YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET YOURSELF INTO VERY DEEP TROUBLE

INFOCOM INTRODUCES CUTTHROATS™

Nights on Hardscrabble Island are lonely and cold when the lighthouse barely pierces the gloom. You sit on your bed, thinking of better times and far-off places. A knock on your door stirs you, and Hevlin, a shipmate you haven't seen for years staggers in.

"I'm in trouble," he says. "I had a few too many at The Shanty. I was looking for Red, but he wasn't around, and I started talking about.... Here," he says, handing you a slim volume that you recognize as a shipwreck book written years ago by the Historical Society.

You smile. Every diver on the island has looked for those wrecks, without even an old boot to show for it. You open the door, hoping the drunken fool will leave. "I know what you're thinkin'," Hevlin scowls, "but look!" He points to the familiar map, and you see new locations marked for two of the wrecks.

"Keep it for me," he says. "Just for tonight. It'll be safe here with you. Don't let—." He stops and broods for a moment. "I've got to go find Red!" And with that, Hevlin leaves.

You put the book in your dresser and think about following Hevlin. Then you hear a scuffle outside. You look through your window and see two men struggling. One falls to the ground in a heap. The other man bends down beside him, then turns as if startled and runs away. Another man then approaches the wounded figure. He kneels beside him for a long moment, then takes off after the other man.

It isn't long before the police arrive to tell you that Hevlin's been murdered. You don't mention the book, and hours later, as you lie awake in your bed, you wonder if the book could really be what it seems.

Cutthroats is Infocom's first new product to appear in the new package design.

That is just the beginning of *Cutthroats*, Infocom's newest title in the Tales of Adventure genre. Written by Michael Berlyn (*Suspended*, *Infidel*) with the assistance of Jerry Wolper, *Cutthroats* promises to be another Infocom classic.

The story takes place on Hardscrabble Island, a dying little seaport all but forgotten. The island hasn't got much to offer, and diving off the treacherous reefs has long since lost its charm. So when the chance of a lifetime is dropped into your hands, you're ready for action. True, your cohorts are untrustworthy. Granted, keeping the sunken treasure a secret is practically impossible on such a small island. Naturally, diving alone in new areas is dangerous. But if you keep your head and get the treasure, the riches will more than offset the risks you have to take.

There are a number of new twists in *Cutthroats*. Dealing with a group of shady characters is one thing, but having to cooperate with them as you do in *Cutthroats* is another. The character interactions differ from those in other Infocom stories since the plot requires everyone involved to agree on taking risks together. In *Cutthroats*, you're not the leader of the expedition, you're one of four people whose survival depends on working together.

Cutthroats comes with a book entitled "Four Shipwrecks Off Hardscrabble Island." There's also a map showing where the shipwrecks went down, a price list from Outfitters International, a tide table and, of course, the True Tales of Adventure magazine. It is a standard level game and will sell for $39.95 on most systems. **Z**

—— InfoNews Roundup ——

New Packaging

Infocom has been known for its remarkable packaging since it began selling *Zork I*. At the time, software was sold in plastic bags, often with mimeographed manuals. Along came Infocom with full-color, professionally produced blister packs.

Over time, Infocom packaging became more and more noteworthy. *Deadline*™—with its police file full of reports, clues, photo, and even pills found near the body—was another software packaging breakthrough. Next to appear were *Starcross*™, in its distinctive "flying saucer," and *Suspended*™, with the white mask which catches attention from 50 feet away. *Planetfall*™, *Witness*™, *Enchanter*™, *Infidel*™, *Sorcerer*™, and *Seastalker*™ were a bit less far-out in appearance and shape, but continued Infocom's tradition of interesting and useful package elements.

Now we have taken the next step. We believe that we have created the most innovative package in the industry. Measuring 9" by $7\frac{3}{8}$" by 1", the first thing you will note is that our new packages are consistent in size and look, without sacrificing any of their individuality. The package opens like a book to reveal a convenient 24-page "browsie" and improved technical manual ("browsie" is our term for the section which ties into the game). The disk and package elements are packed in a re-closable tray for convenient storage. These packages will store very handsomely on your shelf.

Editorial Page

3-Aug-84 10:43:14-EDT,580;000000000001
Mail-From: SWG created at 3-Aug-84 10:40:00
Date: 3 Aug 1984 1040-EDT
From: Stu Galley (SWG at ZORK)
Subject: grue songs
To: everybody at ZORK

What songs do you think grues might sing around a campfire, if they ever made campfires and felt like singing?

How about:

"I Could Have Lurked All Night"   "I Get a Nip out of You"
"Lurking in the Dark"   "Stayin' Alive"
"I've Been Lurking on the Railroad"*   "Sunglasses at Night"
"Strangers in the Night"   "Help!"
"Tonight We Lurk"   "Hey, Grue!"

* Please, no jokes about what kind of railroad.

