

**Extra!**

# The New York Times

**Extra!**

## More Games, Systems, says Infocom

Infocom has announced that as of May 1, 1982, Zork I, Zork II, and the new Deadline will be available on the

Atari, IBM, NEC, PDP-11, plus systems running the CP/M Operating System. (The TRS-80 version is ex-

pected to be available exclusively from Radio Shack.)

### First Computer Mystery Announced

Imagine: instead of passively reading your favorite detective stories, having full control over the investigation, Infocom, creator of the unexcelled Zork adventures, has made another major advance in the development of the electronic novel:



first in the Interlogic mystery series.

As Chief Inspector, you have been asked to conduct an investigation into the death of the great industrialist and philanthropist, Marshall Robner, an apparent victim of suicide. For one day you may visit the estate: examining evidence and observing and interrogating his family, servants and close business associates, in an effort to determine what actually happened.

This mystery includes a number of major advances over previous computer games: the passage of time is quite realistic; the characters are very lifelike in their mobility and dialogue, and the ability of the program to understand English commands has been improved over that of Zork (which until now had the best language handling on the market).

In addition to the game disk and manual, the mystery includes a preliminary police report with interviews of the possible suspects, reports by the police crime labs and medical examiner, as well as physical pieces of evidence.

slower than a photon...  
smaller than a galaxy...  
less important than a cure for cancer...

The Zork Users Group is Proud to Present the Ultimate Solution . . .

**InvisiClues™** for  
*Zork: The Great Underground Empire - Part I*

No more frustrating delays. For the cost of about 6 questions from our ordinary hint service you receive over 175 questions about Zork I, progressing from a gentle nudge in the right direction all the way up to a full answer. Included is a complete list of treasures, including their values and locations, and a section entitled "for your amusement" which includes some interesting Zork trivia.

With this booklet you can solve Zork completely and learn about a lot of things you otherwise might not have noticed!

"But won't this completely ruin the game for me? How can I look up something that has me baffled without seeing unwanted hints or answers to other problems?"

This was our major worry. We wanted to provide just as much help as was needed without giving away problems unintentionally. Therefore, all of the hints and answers in the InvisiClues booklet are printed in invisible ink. To use the booklet, simply find the section and question which pertain to your problem and use the developing pen provided to develop the first invisible clue.

The book is attractively illustrated by David Ardito, and written with the style and wit Zorkers have grown to appreciate.

Even those who have successfully completed Zork on their own are likely to find much in the booklet new to them.

### Discount Policy Changed

As the result of a new agreement with Infocom, the Zork Users Group will no longer be able to provide direct discounts on games. Since new products are delayed by the distribution channels to stores, we will generally be able to ship new products to you long before they appear in computer stores. We will also be able to provide you with the convenience of ordering by mail, the savings on sales tax for all but Wisconsin residents, and our speedy service (most orders are shipped within 2 days of receipt). We hope you will continue to patronize us.



**Special**



**Limited Offer**

In order to gauge response to Deadline and to purchase sufficient inventories, we are making a special offer: if your game order is postmarked on or before April 30, we will include the color poster for Zork I absolutely free. You will be guaranteed shipment of your game at the earliest possible date. We expect to be able to ship the game for the Apple by April 10. The other versions are expected to be available May 1.

Enclose this coupon with your order if you wish to receive the free poster. Limit one per customer.



Watch for Infocom's ads for an additional bonus after you have purchased the game.

Flatheads shut out Robners, 6-0, in postponed game *Sports p. 12*

New lunch treats with peppers and garlic *Living p. 12*

**All the  
grues that  
fit,  
we print.**

# The New York Times

New York  
area weather:

Vol. II, no. 1

Fall 1982

hi 55, low 70

# MORE

## InvisiClues™

Since the InvisiClues booklet for *Zork I: The Great Underground Empire* was so well received by Zorkers, the Zork Users Group has moved forward with the production of three more.

InvisiClues for *Zork II: The Wizard of Frobozz* are now available. InvisiClues for *Zork III: The Dungeon Master* and for *Starcross* are expected to be available on December 1, 1982.

InvisiClues are the ultimate in computer game hint booklets.

No more frustrating delays. The InvisiClues booklet for *Zork I* includes over 175 hints (and answers) to over 75 questions, progressing from a gentle nudge in the right direction to a full answer. (The booklet for *Zork II* contains over 210 hints to over 80 questions.)

Included are complete lists of treasures, with their values and locations, and "for your amusement" sections which include fascinating game trivia.

They provide just as much help as is needed without giving away answers unintentionally. All of the hints and answers in the InvisiClues booklets are printed in *invisible ink*.

You see nothing but what you *want* to see. To use the booklets, simply find the section and question which pertain to your problem and use the developing pen provided to develop the first invisible clue. With these booklets you can solve the games completely and learn about many things you might otherwise not have noticed!

The booklets are attractively illustrated by David Ardito, and written with the style and wit Zorkers have grown to appreciate.

If you wish to avoid double payment of the per-order postage and handling charge or simply wish to get your order in early, we will now accept and process orders for *Zork III* and *Starcross* InvisiClues and ship as soon as available.

## Infocom announces two new games: Starcross, and long-awaited Zork III

# Zork III      Starcross

A year in the making, *Zork III: The Dungeon Master* is the climax of the first Zork trilogy. If you enjoyed *Zork I* and *Zork II*, you'll love *Zork III* — it's the most mind-boggling of them all.

Visit the mystifying Land of Shadow. Try to obtain the crown jewels of the Great

... climax ...

Underground Empire. Solve the royal puzzle. Delve into the secrets of the Technology Museum. Meet some very mysterious characters. The greatest challenge is figuring out what is going on and what you are there for. The conclusion of this game is quite satisfying.

# INFOCOM GAMES: MORE SYSTEMS

Infocom has announced that its games will now be available on the NEC APC (CPM-86) and Commodore 64 (with disk).

*Deadline* and *Starcross* are now available for the TRS-80. (Radio Shack is exclusively marketing *Zork* for the TRS-80 models.)

Finally Infocom has entered the realm of science fiction. The result is what you'd expect from the masters of the text adventure genre — stupendous!

You are the skipper of the *Starcross*, a one man survey ship searching for quantum black holes. Suddenly your mass detector locates a

... science fiction ...

large mass moving through your sector, but this is no black hole. You are about to become the first human to have contact with extra-terrestrial beings...



# Critics acclaim Zork and Deadline

## Zork I

*"Zork is a classic. Without a doubt, Infocom offers the finest text adventures yet available for the IBM."*

Forrest Johnson in *Softalk* for the IBM PC, June 1982

The results of *Softalk's* reader poll:

*"The Adventure 5 balloting provided the biggest upset. Although On-Line Systems hi-res adventures continually dominate the sales charts, Zork got the nod as the most popular adventure program."*

*Softalk*, April 1982

[In May 1982, *Deadline* was top of the sales chart.]

*"Zork is the definitive adventure game ... The vocabulary is out of this world, and by far the most extensive yet encountered ... The best news is that this is only part I!!"*

Kim Schuette in *The Book* 1981

*"No single advance in the science of Adventure has been as bold and exciting as the introduction of Zork: The Great Underground Empire."*

Bob Liddil in *Byte*, February 1981

## Zork II

*"Once again the master adventurers at Infocom have thrust us into the titillating, terrifying, and sometimes intimidating world of Zork ... This is an ambitious adventure, replete with volcanoes, dragons, princesses, unicorns, and a myriad of other creatures and objects that will extend your imagination ... A well-balanced mix of humor, wit, and wry puns makes reading [the descriptions] almost as pleasurable as solving the game itself."*

*"The riddles and puzzles are intricate but, for the most part, their answers are logical and succumb to rigorous application of the principles of deductive reasoning. Some of the puzzles are astounding in their ingenuity ..."*

*"As a matter of fact, Zork is such a popular game that a Zork user group has been formed. They offer various Zork paraphernalia, including very handsome maps that enhance playing both games ..."*

Tom Repstad in *Sofline*, May 1982

*"Zork II is a delight to play. A text adventure, it is of the high quality, logic-loyal wing of that genre ... Zork II somehow escapes the mold. It is fresh and interesting ... You do not need to have played Zork to play Zork II, but if you haven't, you're apt to want to pick up the first Zork after the fact."*

Margot Tommervik in *Softalk*, March 1982

## Deadline

*"If the mystery writers of America gave an award for Best Fiction in Software, Deadline would win in a walk ... This is an elegant mystery, with its roots in Agatha Christie ... For anyone who ever loved a mystery — and who has a couple days free — it's indispensable."*

*Softalk* for the IBM PC, July 1982

*In years to come, generations hooked on computer mysteries may well look to Marc Blank and Dave Lebling with the same respect that mystery novel readers have for Doyle; these two have created the first wholly interactive mystery for the computer. And it's dynamite.*

