, so I'm speaking purely as a veteran of countless computer RPG campaigns when I say this game is *too* faithful to the paper and pencil version in certain respects. The multi-step process for memorizing spells, for example: while true to the original game, it should have been chopped down to one step. This kind of thing might be fun when you're sitting around a table with friends, but not when you're facing a computer screen. TSR insisted SSI stick by the original rules, and they had final say on the finished product. That restriction must have been creatively inhibiting at the least, for it means ignoring much of what game designers have learned about writing RPGs designed to be played on a computer—which are decidedly different from face-to-face games.

On the other hand, many diehard fans of the original game tell me combat is the essence of *A D & D*, which is certainly true in *Pool of Radiance*. If you like combat—specifically tactical combat with magic spells for artillery—explore no further for your next game. (In a future issue, we'll have related comments

Origins-Gencon

Continued from page 1

set-ups, posters and maps, hoping some of these people will be hooked into trying their games. Central to the entire thing is the Dealer's Exhibition Hall, where about 5,000 dealers set up booths and hawk their wares in an enclosed area bigger than your average county fair.

And then there are the professional game designers such as myself. We don't come to game (though we might if a good opportunity arises) or to sit at a booth and sell things. No, we come to schmooze. Origins is a great place for freelancers to meet people who might buy our product. For example, I met Jordan Weisman and Ross Babcock of FASA, Infocom's Chris Erhardt, Bill Leslie from Omnitrend, Johnny Williams of *Computer Gaming World*, Didier Giserix of *Casus Belli* and many more people than I can cram into this sentence.

There was a far stronger computer gaming presence at Origins this year than I've seen previously. A partial list of companies represented includes Infocom (showing *Battletech*), SSI (selling vast numbers of their *A D & D* games), Origin Systems (Lord British showed up to promote *Ultima V*), Omnitrend (showing off *Paladin* and *Breach*), Avalon Hill (with a lot of war games I didn't even look at), Micro Prose (Laurence Schick just wandered around and had a good time) and



Broderbund (who cut a deal with PBM company Reality Simulations). I know I left out a few, but I couldn't meet everyone.

And the Winners Are...

Three sets of awards were handed out. I can't say who won everything, but some of the computer game winners were:

Bard's Tale III as Best Computer Game, *Pirates* as Best Graphic Presentation Best Science Fiction/Fantasy Game.

The Academy of Game Critics Awards are not to be taken so seriously. These go to the companies, people and games that best exemplify tackiness, bad taste, stupidity and insensitivity in the gaming industry. Of course, it's all done in fun, like the list of the ten worst dressed women.

Many such awards were given this year, but I'll only mention the Bulk Eraser Award, which goes to the computer game that would be best enjoyed by hanging it on a refrigerator door with several large magnets. This year's winner was *Stellar Empires* by SSI—described as having the complexity of particle physics and all the excitement of watching a refrigerator light bulb go out. I know you'll all want to rush out and buy it to verify this for yourselves. Just don't say I didn't warn you.

I've been to quite a few Origins conventions, but this was the best one yet. Next year it will be held in Los Angeles. Maybe I'll see you there, gamers...

on this topic from Michael Bagnall and others who have played *A D & D* in both the original and the computer versions. All readers with such experience, in fact, are invited to share their thoughts on this subject.)

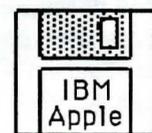
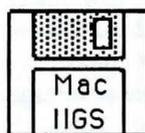
Paper and Plastic

You get a 28-page manual on game mechanics (not as hard as the manual makes it look) and a 38-page Journal filled with relevant text, clues, maps and

Continued on next page

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Pool of Radiance

Continued from previous page

more useful information presented in the form of an Adventurers Journal (of course, we all know it's not *the* Adventurers Journal.) A \$12.95 clue book contains maps, clues and tips on tactical combat.

The C 64 game spans both sides of four disks. A built-in Fastload feature works remarkably fast, so you don't have to wait days for the program or a new dungeon to load. And none of the disks are protected. A codewheel enables you to type in the correct word in order to load the game.

Conclusions: Clearly the most polished piece of work ever to emerge from SSI, *Pool of Radiance* is highly recommended if you love combat. Don't balk at this one just because you didn't like *Eternal Dagger* or *Wizard's Crown*—neither did I, but I had fun with *Pool of Radiance*. It's also worth checking out if you have been playing computer RPGs and want to see what *AD & D*, the inspiration for the genre is like—without having to sit around a table with a bunch of people who've decided they are going to be Elves and Dwarves for the evening.