3-Aug-84 11:01:02-EDT, 226,0000000001
Date: 3 Aug 1984 1101-EDT
From: Jerry Wolper (JW at ZORK)
Subject: Re: grue songs
To: SWG

In-Reply-To: Your message of 3-Aug-84 1040-EDT

"Here Comes the Dark"
"Fangs for the Memories"
"Slaverin' Alive"

3-Aug-84 11:15:32-EDT,366;000000000011
Date: 3 Aug 1984 1115-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky (SEM at ZORK)
Subject: Re: grue songs
To: SWG
In-Reply-To: Your message of 3-Aug-84 1040-EDT

1) A grue would never light a fire, or stick around if someone else did.
2) Grues don't sing, they gurgle.
3) Isn't it a little early in the day for you to be drinking?
4) How about "Grue Moon"?

3-Aug-84 11:42:18-EDT,466;000000000001
Date: 3 Aug 1984 1142-EDT
From: Stu Galley (SWG at Zork)
Subject: Re: grue songs
To: SEM
In-Reply-To: Your message of 3-Aug-84 1115-EDT

1) No problem. All they need is a source of intense, flickering DARK.
2) Ditto. Gurgling songs is okay by me.
3) Isn't it a little early in the day for you to be assuming that I didn't get this idea last night?
4) Yaaaaaaaaaay! I guess grues love a new moon because the night is darker.

4-Aug-84 13:17:17-EDT,290;000000000001
Date: 4 Aug 1984 1317-EDT
From: Brian Moriarty (PROF at ZORK)
Subject: On the incompatibility of Grues and Campfires
To: SWG

Silly Stu! How could a Grue even get near a campfire? Too bright!

Maybe they could have a '60s psychedelic party instead...with black lights!

Z

"I've been playing Zork for three years and I haven't gotten into the house yet."
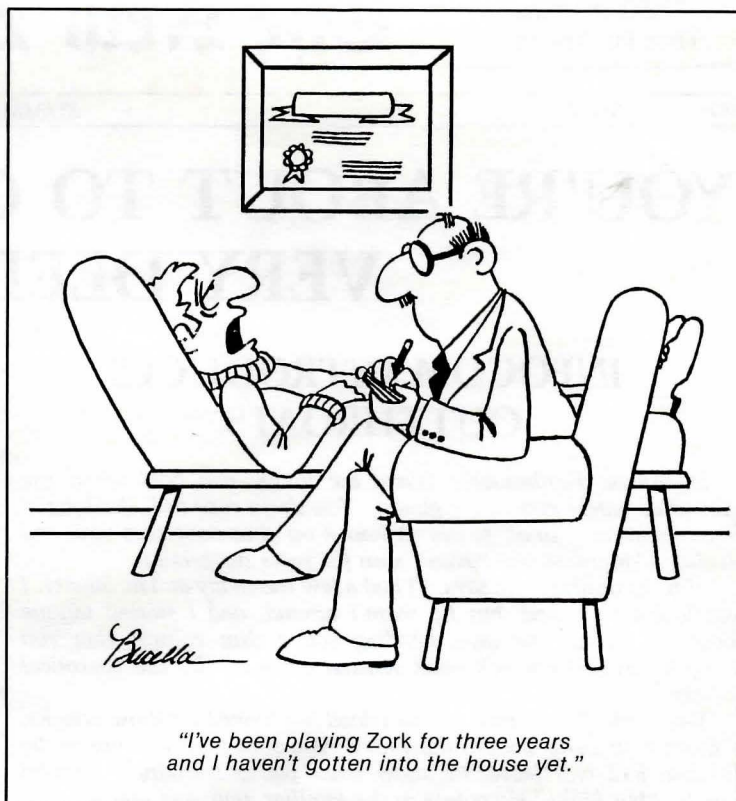
As seen in June 1984 *Computer Games Magazine*. Reprinted with permission.

WE READ THEM!

Remember all those weird things you wrote on your Owner Registration Card because you thought no one would ever read them...?

Zork I—
"The best of all adventures. I am a Zorker."
Richard, 15, Douglaston, NY

"Wow! I love it! I love every game you make! Who needs graphics anyway?"
Jeremy, 13, USAED, Japan

Zork III—
"Infocom's game's are the reason for buying a computer!"
Ariel, 15, Mission, TX

Suspended—
"The robots have become family members." *Arlie, 37, Chester, MA*

Zork/Planetfall—
"I use these games as rewards for good performance in my class."
Ken, 47, San Juan Capistrano, CA

Planetfall/Infidel—
"I missed a car payment to get these two."
Joseph, 20, Ocean View, NJ

Infidel—
"Closest thing to literature yet."
Carol, 32, Honolulu, HI

HOW THE WITNESS CAME TO BE

By Stu Galley
for The New Zork Times

I got hooked on interactive fiction in early 1982, when I tested a preliminary version of *Deadline*. I had seen *Zork* and thought it was interesting, even fun, but the fantasy theme and the arbitrary nature of the puzzles did not excite me personally. But *Deadline* was different: it had a realistic setting, a realistic and coherent puzzle to solve, and a semblance of plot in its events and movements. So when, in the summer of 1982, I got the opportunity to work on a sequel, I took it!

The working title was "Invitation to Murder." Marc Blank had conceived the plot and made some sketches of the scene of the crime. The most significant part of the plot was Linder's death scene, which Marc had placed in a dining room with the detective and the other characters attending a dinner party, like the final scene in *The Thin Man*. Except for someone on the phone and someone else in the bathroom, everyone would be a witness to the death. Using the *Deadline* package as a model, Marc imagined that you would learn about the characters from newspaper stories instead of police interviews, and that the postmortem reports on Linder would be sealed inside an envelope with these instructions: "Do not open this package until instructed to do so."