*"... Deadline incorporates all the finesse in programming we've come to expect from Infocom ..."*

Probably the most gratifying praise has come from you, the Zorkers and Deadliners of the world. The comments on the owner warranty cards have been phenomenal, stupendous, unprecedented, ... well, you be the judge:

**Zork I** *"It is magnificent! Best adventure I've ever played."*

*"Outstanding — far superior to Adventure."*

*"It took my brother and I almost a year to solve Zork I. We bought Zork II the day after we finished Zork I."*

*"Most sophisticated adventure I've ever experienced."*

*"YAHOO!!"*

*"I think it is the best adventure program available today."*

*"Love it!! Glad there is a Zork II to look forward to."*

*"Nifty."*

*"Very good. Best I've seen."*

**Zork II** *"Loved Zork so much I had to come back for more."*

*"More restless nights." "Woopie! More Zork."*

*"Really intriguing. Beat graphic display games."*

*"Excellent — easily the best adventure on the market."*

*"Excellent in all respects. Zork products are the most entertaining adventures on the market today. Games are creative and reliable."*

*"Annoying, frustrating, and terrific! The best adventure game on the market."*

*"Exceptionally well-done — exciting to play for hours on end."*

*"Has even intrigued my wife."*

## Deadline

*"Excellent; well written and conceived."*

*"I believe this to be the most challenging and realistic adventure yet."*

*"I can't believe someone has finally come out with a detective computer game, hope to see more."*

*"Excellent adventure!! The documentation is superb!!"*

*"Totally fascinating."*

*"It's hard, but great."*

*"Fantastic! Keep up the good work in the next Interlogic mystery series."*

*"Help!"*

*"Fantastic!!"*

*"A brilliant concept."*

*"An unquestioningly challenging and entertaining game of excellent quality, well worth the cost."*



Are you proud to be a Zorker? Would you like to meet other Zorkers? The Zork Users Group now has a lovely assortment of Zork buttons.

All the  
grues that  
fit,  
we print.

Third Sci-Fi game, Planetfall, due out in July!

# The New York Times Our last issue!

Vol. II, no. ∞

Summer 1983

New York area  
weather: sunny, 70s



**ACTUAL SIZE!** A small portion (3%) of the new Zork II poster is reproduced at actual size above.

## ZORK USERS GROUP WILL SHUT DOWN

All good things must come to an end. Mike, the founder of the Zork Users Group (see story on page 3), is getting his M.B.A. in June and going to work for Infocom in August as product manager for entertainment products.

The Zork Users Group will be shutting down for two reasons. Primarily, Infocom would like to be fully responsible for support of their products. Secondly, Mike would be in a position of possible conflict of interest if he continued to run the Zork Users Group as an employee of Infocom.

The Zork Users Group will continue to process orders received through July 31. All orders will be handled as they have always been – promptly and efficiently. There will be no difficulties with inventories (with the possible exception of the *Zork I* poster).

As of August 1, all orders will be handled by

Infocom. Any orders received by the Zork Users Group after July 31 will be forwarded to Infocom. However, if you have a problem with a Zork Users Group shipment, write to our usual address.

**Infocom will not be carrying all of the Zork Users Group product line.** They will not carry buttons, T-shirts, bumper stickers, or the *Zork I* poster. They will carry our maps at least as long as the inventory lasts. A final decision on whether Infocom will continue to carry maps has not yet been made. InvisiClues will certainly be continued.

Orders placed in early August may be subject to delay due to the transition. We urge you to place all orders as early as possible.

**DEADLINE™**

**InvisiClues™**

*Deadline* and *InvisiClues* were born in the same month – April 1982. Both have been extremely popular, and have received critical acclaim. *PC Magazine* called *InvisiClues* "almost as much fun as *Zork*." *InvisiClues* for *Starcross* and *Zork III*, both introduced in October of 1982, became available in late December. Why has it taken a year for *Deadline* *InvisiClues* to be written? Certainly not for lack of interest. The Zork Users

(continued on page 2)

They're writing as fast as they can!

## WITNESS™

Infocom's long-awaited second mystery game is finally announced, and it was worth waiting for. The advance word is that it tops the highly acclaimed and tremendously popular *Deadline*.

"Witness is really wonderful."

Marc Blank, author of *Deadline* and *Zork*

Topping *Deadline* will be quite an achievement. *Deadline* has received rave reviews (even *The New York Times* called it "a milestone").

*Electronic Games* magazine (primarily a video game magazine) awarded it the "Best Computer Adventure – 1983." *Deadline* was voted the #2 adventure in *Softalk* magazine's poll of its readers. After a year on the market, it is still at the top of the sales charts – very rare in this fast-moving market.

But *Witness* is up to the challenge. Once again, you are the detective who must solve the crime, but this time you are in a classic 1930's setting and the murder takes place before your very eyes.

"There is a great deal of mood setting – the atmosphere is great!" says Marc Blank. "Although there are fewer characters in *Witness*, they are much better developed and more interesting. There is significantly more conversation, and the game is richer in detail."

The author of *Witness* is Stu Galley. One of Infocom's founders, he worked in the same group at the MIT Laboratory for Computer Science as Marc Blank, Dave Lebling, Joel Berez (Infocom's president), and Mike (the founder of the Zork Users Group). Stu's background is physics (B.S. Caltech, M.S. MIT), which may seem odd training for writing mysteries, but Stu is an excellent writer, and is very well-read. In short, he is a true renaissance man.

"Stu is really great at the subtle things."

Steve Meretzky, author of *Planetfall*

As usual, *Witness* introduces improvements in Infocom's parser (the program which understands the sentences you type in). No one else has come close to Infocom's language-handling abilities, which are continually improving.

## SYSTEM NEWS

*Zork II* and *Zork III* are finally available on the TRS-80® models 1 and 3 (Radio Shack still has an exclusive on *Zork I*).

The TI Professional is the latest system to be added to Infocom's list. All of the games are available for this new computer.

After our spring issue of *The New York Times* went out, Infocom withdrew its announcement of the PDP-11 and NEC PC-8000 versions of *Suspended*. This decision has been reversed again, and we expect *Suspended* to be available on these systems by the time you read this.



# Deadline InvisiClues

(from page 1)

Group has received over 1000 requests – more by far than for any other product.

Writing InvisiClues for *Deadline* was a difficult task. The game's problems are not at all like those of the *Zorks* or *Starcross*. Most of *Deadline's* problems are interrelated and in a sequence. Questions about problems further down the sequence would reveal too much and spoil the game.

The solution to this problem was a more creative use of the InvisiClues process. For delicate matters, neutral questions and situations are posed which direct the player to develop more specific, numbered, invisible questions. As usual, there is a section "for your amusement," which details many of the interesting or humorous things you may have missed. There is also a special section which discusses all 21 possible game endings and how to reach them.

We are sure you will find the *Deadline* InvisiClues meet or surpass the quality of those for the other Infocom games.


## At Last, a Zork II Poster

Pier Giovanni Binotti is an Italian artist who fell in love with *Zork*. In the Italian tradition, he expressed his love with a beautiful work of art which he is making available to the world through the Zork Users Group. This 22" x 28" poster encompasses the entire geography of *Zork II: The Wizard of Frobozz*. The illustrations are exquisitely detailed and blend together to form a stunning piece of work.

This is a poster any Zork lover would be proud to own. (Since the poster reveals solutions to certain problems, anyone who hasn't completed *Zork II* may want to wait.) You'll have to see it to believe it.


**Zork T-shirt and another!**

Free heat-transfer sheet (\$3.95 value) with this coupon and the purchase of any game.



*Limit one per customer; offer expires 7/31/83.*

free T-shirt transfer with this coupon and any two booklets purchased.



*Limit one per customer; offer expires 7/31/83.*

**FREE STUFF!**

# ZORKERS RESPOND

Below are reproduced some of the comments received on warranty cards and in letters:

*On the Zork Users Group*

"This is a letter of appreciation. ... Your customer service is excellent and all of the products you offer make the games so much more enjoyable. I have every one of the Infocom games and all of the InvisiClues booklets. The InvisiClues are top-notch and well worth the price. ... 3 cheers for the Zork Users Group!"

**Marian  
Napa, California**

"I was very impressed with the speed of delivery of my last order."

**Walter  
Dover, New Hampshire**

"I am writing this letter because of your quick delivery and great games. I was pleased at the speedy delivery of your mail-order services. Your service is the best that I have encountered."

**Vance  
Athens, Georgia**

"I recently purchased your InvisiClues for *Starcross* and want to thank you for your fast service. In this hurry up and wait world, it is refreshing to receive something before it was expected. Hurray for you."

**Barbara  
Ontario, California**

*On Zork*

"*Zork* is so much better than *Adventure* ... I finally got smart and moved on to *Zork*. My smartest move yet."

"This is so much fun I have to force myself to stop. I enjoy it far more than my other Adventure games, even without the graphics."