Skill Level: Advanced

Protection: Codewheel

Price: \$39.95, C 64; \$44.95, others

Company: Strategic Simulations/
Electronic Arts

The Last Ninja

Continued from page 4

complexity of actions, using it was no picnic either.

I also noticed an interesting paradox: occasionally I'd run off the screen to the southeast and find myself on a new road facing northeast. These transitions could have been made less jarring by adding a couple of extra screens.

I heard only three sound effects, and these were spread rather thinly around the game. Music, however, is one of best implementations of a single voice that I've ever heard. A hauntingly Oriental sounding theme plays when the game is first run and again at each transition between segments. The blurb on the box boasts "6 different 'movie score' soundtracks." I only heard one, which played six times, but it was beautifully done just the same.

Two booklets tell how play the game and install it on a hard disk (you must briefly insert the original program if play-

Mainframe

Continued from page 3

Graphics are very fluid, smooth and painted with vivid colors, and it reminded me of watching a Saturday morning cartoon. The colors blend well, creating a computer-devastated landscape whose feeling of eeriness was sometimes a little unsettling. Other than your character, nothing in this world is even remotely humanoid. This heightens the drama, for there's nothing you can relate to in the game: no humans to help, no friendly faces—just you versus IT.

A nicely-composed science fiction theme plays constantly as you roam earth in search of the "off" switch. For me, a good soundtrack often sets the tone of a game, much like a movie soundtrack. *Mainframe's* theme succeeds beautifully (but you can toggle it off if you prefer). But aside from the occasional laser blast and a few others, you won't hear many sound effects.

Conclusions: This is a shoot-'em-up that ain't. Jumping in with blasters blazing will just get you killed. *Mainframe* promotes strategy and planning—and it's *not* a game for the light of heart. Micro Illusions is relatively new to the industry, but *Mainframe* shows they certainly know what makes a good game. It's a joy to look at, listen to, and to play. After playing *Mainframe*, I now treat my Commodore with a little more respect: I don't want it to turn on me one day!

Skill Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Protection: Program

Price: \$39.95

Company: MicroIllusions/Mediagenic

ing from copies or hard disk), and Activision offers a recorded message with several hints.

Conclusions: I give *The Last Ninja* a limited recommendation. It's hard to imagine better use of graphics in an IBM-compatible game. This one would make a really good showpiece to impress friends or enemies, and the game itself is not bad either. But due to the stiff interface, you'll probably get tired of fighting for control and give up before you ever finish the final level.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Key disk

Price: C64, Apple II, \$34.95; IIGS, IBM, \$42.95

Company: System 3 Software/
Mediagenic

Waiting for Duffy

Duffy is meditating, so write these people if you can help.

Black Cauldron: How do I get past witches? If not by giving mirror, then what? Chris Kelly, 3709 Sandal Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45248

Bard's Tale II: How do I cure my party of poison after defeating Toxic Giant? Ron St. Pierre, 405 Urban Takao, 4-2-17 Takao-dori, Nada-ku, Kobe, Japan 657.

Dark Lord: Need help. Also with Leisure Suit Larry & Maniac Mansion. Donald Kawamata, 1624-D-1 Liholiho St, Honolulu, HI 96822

President is Missing: need help. Rich Worles, 789 Grafton St., Worcester, MA 01604

Wizardry I: Need help on level 10. How do I find Werdna? Alan Barber, 5546 Apple Vale Dr., Murray, UT 84123

Wizardry II: Need answer to 1st riddle on 6th level, plus hints to make party more powerful. Chad Sakamoto, 3015 Calle Juarez, San Clemente, CA 92672

Bard's Tale 3: Need help with Geldia. **Might & Magic:** Where is code key? What is Thundranium for? Dan Heffron, 2 Lavelle Lane, Framingham, MA 01701

Alternate Reality, The Dungeon: What time is midnight? I tried 12:00 and 12:30. Mark Lain, 4518 Pine St., Hammond, IN 46327

Guild of Thieves: How do I get lute? Don't have enough money to buy. **Might & Magic:** Need maps, help, supermen. Michael Parkin, 5 Old Lantern Rd., Danbury, CT 06810

Phantasie 3: Needs maps bad, also clues. **Guild of Thieves:** How do I enter village, windmill, wine cellar? Also need maps. Tom Bray, Box 838, Houston, BC, Canada V0J 1Z0

Dungeon Master: After Test of Strength on 6th level, where is key to locked door? Somewhere around 13th level, where is key to fit hole next to Ir symbol? What do you do where it says "When a rock is not a rock"? Tom Page, 96 Haddon Pl, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043



Keys to the Kingdoms



Wasteland

For a pair of strong NPCs, go to lab in Darwin and use chemical (from Vegas casino, upstairs) on table, then use fruit (from agricultural center) on table. Get the antitoxin. Send your two weakest NPCs (get all their stuff first) into combat till they're seriously wounded, then have the main party get them back and wait till they die. Bury them and use it on the two guys in the tavern. Hire both. At Library, Mad Dog should learn Demolitions and Metal Maniac should study Assault Rifle.