With Dave Lebling's help, Marc had outlined the story in a few typewritten pages: who the main characters were, what their motives were, what evidence there would be, what you would see before the shooting, and so on. So I began my moonlighting work at Infocom by expanding on that outline: completing the personal histories, designing a realistic house, and running the story forward and backward through my head, with all the variations I could imagine, until I was convinced that there were no "holes" in the plot, that it made sense no matter how you looked at it or made your way through it.
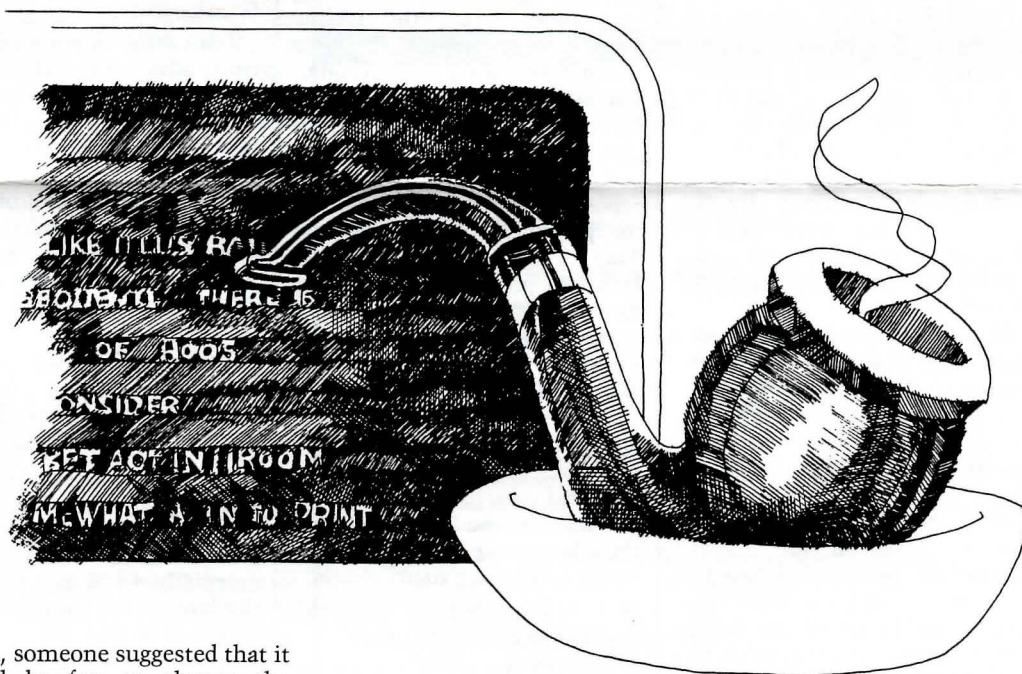
Then the programming began. I made a copy of the *Deadline* program and ripped out everything that I didn't need: the house, the characters, the evidence, and the plot. Then I could build my own story on the foundation that was left. I decided to begin with the house, so that I could play the game as soon as possible, even before I put in the characters. As I had hoped, it was a thrill when the fledgling program let me walk around this house in my imagination! By the time the shooting first occurred, I was ready to quit my regular job and work at Infocom full time, at least.

In late January 1983, the program held together enough for me to demonstrate it to the folks at our advertising agency, as long as I didn't stray too far from the main line of the plot. At that

demo, someone suggested that it would be fun to change the setting from contemporary to the golden age of American mysteries, the 1930's. Since Mike Berlyn had also suggested this, I got a copy of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, and within a few pages I was convinced! Soon my office bookshelf had an old Sears catalog and a pictorial history of advertising (to help me furnish the house and clothe the characters), the *Dictionary of American Slang* (to add color to the text), and a 1937 desk encyclopedia (to weed out anachronisms).

Now, how to choose a particular date for the story, as in *Deadline*? I wanted a contrast between our present-day view of the thirties and the characters' view, so I decided to make the house a "modern" electric one. The Los Angeles area got cheap electricity from Boulder (now Hoover) Dam, completed in 1935, so the late thirties seemed like a good choice. I didn't want the complications of wartime living, and most people now think of World War II starting in 1939, so that was too late. And '38 has the same digits as '83, the year of writing, so I chose it. Next, I wanted a contrast with *Deadline*, so the season had to be winter, and I think of February as the epitome of winter, with no connotations of New Year's Day or the spring to come. The day should be Friday, so that a police detective could plausibly have time to check out the case after work, and the moon should be nearly full, so that darkness would not play a part in the mystery. That settled it: February 18. (I didn't realize, until the day arrived, that February 18, 1983, was also a Friday!)