"Like living inside a novel, kind of makes you feel like Alice in Wonderland."

*On Suspended*

"This is sure to be another big hit as all your software is. Best game so far!"

"Excellent. You did it again!"

"The hardest of all your adventures. I loved every minute of it."

"I'm becoming emotionally involved with my robots."

"Another unique idea from one of the greatest software companies ..."

"Keep 'em coming."

"I'll be waiting for the next science-fiction game."

"The best! You must now produce games faster, because nothing but Infocom is worth playing!"

"Another Infocom winner."

"Love it. Marvelous packaging. Makes even pirates want to buy it."

"Creative packaging, extremely playable."

"Outstanding."

"Superb graphic quality of packaging, manual, map and pieces was unexpected but very pleasurable."

"I like the hint computer."

"Excellent."

"Suspended is a deep, involving, and extremely tough adventure. Highest praise for it and all the Infocom line."

"Infocom never disappoints. Yours are the only adventures I purchase now."


"Perhaps the best yet."

"So far, the game is intriguing, fascinating, enjoyable, superbly written, addicting, witty, engrossing, fun."

"Awesome! You guys aren't kidding when you say the game takes place in your mind."


"Incredible!"

"Outstanding! Challenging – this is what a game should encompass."



free bumper sticker with this coupon and any InvisiClues book purchased.

*Limit one per customer; offer expires 7/31/83.*



**InvisiClues  
booklet**

free InvisiClues book with this coupon and any two games purchased.

*Limit one per customer; offer expires 7/31/83.*

# MEET THE ZORK USERS GROUP



Many of you have asked who we are, how many of us there are, etc. Above is the answer. Mike, the founder, is sitting in front center holding a bumper sticker.

Mike started the Zork Users Group in October of 1981. He had been working at the MIT Lab for Computer Science and part-time for Infocom as the game-tester (their first paid employee). When Infocom began selling games in 1980, our Mikie began answering requests for hints. He convinced Infocom to produce the map and poster for *Zork I*.

In September 1981, Mike left Cambridge to attend the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. Before leaving, Infocom offered to allow him to set up the Users Group to continue supporting the games. Mike accepted and planned to run the operation from his dormitory room in Chicago.

During the one week Mike spent with his parents in Milwaukee before starting classes, his father Bob (standing at back left), who had retired only a few months before, suggested that he could handle the day-to-day order filling in his spare time at home in Milwaukee. So, the post office box, bank accounts, etc. were established there.

It was a small, frugal operation for the first six to nine months. The mailing list of about 1000 names was kept on 3" x 5" cards. Mike's mother, Marion (standing at back right holding *Zork III*), maintained the mailing list and handled the requests for price lists. Mike took care of accounting, taxes, planning, product development, advertising, mass mailings, ... , and answered all the hint requests.

He was getting quite bored explaining what to do about the Thief, and giving the answer to the riddle. He wanted to do hint booklets if only he could find a way which would be easy to use without spoiling any part of the games for anyone. After months of searching for a solution, he came across an invisible printing process and InvisiClues were born.

With the introduction of InvisiClues, the

expansion of Infocom's product line, and the growth of personal computers, demands on the Zork Users Group were growing. After Mike and his parents spent three weeks printing and typing 4000 mailing labels by hand for the August 1982 mailing, it became clear that the Zork Users Group needed to join the computer age.

Steve (front left, holding *Zork I* map), Mike's best friend from high school, was writing database systems for the insurance industry. He began working as a consultant for the Zork Users Group, writing a system to handle order entry and to maintain customer records. An IBM-PC with a 10mb Davong hard disk was purchased. [Anyone interested in information on this software should contact the Zork Users Group.]

Once the software was ready for use in January of 1983, the customer list and order information had to be input. Mary (standing in back middle holding *Starcross*), Mike's former next-door neighbor, and Sharon (front right holding *Suspended*), who used to work with Marion, were hired to type in the information (which had grown to 10,000 names). Once the information was keyed in, Mary and Sharon stayed on to help out with the daily orders and relieve Mike's parents, who were "working harder than they ever had in all their lives."

So there they are: the people who handle 300-400 orders a week plus 50-100 information requests. They remain semi-anonymous to protect their sanity - since the Users Group is operated out of a home, they can't get away from the phone. Desperate Zorkers have been known to call Infocom in the middle of the night from as far away as Australia.

*P.S.* Amazing as it may seem to those of you addicted to Infocom adventures, Mike remains the only one of the six above who has ever played *any* part of *any* of the games.

## More Kudos for Infocom Games

Infocom did extremely well in the *Softalk* poll of their readers' opinions on Apple software introduced in 1982. All four of the Infocom products which qualified were in the top 10 in their category. In the adventure ten, *Deadline* placed second, *Zork II* third, *Starcross* fifth, and *Zork III* seventh.

The same issue of *Softalk* (April 1983) featured an excellent review of *Suspended* (p. 155). To sum up a one page review is difficult, but a few quotes may help:

"Berlyn has succeeded in devising an adventure that is so absorbing, so compelling in the pleasure of achieving, that you can play it again and again."

"*Suspended* is an intelligent, logical, well-plotted, compelling, and absorbing, challenging and satisfying text adventure that begs to be played over and over again. What more can an intelligent adventurer ask?"

## Zork Users Group Now Spans 40 Countries

The Infocom games have strong appeal around the world. We know of Zorkers in the following 39 countries outside the U.S.

<b>Argentina</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Norway</b>
<b>Bahamas</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>Saudi Arabia</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>Singapore</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
<b>Chile</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Columbia</b>	<b>Kenya</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Kuwait</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>Mexico</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Fiji</b>	<b>Monaco</b>	<b>Uruguay</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>The Netherlands</b>	<b>Venezuela</b>
	<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	<b>West Germany</b>

We know addresses for only about 20% of those who have purchased Infocom games, so there are undoubtedly more countries from which we haven't heard.

## A Note on our Service

The Zork Users Group generally ships your order within one day of receipt. Packages under 12 oz. are shipped via first class mail. Packages 12 oz. or over are shipped priority mail. The only exceptions to this have been due to unavailability of a game.

Occasionally Infocom experiences a delay on a game introduction for a particular machine (as recently happened with the Atari *Suspended*, with the TRS-80 *Zork II* and *Zork III*, and with all the Commodore 64 games). There have also been occasions when Infocom has back-orders due to unexpectedly heavy demand. In all of these cases we ship your order as soon as is humanly possible.

The exceptions are a small minority of orders. The Zork Users Group maintains a healthy game inventory for all machines. We have never run out of maps, InvisiClues, bumper stickers, T-shirts or posters, and, barring a disaster, we will not run out of any of these items (with the possible exception of posters).

## Summer 1983 Price List for Interlogic Game Products

(Prices effective through September 30, 1983)

The Zork Users Group is an independent group licensed by Infocom, Inc., to provide support for Interlogic adventurers. Our sole purpose is to enhance your enjoyment of Infocom's worlds, however, we are a separate entity not affiliated with Infocom. For your convenience we also maintain an inventory of all the games for all systems on which they are available (on a non-exclusive basis). **Why buy games from us?** We can generally deliver new games to you faster than the wholesale distribution system delivers them to stores. **You also save money.** Many stores across the country have been charging above list prices. In addition, non-Wisconsinites pay no sales tax (our postage and handling charge is less than the sales tax in most states).

### InvisiClues™

Each booklet contains over 175 hints (and answers) to more than 75 questions about an Interlogic game, progressing from a gentle nudge in the right direction to a full answer. Clues are printed in invisible ink (developing marking included), giving you the option to develop only what you want to see. Each has illustrations throughout, as well as sections listing all treasures, how points are earned, and fascinating game trivia.

200-IN1	InvisiClues for Zork I	\$9.95
201-IN2	InvisiClues for Zork II	\$9.95
202-IN3	InvisiClues for Zork III	\$9.95
203-IN4	InvisiClues for Starcross	\$9.95

InvisiClues for Deadline — same general idea as the other InvisiClues booklets, but organized differently due to the unique nature of the game. Includes a section detailing all 21 possible game endings.

204-IN5	InvisiClues for Deadline	\$9.95
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Each booklet comes with one developing marker, which is more than sufficient to develop the entire book. However, should you misplace yours or allow it to dry out, we do have replacements.

299-MAR	InvisiClues developing marker	\$1.95
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The ultimate hint service.



What is the timber for?

How do I use the machine?

A. **The switch description should remind you of something.**

B.

### guide maps for Zork I, II, & III



Facilitate your explorations of the Great Underground Empire or decorate your wall. Order the official guide map to Zork I, Zork II, or Zork III. These intriguingly illustrated 11" x 17" fold-out maps are printed in brown and black ink on heavy parchment-tone paper. All locations and passageways are shown. Simple directions make the maps useful guides for your journey through the Empire.