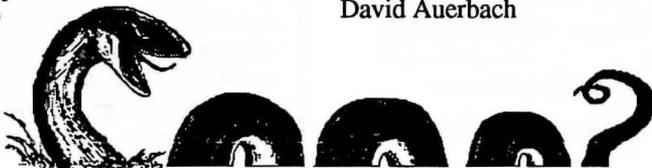
To assemble Max, you need a servomotor, fusion cell, power converter, ROM board and android head, all found in the Vegas sewers. In the Lab found in the southern section of the sewers, think of the four locations on the right side of the wall as A, B, C and D (starting from the top): At D, press 1 & 2, use servomotor, press 3. Press 1 & 2, use servomotor, press 3. At C, press 1 & 2, use servomotor, press 3. At B, press 1 & 2, use fusion cell, press 1 & 2, use power converter. Press 1 & 2, use servomotor. Press 1 & 2. Use ROM board. Press 3. At A, press 1 & 2, use android head, press 1 & 2. Use ROM board, press 3. Exit through force field to the south.

John Pontaoe

Bard's Tale III

Tenebrosia—Finding the Dungeon: First go to Shadow Canyon (3N, 1W) and get the shadow lock (14S, 0E). Get tar from the tar pit. (Nowhere, 2S, 6W) and put it in a container. Go to the forest at 5N, 7W and use the hot tar next to what looks like a pit. Get the magic door here and use it and the shadow lock at 6N, 3W outdoors to enter the dungeon. Also, look for the Nuke spell and Bard's Hall in the town. Two very useful items—a Nospin Ring and the Stone Blade—are found randomly after combat on level 4 of the Chaos Dungeon, also a good place to go for experience points. Combat tips: use Bard song #3 until all armor classes are -50. Cast Luck once or twice to make Fighters more effective and protect against magic. Effects of Bard song #4 are cumulative, so you may soon get more than 50 HP back per round.

Ken Pomaranski



Tenebrosia: in the Dungeon: After entering, you'll be in Scedu's Realm. Take stairs down at 6N, 10E (cast APAR and SCSI). At the second level, cast APAR (13N, 4E) and enter the room to the east to slay Scedu.

Jean Pascal Hiebert

To meet Werra, find all the Gods of War in: Troy (4, 2), Stalingrad (12, 9), K'un Way (3, 4), Nottingham (6, 6), Rome (6, 6), Wasteland (15, 2), Hiroshima (1, 10), Berlin (5, 8). (Their names, corresponding in order to the preceding list: Bsft, Twbsbajd, Zfo-Mp-Xboh, Tu. Hfpsfh, Nbst, Tejbcn, Tvtb-Op-P, Uzs. Or just go to Berlin at 5, 8. Locate Werra at 1, 1 in Tarmitia and say Uzs. Run from Black Slayers. Leave Tarmitia where you entered by going to the end of passage at 12, 12.

Charles Jones

Deathlord

In last level of the mine on Akmihr, the Word is Ojlvnv. Senju, at town of Two Rivers, wants a cmvf dsztubm. You'll find a Word in the Uspmm Ipmf on Chigaku. Cave of the Four Elements is due west of Uplvhxb. Fire Giants' Cave is just north of Dspzp on Btbhbub. To enter dungeon behind Red Shogun's Castle, sail around back of mountains and enter mountains south. The five Relics are: Mboufso, Spe, Sjoh, Tqfbs and Uppui. Uppui is hidden in Nbmlboui, east of Efnpohvse Dbtumf.

From "two people playing the game too long," Andrew Griffith and Scott Nawrocki

Dream Zone

A bug in some versions won't let you jump from the castle courtyard—the only command that works is JUMPU.

David Auerbach

Tower of Myraglen

To complete the 9th level you need five keys and Menalick's Teachings. You'll find a key on the 1st, 3rd and 7th levels, and two on 9. Teach are in a gffejoh uspvhi on 6. Be humble on 10. Braziers are hit points for gold traders.