In early February, Marc and I met with the agency's designers at a restaurant to figure out how to supply the evidence in the package. The designers argued strongly that everything in the package should be available to the detective before the story begins, with none of this sealed

envelope business. We already knew that the package should contain the telegram that signifies your first information about the case, the newspaper stories that tell you about the main characters, and an instruction manual. There should also be something tangible that relates to Linder's fears and his relationship with Stiles: the suicide note from the police file on Mrs. Linder's death. We all wanted something even more tangible, something like the pills in *Deadline* that no one could forget. But what evidence could you gather before even entering the property? Finally the idea hit us: something that a character could have dropped just outside the property, something intriguing, informative, and true to life. How about a phone number cryptically scribbled on something? How about a restaurant matchbook? And so it was.

Soon the agency began seeking sources of authentic-looking props. Western Union was kind enough to supply the design for a 1937 telegram, and American Optical (another client of the agency) supplied copies of their ads from the period. Used magazines and pulp novels from a second-hand store supplied more ads and plenty of ideas for the

Mail Bag

The "Call the Exterminators" article in the Winter issue of The New Zork Times *generated more mail than any other article we have run (excluding the puzzles). We'd like to thank those of you who wrote to us. We are unable to print all of the letters received due to space considerations.*

**Dear Mr. Vezza
and Staff of NZT:**

Thank you very much for *The New Zork Times*. I am a real Infocom groupie. I love all of your games because they are challenging and they respect my intelligence rather than insulting it.

As a result of this addiction, I really appreciate getting first-hand beef on what's new and forthcoming from the Infolabs. I thought that you should be commended for your informative and humorous publication. I am sure that I speak for thousands of others. The puzzles are also challenging, and a lot of fun, too! Another great idea.

I have questions for your summer edition: How do you determine the point value for the solving of any particular puzzle or treasure? What happens after *Zork VI*? Are you going to carry the *Zork* series further, to 7, 8, and 9? Again, congrats. Thanks for reading my letter.

P.S.—Crush Spinnaker and Lotus!

Editor's response: *The point values for treasures or problems are related to the difficulty of attaining or solving them (with some exceptions, such as the 2 point treasure in* Zork I*). Different problems are more or less difficult for different people, but on average large numbers of points are associated with difficult problems. As for* Zork VII *etc., that* would *be telling.*

Gentlemen:

I am only 13 years old, but a true adventurer. The article "Call the Exterminator" reminded me of a mirror that fights back in *Zork I*.

The player types HIT MIRROR WITH SWORD and *Zork* replies any one of the combat replies, like "Clash! Clang! The mirror parries!" or something else like "The mirror dies in a cloud of sinister black fog."

I am glad I shared this news with you.

Peter Schweda
Chicago Illinois

To the Editor:

I loved your newest issue, and especially liked the part about the bugs in the games, but I was surprised to find that you missed the bug that is the most fun to play with. On the TRS-80 Model I version, if you type:

> GIVE AXE TO TROLL

it responds with something like:

The troll accepts your gift, and not having the most discriminating tastes, eats it.

The troll, disarmed, is cowering and begging for forgiveness in the gutteral tongue of the trolls.

If you give the troll to the troll, he similarly eats himself, and disappears; however, he still bars you from leaving the room.

Another fun bug (if you can get it to happen) is if you give the troll to the thief. The thief takes the troll and puts him in his bag. When you kill the thief, the troll pops up and blocks off all the exits from the room. If you give the thief to the troll, he will just reappear later in the game.

Adam Cliff Honig
Huntington, NY

Dear Enchanter programmer:

I regret to inform you that you have not allowed for the capture and sacrifice of any creature besides the humble novice enchanter such as myself who inadvertently strays into the Temple during a ceremony. Having instructed the turtle to enter the temple, I was dismayed to discover that upon completion of the turtle's three to four move term in the Cell, it was I who was released from the cell (which I had never entered) only to be offered up as a sacrifice to some bloodthirsty god in a rather gruesome ritual.

Similarly, when the loyal turtle or the shifty adventurer encounters the hideous shapes which seem to plague areas such as the Banquet Hall and the Library, it is once again the good-hearted enchanter who receives notice of their fate as if it were his own, although he thankfully is not obliged to share that fate.

Christopher P. Thorman (MIT '88)
Great Falls, VA

To Whoever (preferably the writer of "Call the Exterminator" for the Volume #3, Issue #1 of *The New Zork Times*):

Talk about bugs. Poor Michael nas one in *Suspended*. What happened was: I had Waldo get the four-inch cable which ended up in a "Sizzle. . . ." Big Deal! I had Poet drag Waldo to Alpha Repair and pull him up on the glider so he could get fixed. After he got fixed, I had them go back to the Primary Channel where Waldo got zapped. But I noticed something when I asked Poet to look. He replied, ". . . in the room with me is a non-functional Waldo." I immediately had Waldo look to make sure that he was working. Waldo was working and replied, ". . . in the room with me is non-functional Poet "!

John Eric Markey
Houston, TX

. . . Anatomy of a Game

package cover and magazine layout. The *Register* newspaper in Santa Ana was a great find: not only did they give us permission to reprint, but also they sent enlargements of several possible front and inside pages from their microfilm archives, so that we could pick the one we liked best. All the type had to be set again, to match our fictitious stories, but the photos were usable. Many of the original stories were funnier than any we had time to invent!