Please be warned, however, that the maps reveal secrets that would otherwise require you to solve various problems. They might give away more than you wish to know. For this reason, we recommend that you explore the Great Underground Empire on your own before using the map.

210-ZM1	Zork I map	\$2.95
211-ZM2	Zork II map	\$2.95
213-ZM2	Zork III map	\$2.95

### blueprint for Deadline

Architectural drawings of the Robner mansion and grounds. This handy reference may help you to unearth some hitherto-undiscovered clues.

212-DM1	Deadline map	\$2.95
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### guide map for Starcross

This 11" x 17" fold-out map is a two-dimensional representation of the interior layout of the artifact.

214-SM1	Starcross map	\$2.95
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## Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Deadline, Starcross, Suspended and Witness



The first in a series bringing state-of-the-art in fantasy simulation to owners of personal computers. Considered at its introduction in 1981 *the* best computerized adventure game available.



The final test of your courage and wisdom. Your odyssey culminates in an encounter with the Dungeon Master himself, and your destiny hangs in the balance.

## STARCROSS™

First in the Interlogic Science Fiction series. You are the skipper of the Starcross, a one-man survey ship searching for quantum black holes. Your mass detector locates a large mass moving through your sector, but this is no black hole. You are about to become the first human to have contact with extra-terrestrial beings . . .

## WITNESS

Second in the mystery series, and even better than Deadline. In a classic 1930's setting, and the murder takes place right before your very eyes!



When the original Zork was released, it was considered the best adventure ever written. Only the creators of Zork could have approached, much less surpassed, the original, and they have!



Imagine: instead of passively reading your favorite detective stories, having full control over the investigation. Infocom, the creators of the unexcelled Zork adventures, has made another major advance in the development of the electronic novel.

## SUSPENDED™

Kept in a state of suspended animation, you mind connected by a maze of wires to a vast computer, you are the control system of an entire planet's basic systems. When an earthquake strikes, you must use the robots under your control to evaluate and repair the damage.

### Prices and catalog numbers

System	Zork I	Zork II	Zork II	Deadline	Starcross	Suspended	Witness!
Apple II® (32K, 16-sector)	IZ1-AP1 \$39.95	IZ2-AP1 \$39.95	IZ3-AP1 \$39.95	IM1-AP1 \$49.95	IS1-AP1 \$39.95	IS2-AP1 \$49.95	IM2-AP1 \$49.95
Atari® 400/800 (32K, 810 disk)	IZ1-AT1 \$39.95	IZ2-AT1 \$39.95	IZ3-AT1 \$39.95	IM1-AT1 \$49.95	IS1-AT1 \$39.95	IS2-AT1 \$49.95	IM2-AT1 \$49.95
IBM PC (48K)	IZ1-IB1 \$39.95	IZ2-IB1 \$39.95	IZ3-IB1 \$39.95	IM1-IB1 \$49.95	IS1-IB1 \$39.95	IS2-IB1 \$49.95	IM2-IB1 \$49.95
TI Professional	IZ1-TI1 \$39.95	IZ2-TI1 \$39.95	IZ3-TI1 \$39.95	IM1-TI1 \$49.95	IS1-TI1 \$39.95	IS2-TI1 \$49.95	IM2-TI1 \$49.95
Commodore 64 (Disk)	IZ1-CO1 \$39.95	IZ2-CO1 \$39.95	IZ3-CO1 \$39.95	IM1-CO1 \$49.95	IS1-CO1 \$39.95	IS2-CO1 \$49.95	IM2-CO1 \$49.95
TRS-80 Model 1 (32K and disk)	_____	IZ2-TR1 \$39.95	IZ3-TR1 \$39.95	IM1-TR1 \$49.95	IS1-TR1 \$39.95	IS2-TR1 \$49.95	IM2-TR1 \$49.95
TRS-80 Model 3 (32K and disk)	_____	IZ2-TR3 \$39.95	IZ3-TR3 \$39.95	IM1-TR3 \$49.95	IS1-TR3 \$39.95	IS2-TR3 \$49.95	IM2-TR3 \$49.95
DEC Rainbow™	IZ1-DE2 \$39.95	IZ2-DE2 \$39.95	IZ3-DE2 \$39.95	IM1-DE2 \$49.95	IS1-DE2 \$39.95	IS2-DE2 \$49.95	IM2-DE2 \$49.95
NEC PC-8000 (56K CP/M)	IZ1-NE1 \$39.95	IZ2-NE1 \$39.95	IZ3-NE1 \$39.95	IM1-NE1 \$49.95	IS1-NE1 \$39.95	IS2-NE1 \$49.95	IM2-NE1 \$49.95
NEC APC (CP/M-86)	IZ1-NE2 \$49.95	IZ2-NE2 \$49.95	IZ3-NE2 \$49.95	IM1-NE2 \$59.95	IS1-NE2 \$49.95	IS2-NE2 \$59.95	IM2-NE2 \$59.95
CP/M® (48K, 8" disk version 2.0 and above)	IZ1-CP1 \$49.95	IZ2-CP1 \$49.95	IZ3-CP1 \$49.95	IM1-CP1 \$59.95	IS1-CP1 \$49.95	IS2-CP1 \$59.95	IM2-CP1 \$59.95
PDP-11™ (RT-11, RX01 disk or under RT-11 emulator)	IZ1-DE1 \$49.95	IZ2-DE1 \$49.95	IZ3-DE1 \$49.95	IM1-DE1 \$59.95	IS1-DE1 \$49.95	IS2-DE1 \$59.95	IM2-DE1 \$59.95

## Zork T-shirt



Zork cut stone logo with brown door and yellow light shining out, as seen on Zork game packages. Heat-transfer process. Take this sheet to a T-shirt shop with heat-transfer facilities (found in most large cities), and have it transferred to a shirt of the size, color, and styling of your choice. Discontinued after July 31, 1983.

421-TS1    Zork T-shirt transfer    \$3.95

## Zork bumper sticker

Announce it to the world! The Zork Users Group now has a bumper sticker suitable for your car, lamppost, window, wall, or whatever else you'd like to put it. Discontinued after July 31, 1983.

401-BS1    I ♥ Zork    \$.95

## full color poster of Zork I

To commemorate your perilous journey, this full-color poster attractively illustrates the world of Zork I: The Great Underground Empire. All of the major areas of the game are blended together in an artistic form that captures the feel of your adventure in Zork. Shown also are the colorful characters of the game, including the Thief, the Troll, the Cyclops, lurking Grues, and, of course, you, the adventurer.

This 22" x 28" poster is printed on glossy paper and is suitable for framing. It comes rolled in a heavy mailing tube to avoid folding. No wall should be without one! While supplies last (inventory is low). Discontinued after July 31, 1983.

221-ZP1    Zork I poster    \$5.95

## New! Zork II poster

You won't believe it until you see it. This poster captures all of Zork II. The artwork is exquisite. In essence it is a finely detailed map of the game, in which all of the game descriptions come to life as beautiful illustrations blended to form an entrancing whole. Warning to those who haven't finished Zork II: this poster reveals solutions to some problems. 22" x 28" black on white.

222-ZP2    Zork II poster    \$6.95

## Zork buttons

Meet other Zorkers. Identify yourself as a Zork lover (you may find Zorkers in unexpected places). These high-quality, colorful buttons are 2" (5.75 cm) in diameter with a plastic front over a metal backing with clasping pin. Discontinued after July 31, 1983.

301-BU1	I ♥ Zork	\$1.25
302-BU2	Zorkers Do It Under the Rug	\$1.25
303-BU3	Hello Sailor <small>nothing happens here</small>	\$1.25
304-BU4	I'd Rather be Zorking	\$1.25
305-BU5	I'm a Zork Groupie	\$1.25
306-BU6	Master Adventurer	\$1.25
306-BU0	**All six buttons**	\$6.00



All the  
grues that  
fit,  
we print.

# The New York Times

New York  
area weather:

Vol. III, no. 1

Spring 1983

none

## INFOCOM ANNOUNCES NEW SCIENCE- FICTION MASTERPIECE SUSPENDED

Background — for hundreds of years the people of the planet have lived happy, care-free lives. Within the planet, a single human lies in suspended animation. His brain controls the vast computer which in turn controls the planetary transit systems, hydroponics, and weather. Unfortunately, insanity strikes this sleeping mind and thousands die in the ensuing chaos on the planetary surface.

You have been selected by lottery to take the next 500 year shift at the controls. You will remain unconscious unless an emergency develops.

The game begins as you awaken. You control six robots — Iris, Auda, Whiz, Waldo, Sensa and Poet. With these as your hands and senses, you must determine what has happened and repair the damage. Your challenge: restore order with the fewest deaths possible.

Included with the game is a playing board (which serves as a map) and markers representing the robots (to keep track of them).