David Auerbach

Zak McKracken

To wake up bus driver, qmbz lbapp. Get two items on plane: Distract Flight attendant by using upjmfu qbqfs in sink and fhh in microwave. Hostel entry: use uplfo to sfnpwf qmbuf and repair entry. Huge Face door: watch cut-scene of Zaire Tribe Dance for sequence that opens door. Massive doors: To open door two, use wjozm ubqf on EBU in cppn cpy, then sfdpse pqfojoh of door one or three. To use blue crystal to become animal, use it on bmubs tupof. To make yellow crystal, use flagpole and both crystals on bmubs tupof with Annie reading the scroll. Zak needs a spacesuit? Try wet suit, taped fish bowl and oxygen tank. For lotto number on Mothership in Cfsnveb, bring hvjubs to the Ljoh. To find glowing object in Bermuda, become epmqijo. Pyramid Door on Mars: use cpccz qjo tjho to open. At monolith, buy xup uplfot for each person except Zak.

Keith Gossage

Guild of Thieves

The Colored Squares Maze
The Colored Squares Maze
List dpmpt of the sbjocpx cbdlxbset—VIBGYOR—and proceed accordingly. If stumped, go: SE, N, E, E, SE, S, SW, E, then SE into the crypt. To exit the Squares maze from the White Square, go NW, N, NW, E, SW, SW, NW, N, NW.

Bank Manager's Office and the Vault: Make sure you've deposited all fifteen treasures; sometimes you must wait for the man to change a sign and open the bank.) Drop all except bottle, cage and gum. Difx hvn. Open door. Enter bank. Examine bottle. Nzobi, ippsbz (until bird says it). Enter mph rvfvf. Show dbse to teller. [Save] Drop dbhf and cpuumf. Tiblf cpuumf. Wait (till manager escorts you out). Put hvn in lfzipmf. (The nzobi will efupobuf the cpuumf by saying ippsbz But occasionally he won't tbz ju in time, the reason for saving the game. If it doesn't fzqmpf while you're outside, restore and try again.)

Andrew Phang

The "Mangar for President" edition of the QuestBusters
Code: count one letter back—RC = QB.



Swap Shop

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

APPLE

Wasteland, \$20. Deathlord, \$18. Beyond Zork, \$16. AR: Dungeon (& hint book), \$16. Many more, send SASE for list. R. Robillard, 52 S. Main St., Baldwinville, TX 01436

Mindwheel, \$22 or make offer. Write 1st. D. Griffin, 29881 Preston Rd., Pueblo, CO 81006

Sell: Ultima 2, 3, 4; Wizardry 1, 2, 3; Bard's Tale, Ikari Warriors, ACS, Archon II, Zorro and more. Write 1st, let's swap lists. Chi H. Shum, 1941 3rd Ave, NYC, NY 10029

Trade/sell: 2400 A. D., Bard's Tale 3, Wizardry 4, King's Quest 3, Space Quest 2, Shard of Spring. Brad Kinman, 510 Laurel Rd., Easley, SC 29640

Mac, \$15 @, 2 @ \$25: Legacy, Dragonworld, Fahrenheit 451, Borrowed Time, Mindshadow, Zork 2, Transylvania, Crimson Crown, Reach

for the Stars, Sword of Kadash. D. Campbell, 9772 Via Pavia, Burbank, CA 91504

Want: Leather Goddesses, Hollywood Hijinx, The Pawn. Have Bard's Tale 1-2 (w/ cluebooks), Amnesia, Moebius. Will trade, buy, sell. M. Scholz, 1019 California St., Woodland, CA 95695

Trade: Ultima 3-4, Bard 1-2, King's Quest 2, Might & Magic, Beyond Zork, more. Want Wasteland, Ultima 5, Deathlord, others. Will swap lists. D. Stewart, Rte 5, Box 1235, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Trade: 2E/C version of Space Quest 2 for Space Quest; King's Quest 3 for KQ 1 or 2. Maniac Mansion for sale: \$10. G. Mintz, 4088 Armstrong Ave, Boise, ID 83704

Sell/trade: \$15 @: Ballyhoo, Lurking Horror. \$20: Spellbreaker. Want new GS or Amiga stuff. I pay postage. Aaron Chou, 7032 Woodbury, MN 55125

Trade/sell: Autoduel, Might & Magic, Bard 1, Ultima 2, Aztec, 7 Cities of Gold. M. Bennett, RD 1 Box 576, Montoursville, PA 17754

Sell/Trade: \$20 @: Ultima 4, Might & Magic (both with super characters). \$14: Moonmist. \$3: Underworld map for Ultima 5. Want Wasteland, Bard 3. Greg Watanabe, 3203 N. Alpine Rd, Stockton, CA 95205