Meanwhile, back at the program, the "alpha" test had begun, when a company tester played the game over and over, looking for bugs and inconsistencies. He discovered significant "branches" in the story that I had overlooked. For example, what if the player sneaks into the house or doesn't go in at all until too late? The first possibility raised too many complications, so we decided to lock all the outside doors. For the second case, I had to invent a new sub-plot that could involve trying to accost Stiles and get new evidence, or trying to get past Phong after Stiles had come and gone.

The "beta" test began in mid-March, when we sent copies of the program and the prototype package to some friends and volunteers outside the company. Based on their reports, and on continuing testing at Infocom, we decided to add some features to round out the story: giving the characters responses to questions about yourself, letting you handcuff the corpse, putting the L.A. *Times* (found in the Harvard library) in Linder's office, using its radio schedule to make the radio programs authentic, and so on.

In late April, we sent out copies for final testing, which we call the "gamma" test. During this time, I got the feeling (which was typical, I was assured) that there was no end to the little bugs that kept appearing, and that maybe I should throw away the program and start over. But finally the bug reports trailed off as the deadline for production neared. In late May, I declared the program finished, prepared master disks for all the different computer versions that Infocom sold at the time, and sent them out for duplication. It wasn't until July that *The Witness* appeared in stores, and it was several months later that the first magazine review appeared.

What was the biggest thrill in the whole process? I don't know, because there are many thrills:

► designing the story, when the opportunities seem so rich;

► playing the game myself for the first time;

► watching someone else play it for the first time;

► making a complex feature of the story work, after many trials;

► seeing a package design that I feel good about;

► seeing a complete package, "hot off the press";

► seeing my creation on the shelf (or in the window!) of a store;

► reading a favorable review of the story; or

► getting a special piece of fan mail from someone who got hooked on interactive fiction because of me!

Ⓩ

ASK DUFFY

Dear Zorkers:

I just read *The New Zork Times* and I loved it. When I first got *Zork I*, which was a long time ago, I found out that if you get in the raft and put the torch in the raft, the raft will burn to ashes and you won't be able to move. If you say WEST (or another direction), it says "You can't control the magic boat with words." But if you say GET OUT OF THE BOAT, it says "You can't see any boat here." Anyway, keep up the good work!

P.S.—On all my games (and I have all to date), if I say AGAIN as the first move, they say "Brief Descriptions."

Kevin Clark

Editor's Note: *The boat is "magic."*

★ ★ **Letter of the Month** ★ ★

Dear Sirs:

I am presently designing a game of my own, but I am basing it from games like *Zork II*, to do this I have to make the program like the following example LET C EQUAL 24, and that would take a considerable time to program.

The main reason why I am writing, is that on the monitor screen *Zork II* aids or prompts you with an arrow for your answer to the question which is in words not numbers which I like. If possible, could you please explain in great detail how to program for prompt arrow. Thank you for your time and consideration.

(name withheld)

LET US KNOW

Here at the Middlesex County offices of The New Zork Times, *we take great pride in the quality of our work. Even after issues are "out the door," we're constantly improving, honing, and perfecting. If you find an error, feel that an article was boring or particularly good, a puzzle was too hard or too easy, or have suggestions for future articles or puzzles, drop us a note! We love every excuse to stop working, and a letter from you is just such an excuse! Write to:*

New Zork Times Editor
Infocom
55 Wheeler Street.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Duffy:

Some of my friends in the playground told me that opening a disk drive while it's running can cause warts. Is this true?
—**Worried About Warts**

Dear Wart:

To answer your question, I went straight to an expert: Professor Humbick Q. Fiddleberry, Department Head of Harvard University's School of Dermatology and Computer Science. He claims there's absolutely no chance of getting warts from opening a disk drive — unless, of course, there's a frog inside it.

Dear Duffy:

There's a girl in my Science class who I really have a crush on. I invited her to my house to play *Zork II* on my TI-99. We had a really good time, but then her parents found out about it. They've seen "Wargames" and think that all computer hackers are dangerous criminals. What should we do?
—**Not A Dangerous Criminal**

Dear Not:

This is a common syndrome among parents. Explain to them, in an intelligent and mature way, that you are not going to blow up the world, and that *Zork II* is a harmless and educational pastime. If this doesn't work, get a lucrative job in the computer industry, start your own high-tech company, attract millions in venture capital, buy a huge estate in California, take lots of world cruises, get elected to an important government post, discover a cure for cancer, and write several best-selling novels. After that, her parents probably won't mind if she visits you to play *Zork II*.

Dear Duffy:

I recently discovered that my daughter has been visiting the home of a boy in her Science class to play computer games. My husband and I are terrified that they will accidentally break into some secret defense network and start World War III. We have told her to stop going there. Are we being overly protective?
—**Nervous Mom**

Dear Nerv:

You're doing exactly the right thing. The kid is probably some kind of dangerous Commie prevert. You should give his name to the FBI so they can stop him before it's too late. Also, if your home is near any major strategic nuclear targets, I'd start thinking about moving.