## NEW PRODUCTS IN THE WORKS

### 2nd mystery due soon

Those of you who liked *Deadline*™, Infocom's first mystery game, will be happy to know that the second in the series is due soon. *Witness!*™ is expected to be available in May. Keep an eye out for your next copy of *The New York Times*.

It is rumoured that the next edition of the *Times* will announce the long-awaited InvisiClues booklet for *Deadline*, as well as one for *Suspended* (and possibly for *Witness!*).

## Systems Now Total Twelve

Infocom games are finally available on the Commodore-64, after a number of delays. With the recent addition of the DEC Rainbow™, the systems total is now 12.

The Zork Users Group carries all of Infocom's games on all but a few systems.

On the TRS-80, we have only *Deadline* and *Starcross*. (Radio Shack is exclusively marketing *Zork* for the TRS-80 models. *Suspended* is not currently available.)

Games for the Osborne are available only through Osborne dealers.

Several more systems are in the works. Watch for future issues of *The New York Times* for details.

## MORE InvisiClues™ PLANN'D USER SUGGESTIONS SOLICITED

Four InvisiClues booklets have been produced to date, and the response from users has been tremendous.

InvisiClues are planned for *Suspended* and *Deadline*. Release dates are not yet available.

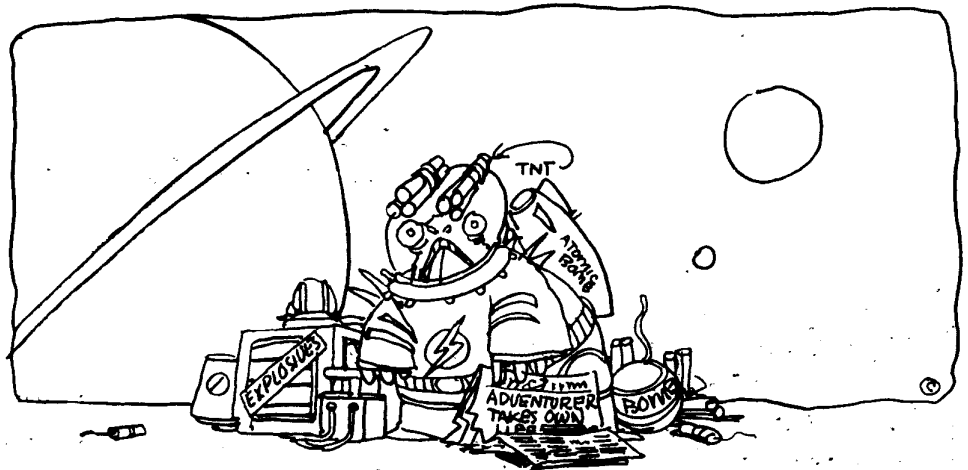
We are considering the possibility of writing InvisiClues for non-Infocom games such as the original *Adventure*. Your suggestions would be appreciated.

### Zork T-shirt

Free heat-transfer sheet (\$3.95 value) with this coupon and the purchase of any game.



Limit one per customer.  
Offer expires April 15, 1983.



Don't give up hope! Our maps and InvisiClues will help.

Courtesy of Bill Mayer



# ZORK USERS GROUP

## *in the news:*

There have been a number of recent articles which highlighted the Zork Users Group.

The January 1983 edition of the British magazine **Microcomputer Printout** included an article on desert island software (in other words, games to have with you when stranded on a desert island). All five Infocom games were included.

The writer had this to say: "*My only regret on my island is the length of time it will take me to get in touch with the Zork Users Group. This is an organization entirely separate from Infocom, Inc. set up to help and advise stranded adventurers. Such is the hypnotic power of Zork that such a group lives and flourishes.*"

**The Book of Apple Software 1983** had some kind words for us. "*The Zork Users Group is totally independent of Infocom; however, they certainly know the fine points of those games. The clues are accurate and complete; the 'extraneous clues' are amusingly written. Even conquerors of Zork may learn something — there is a list of suggested activities and words to try to gain the last full measure of Zork's humor.*"

"*This reviewer, a seasoned Zorker, re-entered the game just to try the 25% of those listings which hadn't been tried, and the responses to several made the journey worthwhile.*"

"*InvisiClues contains good artwork, writing, and printing, and reflects a very high*

*quality production. Except for the price, InvisiClues are excellent in all regards, entertaining in their own right, and definitely allow Zork to be solved almost too painlessly.*"

We would like to do something about the price, but unfortunately the process is quite expensive.

It's possible that in the future, as sales and printing volumes increase, we'll be able to decrease the price per booklet.

**PC magazine** (December 1982 **Games** issue, p.99) says "*InvisiClues is almost as much fun as Zork...*"

**Softline** (May 1982) said the Zork Users Group has "*very handsome maps that enhance playing...*"

**PC** (August 1982, p.24) "*But hark — here comes the Zork Users Group to the rescue! These folks have risen from the Great Underground Empire long enough to publish maps, clues and blueprints for the Infocom games.*"

Infocom's games have been racking up compliment after compliment from critics and users alike. The games have received many reviews recently — they have been unanimously favorable.

Our last issue highlighted quite a few reviews and many comments from users. Since then we've received one comment which we must share with you (it's in regard to *Zork II*): "*Awesome, awesome, awesome. I get tingles all over from the excitement it brings.*" (!)

## INFOCOM AND MICHAEL BERLYN: the perfect match

The critics consider Infocom's adventures the undisputed leaders in language handling ability and in the creativity and logic of the problems. As Margot Tommervik wrote in the March 1982 review of *Zork II* in *Softalk*:

"*Zork II* is a delight to play. A text adventure, it is of the high-quality, logic-loyal wing of that genre, populated only by such gems as the original *Adventure*, *Zork*, and *Cyborg*. Where *Cyborg* reached — and retains — the mountaintop in terms of plot and integration of player with adventure, *Zork II* joins *Zork* as the ultimate in text adventuring technique and communication."

"What?", you ask, "There's a game which threatens the supremacy of *Zork*?" Although *Cyborg* was very well received by the critics, many adventurers are not familiar with it since it was not distributed widely.

*Cyborg* was written by Michael Berlyn, an accomplished science fiction writer. (Michael is the author of *Crystal Phoenix* and *The Integrated Man*.) During the summer of 1982 he joined the staff at Infocom and has toiled since then on his best work to date: *Suspended*. You will find that *Suspended* thrusts you into a thoroughly believable and engrossing plot, with the creative problems and intelligent input you've come to expect in an Infocom game.

With Michael Berlyn's writing skills and Infocom's technology, how can you lose?

## Still more new products

### BUTTONS, SHIRTS

In response to your requests, the Zork Users Group has come out with two new products. The *I ♥ Zork* bumper sticker is 3" x 11", with white letters and red heart on a black background.

There has been a strong demand for T-shirts, but problems with sizes, styles, and colors have made us hesitate.

We now have the solution: heat transfers! The *Zork* logo (brown, yellow, and black) has been printed with special heat-transfer ink. We will ship you the transfer sheet which you can take to a T-shirt shop which does heat transfers. There you can pick out the T-shirt of your choice. (Note: using a standard household iron is not recommended; however, a photographer's mounting press can be used.)



*InvisiClues*. PC magazine called them, "almost as much fun as *Zork*." They are fun, and quite useful, too. Even experts who have finished the game will find out about things they missed.

# SORCERER HAS THE MAGIC TOUCH




Included in the *Sorcerer* package you will find an issue of Popular Enchanting Magazine, the Creatures of Frobozz Infotater, and a handy storage pouch.

## Hello Sailor!

Welcome to the Infocom Elite Adventurers Society. Some of you may remember *The New York Times* put out by "Mike" of the Zork Users Group. Well, Mike is now Infocom's Product Manager and *The New York Times* and some of the Zork Users Group's other services have been taken over by Infocom.

What can those of you who have never seen *The New York Times* expect? The latest breakthroughs! The newest Infocom games to watch for! Special offers! Feature articles: the making of an Infocom game; unusual commands that get outlandish results; the people behind the scenes, what they're doing there, and

why we only let them out on Sundays and Thursday afternoons! And more! The whole spectacular, sordid, spine-tingling story is right here in *The New York Times*.

While the staff of *The New York Times* never runs out of subjects to write about, now and then we do like to reach into the NZT mailbag for a few ideas from our readers. If you have any suggestions for articles or regular features you would like to see, or if you just want to practice your penmanship, drop a line to: New York Times, Inevitable Newsletter Articles of the '80's, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, Mass., 02138. 

## InfoNews Roundup

### New Game!

*Sorcerer*, the second in the Enchanter series of adventures in the mystic arts, is now available. The game was written by Steve Meretzky, whose hilarious science fiction game, *Planetfall*, was named by *InfoWorld* as the Best Adventure Game of 1983. In *Sorcerer*, you are a member of the prestigious Circle of Enchanters, a position that you achieved in recognition of your success in defeating the Warlock Krill in *Enchanter*.