\$15 @: The Pawn, Mind Forever Voyaging, Voodoo Island. Bruce Smith, 10035 Placer St., #D, Cucamonga, CA 91730

COMMODORE

Trade: Defender of Crown, Heart of Africa, Alice in Wonderland, Swiss Family Robinson. Want Oo-topos, California Games, One on One. Chris Kelly, 3709 Sandal Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45248

Rescue Rachel, a C-128 text/graphic adventure on 2 2-sided disks w/hints, solution. State 1571 or 1541 drive. \$6 or trade. Tony Fournier, RD 3 Box 112, Bainbridge, NY 13733

Bard's Tale 1: \$17. Amiga Bard 1, \$20, and Bard 2, \$25. Paul Shaffer, 1705-C, O'Shea Ave, Bowling Green, KY 42101

\$15 @ or trade: Defender of Crown, Legacy of Ancients, Last Ninja. \$10 @ or trade: Phantasie, Roadwar 2000, Spell of Destruction, Black Magic, Portal, ACS, Heart of Africa. C. Burkart, 1320 Crosby Ave, NYC, NY 10461

\$15 @: Roadwar, Beyond Zork. \$10 @: Trinity, PSI 5, Killed Until Dead, Labyrinth, Hacker 2, Seastalker, Oo-topos. Craig Konecnik, 873 Yorkshire, Crystal Lake, IL 60014

Trade: Autoduel, Ultima 1-4, Might & Magic, Eternal Dagger, Phantasie 3, Last Ninja. Let's swap lists. R. Nelson, 1114 Tahoma Rd., Lexington, KY 40503

\$10 @: Questron 1, Phantasie 1-2, Bard 1. \$15 @: Bard 2 w/clue book, Phantasie 3. \$20 @: Might & Magic, Questron 2. \$25 @:

Continued on next page

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I'd Rather Be Avenging & Pillaging
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Flogging Peasants
My Dungeon or Yours?

Continued from previous page

Wasteland, Bard 3. Many more. Gene Heskinn, 65 West 19th St., Huntington Station, NY 11746

Amiga: Trade or \$15 @: Trinity, Mindshadow. (See Apple ad.) Aaron Chou, 7032 Woodbury, MN 55125

IBM & QUEST-ALIKES

Am building IBM clone & need these parts: 135-watt power supply, 5.25" drive & controller card, CGA & other cards. If you've upgraded & have any of these lying around, write me: Tom Radigan, 264 Addison Rd., Riverside, IL 60546

Sell: Wizard's Crown, \$20. ACS, \$10. \$15 @: Black Cauldron, Mindshadow, Gauntlet. E. Su, 11 Kuchler Dr., Lagrangeville, NY 12540

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Trade/sell: Pirates, Universe 2, Bard 1, Master Ninja, Wizardry 1-3. \$20 @. James Bumgardner, RR 1 Box 136, Fillmore, IN 46128

Want Apsai Trilogy, Police Quest, Space Quest 2, Lurking Horror, Stationfall, Border Zone, Might & Magic, Bard's Tale. Will buy/trade (have most of older Infocom and King's Quest 2) Carl Stubblefield Jr, 3780 Ramblewood, Flagstaff, AZ 86004

\$15 @: Where in US is Carmen SanDiego?, Where in World is Carmen SanDiego?, & Where in Third World is Carmen SanDiego?, Hackers 2, Brimstone, Breakers, Lurking Horror. Want to buy non-Infocom text adventures. Maureen Moran, 160 W. 96 St., NYC, NY 10025

ATARI

ST: Beyond Zork, Captain Blood, Gauntlet, Rogue, more. Most are \$15. J. Hollingsworth, POB 27, Kelso, WA 98626

ST: \$10 @—Knight Orc, Questron 2, Space Quest. R. Podlesak, 11616 SW 4th Terrace, Yukon, OK 73099

ST, trade: Barbarian, Dark Castle, Defender of Crown, Gauntlet, Rogue, Time Bandit, more. Want Obliterator, Sundog, Tanglewood. Have maps, clues for Dungeon Master, will swap for more clues. Jayson Hogan, 502 N 75, Seattle, WA 98103

8-bit: \$10 @ or trade: Age of Adventure, Mask of Sun, Ultima 1, Zork 1, Questron. C. Burkart, 1320 Crosby Ave, NYC, NY 10461

8-bit—trade: HHG, Zork (I on C 64), Eidolon (AT & 64), for any Infocom but Hijinx, Infidel, Spellbreaker, Starcross, Wishbringer. J. Kalstrom, 6237 Cumberland Dr., Goleta, CA 93117

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