Dear Duffy:

I'm very worried about my parents. Lately, they spend all their time playing those mindless arcade games on our home computer. I've tried turning them on to my favorite Infocom games, like *Planetfall* and *Enchanter*, but they say they find them too difficult, and just keep playing Eggplant Kong. My dad used to be a news hound, and my mother loved the Times' crossword puzzle, but neither of them has picked up a newspaper for months! I'm worried about their brains turning to mush.
—**Frantic Son**

Dear Fran:

If your parents found other Infocom games too hard, maybe you should try giving them *Seastalker*. It's easier than the games you mentioned. Better hurry, though, before your parents start smoking, hanging around the local pool hall, and staying out late.

Dear Duffy:

Are you any relation to the Sgt. Duffy in *Deadline* and *The Witness*?
—**Curious in Canada**

Dear Can:

I'm not telling.　　　　**Z**

THE INFOTEAM. **First row** *(left to right):* Richard Ilson, Dave Lebling, Betty Rock, Linda "Tex"Avery, Joanne Avtges, Harle "The Big H" Perkins, Paul DiLascia, Michael Berlyn, Muffy Berlyn; **Second row:** Barry Starr, Tom Smaldone, Barry Jacobson, Duncan Blanchard *(in striped shirt)*, Richard Weissberg, Mike Dornbrook, Jeff O'Neill, Ernie Brogmus, Mark Sawtelle; **Back row:** Hollywood "Dave" Anderson, Mary Ellen O'Connor, Marc Blank, Jon Palace, Kristin Palace, Elizabeth Metz.

>TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

Ballpark

You are standing at the entrance to a large field of wilted grass...

Absent among the spectators of Infocom's softball games this year were pro scouts (though, it was said, the Red Sox' should have been the exception). So the careers of the likes of Dave Winfield, Steve Garvey, and Doug Gwodsz remain secure.

Then again, would these performers in a different recreational industry negotiate the twists of the Zork I Maze as confidently as they round the bases of their familiar diamond? And would their slugging percentage suffer if they were to face the Hooded Figure or the Troll in the shadowy world of *Zork* rather than the sunny offerings of Fernando Valenzuela? Different strokes.

When the dust settled in the second year of the Boston area's Software Softball league, Infocom had earned the rank of Good Team with a 5–2 record, beating archrival Spinnaker in the playoffs, then dropping a heartbreaking best-of-three series to Softrend. Afterward, spirits had not been as low since Floyd died.

The taste of defeat still fresh as waybread, the Infocom faithful gathered at a Polynesian restaurant in hometown Cambridge, to huddle for the last time over sweet-and-sour pork and a veritable Frigid River of Mai Tais to commiserate over an equally bittersweet season.

Among the heroic on the team was "Hollywood" Dave Anderson, product testing supervisor, who found more holes in the opponents' defense than in the first version of *Seastalker*. HDA's dress code (Hawaiian shirts five days a week) determined the team uniform, but his reputation as a swinger also applied to his batting, as he again took the Babe Flathead Award for the second straight season, with five homeruns.

Also performing at the Advanced level was Marc Blank, who, while leading the team with 22 RBI's, apparently had learned a lesson from his own *Zork III*, since he demurred from the ostentation of the excessively gaudy Triple Crown by finishing slightly behind in homers (3) and batting average (.680).

A later season addition, relief pitcher Barry Star (his real name), captured three SAVEs coming off the bench. His downfall came when he was almost ejected from one losing effort: he insisted that the umpire allow him to RESTORE the game to an earlier position in which Infocom was then leading. The beleaguered reliever was quieted down as player-manager Richard Ilson rushed from the bench into the Oddly-Angled Room, and deftly explained the difference between the game of softball and those of interactive fiction.

It was a noisome task for Ilson, who had volunteered to skipper Team Infocom, to transform software players into softball players. But he seemed to be going overboard when he lectured that "mit" must be thought of, no longer as the acronym for many of the players' alma mater, but rather as "an input device worn on the hand to facilitate the reception of a thrower's or batter's output."

And his assigning push-ups and demerits to his players who performed lackadaisically on the field garnered him the quality of respect and affection normally reserved for someone of Ensign First Class Blather's stature. Indefatigably, *Planetfall* author S. Eric Meretzky, his voice echoing out of the Great Underground Dugout, exorted the troopers on to victory, when he himself was not coming off the bench to provide timely hits.

Yet more controversy erupted in one game when catcher Joanne Avtges, in an effort to prevent the opposing team from stealing her signals, decided to flash signals in reverse hexadecimal notation. This plan was aborted, however, when pitcher Paul DiLascia summarily called time out to request that a PC be installed behind the pitching mound as an aid to deciphering his catcher's signs.

As it turned out, the season saw Witness to Infocom's 23-to-7 trouncing of the eventual league champs, Miller Communications, as well as defeats over Acorn (25–4), Business & Professional Software (14–7), CSA (13–9), and Spinnaker (8–4 and 25–15).

Holding down the corners in the infield were Jerry Wolper at first and Michael Berlyn at third, co-conspirators of Infocom's latest release, whose no-nonsense efforts helped earn the team itself a reputation as "Cutthroats."

This steely image was softened, no doubt, not only be the players' flowery jerseys, but also by their enchantingly unique cheer which followed each game, win or lose: "Frobizz! Frobozz! Frobozzle!" The opposing team was generally, and appropriately, held spellbound by the display.