When the game starts, you realize that Belboz, the Eldest of the Circle, and the most powerful Enchanter in the land, has disappeared. Perhaps he has just taken a vacation, but it wouldn't be like him to leave without letting you know. You remember that he has been experimenting with powerful spells and dangerous demons, and you fear the worst — that Belboz has been trapped by an evil force, and that his magic might be turned against the Circle. And only a powerful Sorcerer can rescue him from a terrible fate!

With its reliance on magic spells and potions, *Sorcerer* has become an immediate hit both inside Infocom and with our crew of outside game testers, many of whom think it's our best yet. Besides its outstanding writing and its intricately crafted plot and problems, it boasts the largest vocabulary of any Infocom game: over 1000 words! With your *Encyclopedia Frobozzica*, you'll have a lot of fun researching the *Enchanter* universe and the History of the Great Underground Empire. The *Enchanter* series will be concluded in 1985. Look for details in future issues of *The New York Times*.

### Technical Hot-Line

Infocom has established a direct line to our technical support staff. Call (617) 576-3190 for answers to questions of a technical nature (e.g., disk problems, game bugs, etc.). Please note that this is not a hint line.

### Hint Booklets

In December, Infocom's long-awaited direct mail operation got underway. Many of the functions formerly provided by the Zork Users Group were taken over by Infocom. Maps and InvisiClues hint booklets were produced for all 10 of Infocom's products. The games themselves were also made available primarily as a service to those of you in remote geographical areas and to those who own the less common computer systems.

Orders are processed by the Creative Fulfillment division of the DM Group, one of the most respected firms in direct mail. Their facilities are in the New York metropolitan area, which explains the strange addresses and phone numbers you'll see on the order forms.

There were admittedly some annoying start-up problems, but the operation is now running smoothly. We hope that those of you who experienced problems with your first order will give us another chance.

### Zork Fan in Orbit

When she's in the air, Sally Ride, the nation's first woman to go into space, is occupied with the computers on the space shuttle Challenger. But when she gets her feet back on the ground, she turns to Infocom for entertainment. Sally's favorite computer pastime is none other than *Zork*. "*Zork* is going to drive me to my knees," Sally said in a recent magazine interview.

### Zork in Print

Steve Meretzky, author of *Planetfall* and *Sorcerer*, has written three "What Do I Do Now?" books for the Tor Young Adult Adventure series. They are titled *ZORK: The Forces of Krill*, *ZORK: The Malifestro Quest*, and *ZORK: The Cavern of Doom*. Look for them at your local book store.

. . . More InfoNews on Page 2



# Call the Exterminator

Despite our best honing efforts, some pretty funny bugs have made it out into the marketplace. Here's a run-down of some of the most embarrassing and hilarious bugs on record. Note of caution: If you haven't finished a particular game, we'd advise against reading the associated paragraph.

## ZORK I

There is an obscure container bug that is probably in every single version of the game. A while back, we were wondering what would happen if you have two large containers, and you tried putting them inside each other. So, we went into *Zork I*, put the coffin inside the raft, and then said PUT RAFT IN COFFIN. They both disappeared!

*Zork I*, being our oldest game, contains some classic InfoBugs in its early version. Shaking any non-empty open container may cause a crash. You "bump your head on the river" if you try to enter it. And saying GO <SOMETHING>, such as GO ROPE, may send you into a totally bizarre location.

## ZORK II

One of the funniest bugs ever discovered was that you could "talk" to various objects in *Zork II*, such as the aquarium. A command like AQUARIUM, WEST would elicit the response, "The aquarium leaves the room." One player led the aquarium halfway across the dungeon in search of the solution to a problem.

## ZORK III

Possibly the most embarrassing bug ever released occurs at the very end of the earliest version of this game. If you are carrying the sword in Prison Cell number four when the Dungeon Master pushes the button on the Parapet, the game crashes. This happens because the sword's routine checks adjoining rooms to know whether to glow, and the relocated Prison Cell had two different NORTH exits. The reason none of the testers ever found this bug was because they all used the sword to block the beam of light, and therefore never brought it as far as the Prison Cell!

A really fun bug occurs when you enter the dungeon, drop one of the seven items necessary for admission,

and then knock on the dungeon door FROM THE INSIDE! The Dungeon Master will tell you you're not ready and send you back to the Button Room, but also follow you! You can then lead him all over the game, and even strand him in the *Zork I* area, if you're clever.

In an early version of the game, you could carry a light source across the lake inside the chest, thus avoiding using the viewing table to get the grue repellent, and consequently finishing the game with only 6 of the 7 points. Since this bug was fixed, we've had people call up, saying "but my friend says the way to get to the Key Room is to bring a light source across the lake inside the chest!"

## STARCROSS

Speaking of talking to inanimate objects, this bug is rampant in early versions of *Starcross*. A simple (though totally unintended) solution to the red rod problem is to say NEST, DROP ROD. The game replies "Dropped." Ouch. Along the same lines, one player was trying to turn the beam of energy off in the Laboratory, and said BEAM, OUT. The game's response: "The beam leaves the room."

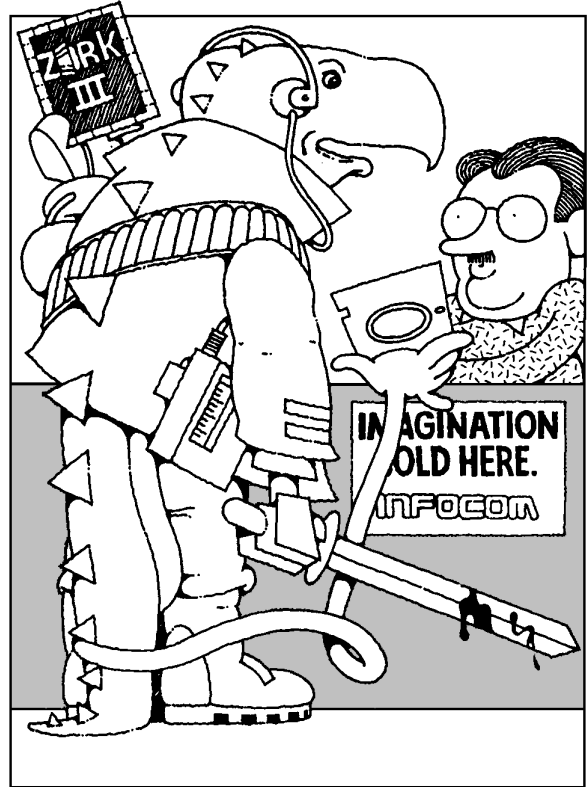
Try this one: go to the top of the tree and say THROW HANDS. If you have an early version, *Starcross* replies "The pair of hands sails away, drifting in a long arc towards the ground."

## DEADLINE

Well, there's the first floor bathroom door that was difficult to open. If you said OPEN DOOR, you were asked "Which door do you mean, the door or the south closet door."

A bug that (thankfully) only a few people have managed to duplicate is the strange case of the two Dunbars — the corpse lying upstairs in the bedroom, and the live Dunbar wandering around as though nothing strange has happened!

Finally, here's a personal favorite. Sit down on a piece of furniture, such as the couch or a bed. Then say (something like) BAXTER, TELL ME ABOUT MARSHALL ROBNER. *Deadline* replies "You can't see any me here." This one was recently voted Bug of the Year by the New England Playtesters Association (NEPA).



## ...More InfoNews

### New Systems

Infocom is committed to producing versions of its software for all popular microcomputers. We are proud to announce three new systems with which Infocom software is compatible: the Kaypro II (with CP/M), MS-DOS 2.0 (with IBM compatible disk, 80 characters x 25 line screen or 40 characters x 25 line screen), and TI-99/4A (32K memory expansion, disk drive, and one of the following modules: Extended Basic, Mini-Memory, or Editor/Assembler).

Fortunately, Infocom's IBM versions were written in such a way that they run unmodified on the new PCjr.

Infocom certainly has the widest range of compatibilities of any software producer. The 17 systems are now: Apple II, Atari, Commodore 64, CP/M, DEC Rainbow or DECmate, IBM PC or PCjr, Kaypro II, MS-DOS 2.0, NEC APC, NEC

PC-8000, Osborne, PDP-11, TI-99/4A, TI Professional, TRS-80 Model I, TRS-80 Model III, and Tandy 2000.

Watch *The New Zork Times* for news of new system compatibilities. Be sure to tell your friends who have been waiting to experience Infocom's interactive fiction on their (previously incompatible) systems.