Z

PUZZLE MANIA: PUZZLE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Solution to Puzzle Number One

We goofed in section A of the puzzle. The total number of robotic extensions in *Suspended* is 35; however, we asked for "grasping extensions," and two of Sensa's are non-grasping. Therefore, we decided to accept both 33 and 35 for section A. Thanks to the many people who wrote to point out this error.

Dunbar sat in seat number 7 when she went to the symphony on July 7, 1982. (The first release of *Deadline* has a typo, and the ticket stub says "1981." Sorry for the confusion this may have caused anyone.)

The stamp in *Zork II* was 3 zorkmids; the Royal Museum in *Zork III* lay unguarded beginning in the year 883 GUE; there are 5 matches in the matchbook in *Zork I*, Flood Control Dam Number Three cost 37 million zorkmids; there are 8 entries in the *Starcross* tape library.

Using 35 for part A, the answer comes out to 128; using 33 for part A, the answer comes out to 107.77. There were 103 entries for NZT Puzzle #1, of which 48 had one of the two correct answers (47%). The most popular wrong answer was 30 (with 13 entries, or 13%). This wrong answer seems to be produced by guessing 11 for the seat number in section B.

The following 10 lucky people were selected at random from the 48 correct entries, and will receive a copy of *Sorcerer*:

1. Steve Booth
   Ashland, Oregon
2. Lawrence Rasbid
   Chicago, Illinois
3. Andrew Sherman
   Concord, Massachusetts
4. Dean Kimball
   Fall City, Washington
5. Dan Gonzales
   Canfield, Ohio
6. Michael Schirpke
   Billerica, Massachusetts
7. Brian Klein
   Valencia, California
8. Edward Rose
   Wilmington, Ohio
9. Linda Barrington
   Friendswood, Texas
10. John Wolfenden
    Chapel Hill, N. Carolina

Solution to Puzzle Number Two

The Living Room description is from *Deadline* and *The Witness*. The knapsack is from *Infidel*, the fancy violin appears in *Zork II*, the disfigured device is from *Suspended*, the high-protein liquid is found in *Planetfall*, the hellhound is from *Sorcerer*, and the Forest description comes from *Starcross*.

. . . Yet More InfoNews

Difficulty Ratings

Another improvement you will find on our new packages is the level of difficulty. We have established four difficulty levels:

Junior: Best introduction to interactive fiction. Written for everyone from age 9 up. (*Seastalker*)

Standard: Good introductory level for adults. This is Infocom's most popular level of interactive fiction. (*Zork I, Enchanter, Planetfall, Witness, Cutthroats,* and *Hitchhiker's*)

Advanced: A greater level of challenge. Recommended for those who've already experienced Infocom's interactive fiction. (*Zork II, Zork III, Sorcerer, Infidel,* and *Suspect*)

Expert: For real diehards seeking the ultimate challenge in interactive fiction. (*Starcross, Suspended,* and *Deadline*)

We expect the designation of difficulty level to make it much easier for purchasers to choose the appropriate game.

New Pricing

Effective September 1, Infocom's recommended retail prices have been changed. This is the first time we have adjusted our prices. The price is determined by level of difficulty and by computer system. On most systems, Junior and Standard level games are $39.95, Advanced $44.95, and Expert $49.95. Commodore 64 and Atari prices are $5 less at all levels.

New Catalog

Included with this issue of *The New Zork Times* is our new product catalog. In it you will notice a preview of our new products for the fall—more to come on *Suspect*™ and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*™ in our Fall issue.

Infocom Sampler

Do you know someone who would love interactive fiction if they would only try it? Infocom has the answer: The Four-in-One Sampler, including excerpts from four genres—*The Witness* (mystery), *Infidel* (Tales of Adventure), *Planetfall* (science fiction), and *Zork I* (fantasy).