### Info Brochure

Enclosed with this issue of *The New Zork Times* is a copy of Infocom's new product brochure, "Our Circuits, Ourselves!" We would love to hear any comments you may have about it. Address them to Mr. Delwood Bland, Infocom, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

### Rumor

We have heard a rumor that someone is planning a parody of *Zork* titled *Dork: The Mediocre Empire*. ☐

### YOU CAN DO IT

Stretch your imagination a bit and try to find some spectacular bugs of your own. The finest bugs begin in the human mind! Here's an example — what would happen if you said AGAIN on the first move of the game? ☐

### So There!

*Zork* is a registered trademark of Infocom, Inc. *Deadline*, *Starcross*, *Suspended*, *Witness*, *Planetfall*, *Enchanter*, *Infidel*, *Sorcerer*, *Interlogic*, and *InvisiClues* are trademarks of Infocom, Inc. ☐

# A Zork By Any Other Name

Have you arrested the murderer in our mystery thriller "Was It Murder?" Or found the alien artifact in "Celestus"? Or maybe met a somewhat childish robot in "Lost Planet"? No, those aren't the names of our newest games — in fact, they're rejected names for some existing ones (can you guess which?). As a player, you've probably taken the names of our games for granted. We didn't. And if you think that writing the games is tough, you should have been there when we named them.

To be honest, some names were easier than others. *Zork*, for example, was simple, since it was used by some of the founders of Infocom back in 1977, when the game was first written. At that time the only other "adventure" game was the original *Adventure*, and authors Marc Blank and Tim Anderson were at a complete loss in thinking up a good name for their new game. Since they wanted people to play it, and since you can't run a nameless program, they needed something quick. Blank chose *Zork*, a nonsense word commonly used at the MIT Lab for Computer Science as an all-purpose interjection. He figured that he would think of something else later, but the name stuck (he never did come up with anything better, anyway) and survives to this day.

As an aside, the original *Zork* had well over 200 rooms, a vocabulary of nearly 1000 words, and required a mainframe computer with over a megabyte of memory! Infocom's *Zork* trilogy has about twice the material of the original mainframe *Zork* in about one quarter of a megabyte. That's progress.

When Marc Blank started writing Infocom's first mystery, he tentatively called it "Was It Murder?" After all, it looked like a suicide. The name was distinctly bland, but nobody around Infocom could think of anything better (give us a break, we had only three employees). We gave the problem to our ad agency, Giardini/Russell (G/R), who came up with the name *Deadline* along with its distinctive logo.

Dave Lebling gave his science fiction scenario a working title of "A Gift From Space". Nobody's socks were knocked off, so we gave G/R

another shot. They proposed five possible titles: *Celestus*, *The Linking*, *Alien Intercept*, *Stardate: 2186*, and *Starcross*. *Celestus* didn't have the right down-at-the-heels image for your ship's name. The *Linking* sounded too much like a Stephen King novel. *Alien Intercept* begged for a joystick. And *Stardate: 2186* wasn't even good enough for a Star Trek episode. *Starcross*, however, with its reference to the stars and its similarity to the word *starcrossed*, had the right sort of feel, and was elected.

We did a little better internally with some of our recent games. Mike Berlyn's *Suspended* was originally called *Suspension* (*Suspenders*, affectionately) for the main character's state of suspended animation, but *Suspended* seemed to work a little better. Stu Galley's 1930's-style mystery, in which the player is actually present at the time of a murder, led us to immediately think

of the title *Witness*. G/R suggested changing this slightly to *The Witness*, a title more in keeping with titles in the Raymond Chandler era. *Enchanter*, written by Blank and Lebling, had its name before it was even started. It just sounded right and its only serious competition was *Zork IV*. A strenuous argument raged for weeks: was it a *Zork* or wasn't it. It wasn't.

*Planetfall* was titled *Sole Survivor* by its author, Steve Meretzky, and later shortened to just *Survivor*. When we discovered another game called *Survivor*, we decided we'd rather switch than fight. G/R went to it again and submitted a list about 30 long, their favorite of which was *Lost Planet*. Reaction was less than enthusiastic, not the least because it reminded two of us of the TV series, *Lost in Space*. Blank suggested *Planetfall* during a long, frustrating meeting — he thought he had seen it once in an SF book as a word

meaning arrival on a new planet (much like landfall). Nobody really believed him, but it was never improved upon.

Our first *Tale of Adventure* might have been called *Pyramid*. Though uninspired, it was used through the game's initial testing and had a loyal following due to its descriptive nature. G/R was unimpressed and suggested *Infidel*. Infocom was unimpressed: it sounded more like something from the Crusades than an exploration for a lost pyramid. But in combination with its distinctive logo and the proposed package design, we relented. We even changed the game a bit to make it work better.

That takes us to the present. As this newsletter appears, we will be releasing the sequent to *Enchanter*, *Spellbreaker*. No that's not right — I think it's *Spellbound*. Or was it *Sorcerer*? I don't know, really. And I don't care. I'm just glad I'm not working on ad copy. **Z**

## CLASSIFIEDS

**FOR SALE:** Twenty valuable treasures. Someone just left them in the trophy case in my living room. How about that?! Write to Ellron, White House in the Clearing, Forest of Zork 9060.

**FOR SALE:** Three-headed dog, cheap. Used to be fierce guard dog, now just slobbers over everyone. Very friendly, upkeep low — one dragon carcass a day should satisfy it. Contact Boris Flathead, Keeper of the Tomb.

**FOR SALE:** Single-person mining ship, perfect for asteroid belt. Equipped with personable navigation computer. A beauty; hate to part with it but am leaving quantum black hole biz to go on lecture circuit. Write Box 3, Ceres Station.

**WANTED:** Gardener for large estate. Last one quit in huff. Grounds include rose garden and orchard. Generous salary. Send references to Leslie Robner, 506 Lakeview Road, Maitland, CT.

**WANTED:** Authentic working *Enchanter's* wand. Last one stolen by upstart adventurer. Will pay top dollar. Contact Wizard of Frobozz, in Exile, Remote Corner of the Great Underground Empire 9133.

**WANTED:** More reliable manufacturer of integrated circuits. Current brand failed at inopportune moment. Please send brochure to: Ignatz Feroukin, Planetary Management Bureau, Contra, Sector 19G.



**IT IS WHAT IT EATS.**

"Caviar in, caviar out." This adage fits just one brand of computer game software.

Because nothing else stimulates your imagination and challenges your computer's capabilities like Infocom prose games. Our secret? We put you inside our stories. And once within, you'll find a dimension alive with situations, personalities, and logical puzzles that can't be experienced anywhere outside our stories.

Step up to Infocom. All words. No pictures. The secret reaches of your mind are beckoning. The next dimension is in there waiting for you.

(For more information on Infocom games contact: Infocom, Inc., P.O. Box 855, Garden City, NY 11530.)

**INFOCOM™**  
The next dimension.

For your Apple II, Atari, Commodore 64, CP/M 8", Dec Rainbow, DEC RT-11, IBM, MS-DOS 2.0, NEC APC, NEC PC-8000, Osborne, TI Professional, TI 99/4A, TRS-80 Model I, TRS-80 Model III.

## INSIDE LOOK AT GAME DEVELOPMENT

Here at Infocom, we try to get as many people as possible involved in the game development process in order to create a smorgasbord of ideas. Our theory is that "too few cooks create a noisome stew." In fact, we frequently even invite characters from the games to our development sessions. Here's a transcript made from a recording of one such session:

**MARC BLANK:** We need to start working on a new game.

**DIMWIT FLATHEAD:** It must have two hundred thousand rooms, four million takeable objects, and understand a vocabulary of every single word ever spoken in every language ever invented.

**WIZARD OF FROBOZZ:** Fantastic.

**MONICA:** Not on your life, flat-brain. Not with the crew of two-bit programmers we've got around this dump!

**BLANK:** I think we ought to analyze the situation.

**SGT. DUFFY:** With all due respect, sir, I don't think I can take the situa-

tion to the lab.

**FROBOZZ:** Fiddlesticks.

**FLOYD:** Enough talking! Let's play hide-and-seeker!

**FLATHEAD:** And it must be 600 thousand million billion megabytes and take up 37 truckloads of floppy disks...

**BLANK:** Maybe if we could start by settling on a genre.

**GURTHARK-TUN-BESNAP:** I don't know the word "genre."

**BLANK:** That is, fantasy, sci-fi, mystery...

**MONICA:** The only mystery around here is how you ever got to be VP, gnrud.

**FLATHEAD:** ...and the packages will be made of solid gold and platinum...

**KRILL:** I can't use multiple direct objects with the verb "made."

**BLANK:** Maybe we should schedule another meeting...

**FROBOZZ:** Friday. Z

## INFOCOM CALLED "BEST THING SINCE SLICED BREAD"

Another batch of awards — Stu Galley, author of *The Witness*, was in the Big Apple recently to accept an award for his popular murder mystery challenge; *Electronic Games* named *The Witness* the Best Adventure of 1984. It was the second straight year Infocom has captured the honor — *Deadline* took the prize in 1983. Three more special honors were recently announced: *Planetfall* was named Best Adventure Game of 1983 by *Infoworld* magazine; *Suspended* was selected as the Best Computer Game by *Rolling Stone* magazine; and *Infidel* was picked Best Adventure/Strategy Game by *The Video Game Update*. Readers of *PC World* chose the *Zork* trilogy as best in the magazine's "World Class PC Contest." The Parent's Choice Foundation recently gave *Zork I* its Parent's Choice Award. Readers of *Electronic Fun* magazine voted the *Zork* trilogy a winner in the first "Hall of Fun" contest.