We have found that 9 out of 10 people who try Infocom interactive fiction love it. Because of this, we are able to make an offer that no one can refuse. The sampler retails for $7.95 and comes with a money-back guarantee—if the buyer decides he is not interested, he can send it back to us for a full refund. If he wants more, there's a coupon enclosed that entitles him to an $8 rebate on purchase of any Infocom title. He can't lose! ▇
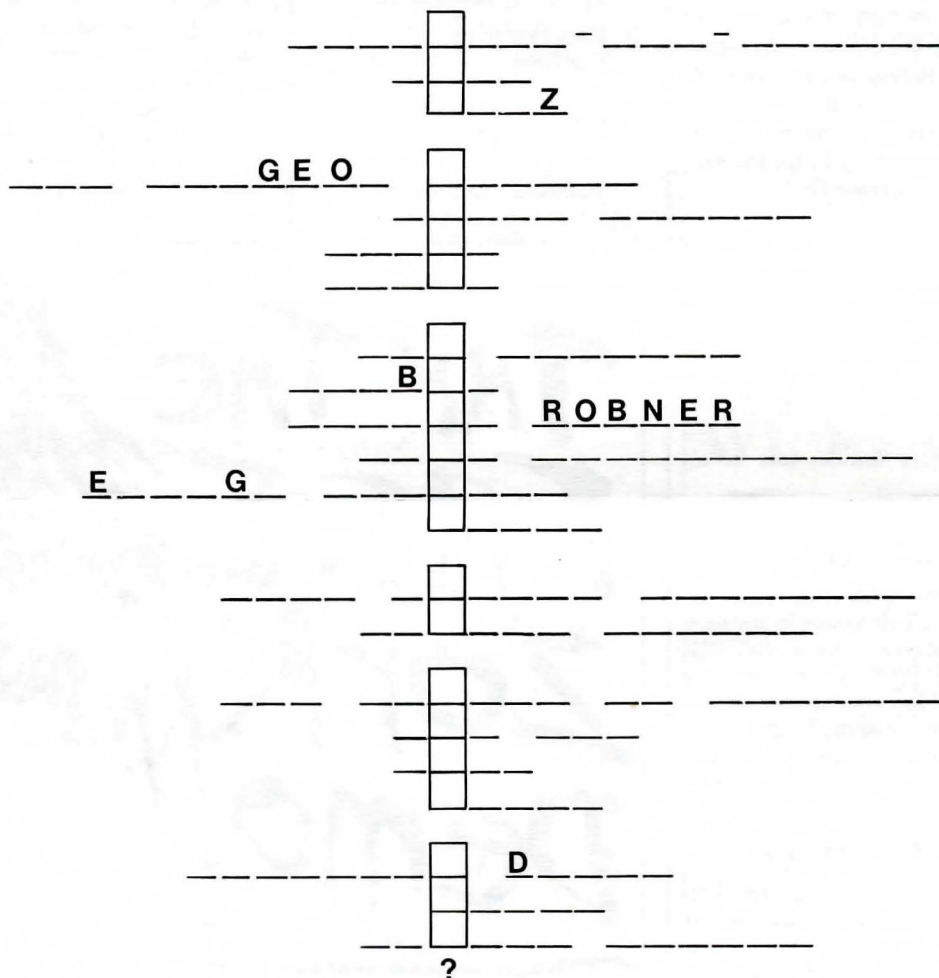
NEW ZORK TIMES PUZZLE   NUMBER 3

In the diagram below, each horizontal line represents the name of a character in an Infocom game (up to and including *Seastalker*). Each blank represents one letter. Fill in as many of these as you can. Several letters have already been filled in to get you started.

When you have filled in enough names, the letters in the boxes (reading downwards) will form a question. Put the answer to this question in the answer box. Only the answer placed in this box will be used to judge your entry.

```
                    _ _ _ _ _ [ ] _   _ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _ _
                            [ ] Z
        _ _ _ _   _ _ _ G E O   [ ]
                            [ ] _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
                            _ _ [ ] _ _
                    _ _ _ _ _ [ ]   _ _ _ _ _ _
                            B [ ]
                            [ ] R O B N E R
                            _ _ [ ] _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
        E _ _ G _ _ _        [ ] _ _ _ _ _ _ _
                            [ ]
                    _ _ _ _ [ ] _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _
                    _ _ _ _ [ ] _ _ _ _ _
                    _ _ _ [ ] _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _ _
                          [ ]
                    _ _ _ _ [ ] D   _ _ _ _ _
                          [ ]
                    _ _ [ ] _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _
                          ?
```

ANSWER: [   ]

CONTEST RULES:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by December 1, 1984.
3. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded for correct answers. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone Number: _____

T-Shirt Size (S, M, L, XL): _____

PRIZE:

The all-new, prestigious *New Zork Times* Puzzle Winner T-Shirt.

That covers ten of the first eleven Infocom games. The remaining game, the solution to Puzzle #2, is *Zork III*. (Several entrants guessed *Seastalker*, but that's not one of Infocom's first eleven games.)

This puzzle must have been considerably easier than Puzzle #1, because the number of entries rose to 694, and the percentage of correct answers also rose slightly (396 correct entries, or 57%). The most popular wrong answer was *Suspended* (110 entries, 16%).

The following 10 people, selected randomly from the correct entries, have won a copy of *Seastalker*:

1. Marc Wontorek
   Northford, Connecticut
2. Diann Harris
   Arlington, Texas
3. Jeff Leonard
   Spring Valley, New York
4. Peter De Gano
   Grand Terrace, California
5. Tim Walters
   Marietta, Georgia
6. Rushton Potts
   Summit, New Jersey
7. Sean Blair
   San Ramon, California
8. Fred Crandall
   Mukwonago, Wisconsin
9. Craig Davis
   Simi Valley, California
10. Peter Merriken
    Elverson, Pennsylvania

Other Puzzle News

Due to a screw-up by the wonderful people who also fill hint booklet orders for us, 12,000 *New Zork Times* readers received their issues two months late. These people received a special puzzle memo with their issues, with a revised deadline. There will be a second drawing for ten additional *Seastalkers* for these entrants.

Many people have been complaining about our policy of awarding the latest Infocom game as the prize for the NZT Puzzle: they dislike having to wait for the puzzle results before knowing if they should buy the new game. Therefore, we are announcing a new prize for puzzle winners: New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-shirts! These shirts are 100% cotton, and are certain to become a mark of distinction among adventurers. In addition, we are increasing the maximum number of winners for each puzzle from 10 to 25.