Infocom has received a lot of favorable publicity lately. Marc Blank, vice president for product development, appeared on a CBS Morning

News segment featuring *The Witness*. *The New York Times* (not to be confused with *The New York Times Sunday Book Review* devoted a page to Infocom's interactive fiction — *Deadline* in particular — saying "*Deadline*, in fact, is more like a genre of fiction than a game." The December 5 issue of *Time* magazine featured a full page on Infocom titled "Putting Fiction on a Floppy," the December 22 *Washington Post* devoted 3 pages to the Infocom story, as did the March 1984 issue of *Discover* magazine.

The December issue of *Creative Computing*, which reviewed *Planetfall* and *The Witness* in an article entitled "Infocom Does it Again ... And Again," had this to say: "With each new release, each new venture into a genre they have made famous, the people at Infocom, authors of *Zork* and *Deadline*, seem to reaffirm a commitment to a level of quality and innovation that has guaranteed them not only a fiercely loyal following, but also an undisputed position at the forefront of the computer adventure market." Z

(CUT ON DOTTED LINE)

(CUT ON DOTTED LINE)

### Free InvisiClues

with this coupon and the purchase of any Infocom game. Return this coupon with your game order or with proof of purchase of an Infocom game (sales receipt dated between March 1, 1984 and May 15, 1984 identifying the game purchased and the warranty/registration card from the game purchased) and get one of the following sets of InvisiClues hint books and maps (\$7.95 value) absolutely free:

Check One:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Zork I</i>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Witness</i>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Zork II</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Starcross</i>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Zork III</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Suspended*</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enchanter</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Planetfall</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Deadline</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Infidel</i>    |

\*Map included in game package

Limit: one per customer.

Response must be postmarked no later than May 15, 1984. Return coupon to Infocom, Coupon Offer, C.S. 855, Garden City, NY 11530.

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## New York Times Puzzle

$$\left(\frac{A}{B}\right)^C + \frac{(D+E)}{(F)(G)} = X$$

- A = The number of grasping extensions of all seven robots in *Suspended* (including Fred) put together.
- B = The seat number in Row R that Ms. Dunbar sat in when she attended the Hartford Philharmonic Orchestra on the evening of July 7, 1982, according to *Deadline*.
- C = The value of the Flathead stamp found in *Zork II*, in zorkmids.
- D = The first year that the Royal Museum in *Zork III* lay unguarded.
- E = The number of matches in the matchbook in *Zork I*, at the beginning of the game.
- F = The cost of building Flood Control Dam #3, in millions of zorkmids.
- G = The number of entries in the *Starcross* tape library.
- X = \_\_\_\_\_.

### CONTEST RULES

- All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
- All entries must be received by May 1, 1984.
- Up to ten prizes will be awarded for correct answers. In the event that more than ten correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

**PRIZE:** A copy of *Sorcerer*. Please enclose your name, address, telephone number, and the system you'd want *Sorcerer* to run on. Return to Infocom, NZT Puzzle, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

## INFOCOM INTRODUCES SEASTALKER™



Inside the *Seastalker* package you'll find a submarine logbook, nautical chart, special decal, and top-secret Infocards with decoder film.

### FIRST JUNIOR-LEVEL INTERACTIVE FICTION

#### InfoNews Roundup

*Seastalker*, a new adventure in the tradition of Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, will make its appearance in June. Its arrival marks a number of firsts for Infocom.

As the first of the new Junior-Level series, it has been written to be the best introduction to our line of interactive fiction for preteens. While still offering a good challenge to our older customers, it includes a number of Infocards (clue cards) which will help the younger players get through the game.

In another major development in the evolution of interactive fiction, a noted outside author has collaborated with a member of the Infocom staff in producing the game. That author, Jim Lawrence, has authored nearly 60 books — many of these were ghosted for series like Tom Swift, Jr., The Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, and the Bobbsey Twins.

Jim worked with Infocom's Stu Galley, whose first effort, *The Witness*™, was recently named "The Best Adventure of 1984" by Electronic Games magazine. Stu and Jim worked for nearly a year to put *Seastalker* together, a longer time than for any other Infocom product to date. Much of the effort went into additional features that make the story easier for newcomers to interactive fiction to play.

The story is this: An alarm sounds. You are told that there's something terrifying in the depths of the ocean below, and that it threatens the Aquadome, the world's first undersea research station. Your specially equipped submarine, the Scimitar, is ready. But wait — you haven't even tested the Scimitar in deep water, and the crew of the Aquadome may have a traitor in its ranks. Mystery, intrigue, and adventure await you as you face the underwater world of *Seastalker*.

Inside the *Seastalker* package, you will find a submarine logbook, which serves as the manual. There are also eight top-secret Infocards, Infocard decoder film (which can be used to reveal the clues), a nautical chart of Fropton Bay, and a special Discovery Squad decal.

#### Infocom Poster

Many of you have asked us to produce a poster of the back cover of the "Our Circuits, Ourselves" brochure. Your wish has been granted. A stunning poster has been created of the man and computer walking off into the sunset, bordered in black. The 22" by 28" poster is full color and is shipped rolled in a mailing tube. It is being made available exclusively to readers of *The New York Times*.

#### Update on the Macintosh

For those of you who are upgrading to the new Macintosh or know someone else who is, Infocom's entire line of interactive fiction titles will be available in early July. Judging from the number of requests for information on our software availability for the Mac, this is going to be a hot-selling system.

#### HP 150 and TRS-80 Color Computer

Infocom will soon be shipping a new version of its MS-DOS 2.0 products that will be compatible with many more computer systems, including Hewlett-Packard's HP 150 Touch Screen Computer. Also watch for TRS-80 Color Computer versions sometime this summer.

## FRANK ANSWERS

TO THE TEN MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Why are your games so difficult?

Although our games are interactive fiction, they're more than just stories: they are also a series of puzzles. It is these puzzles that transform our text from an hour's worth of reading to many, many hours' worth of thinking. It is these puzzles that cause a player to suddenly leap out of bed in the middle of the night and run to his computer because he just thought of a possible solution to a problem.

The value of our games is that they will provide many hours of stimulating mental exercise. If the puzzles were significantly easier, then many people would no longer find them challenging. For those people who find the level of difficulty *too* challenging, InvisiClues™ booklets are always available to provide hints.

### 2. Why are some games more difficult than others?

It's often hard to tell how difficult a game is going to be until many people begin playing it. During 1983, when we doubled the number of game titles, we also began putting our games through much more widespread play-testing. Because we try to incorporate any reasonable suggestions from our testers, including suggestions for adding hints to problems they found difficult, the 1983 games were generally a bit easier than our earlier games.

Beginning later this year, we will be rating our interactive fiction according to four categories of difficulty. We will continue producing games in each of these categories in order to provide for everyone from the neophyte to the hard-core fan.

...more Frank answers on page 2

...more InfoNews on page 3

## ...Frank answers

continued from page 1

### 3. Why aren't hint booklets included with the game?

Two reasons, the first being temptation. Even though the answers are printed in invisible ink, the temptation to look up the answer to a problem immediately after getting stuck would be too great for many people. After all, one of the great joys of interactive fiction is the rewarding feeling of finding a solution on your own after several hours of exercising the logic and imagination of your brain.

The second reason is cost. If InvisiClues were included, the price of the game would have to be increased slightly to cover this extra cost. People who don't want or need the hint booklet would not be pleased to have to pay this extra amount.

### 4. Why don't your games have graphics?

We have nothing against graphics per se. However, given the quality of graphics currently available on home computers, we would rather use that disk space for additional puzzles and richer descriptions. After all, as our famous "brain ad" says, the world's best graphics generator is your own imagination.

### 5. Why are there so many "red herrings" in your games?

People accustomed to standard adventure games, where every item you run across has one (and only one) purpose, may find our games a bit disorienting. Some objects will have several uses, and many items will have no purpose at all — "red herrings." Since the player has to determine not only where something is useful, but even whether it is useful at all, this increases the player's mental stimulation. In addition, these red herrings add to the realism of the game. After all, if you really found yourself stranded on a doomed planet or exploring an ancient pyramid, is it likely that every object you ran across would have one (and only one) use? (Hint: The answer is not "yes.")

### 6. Why are the prices of your games so high?

One reason that our interactive fiction costs a little more than your run-of-the-mill computer game is all the honing and perfecting that goes on here at Infocom. Before you think

this is starting to sound like one of our ads, stop and think for a moment. Each of our games lasts hundreds of moves, and at each move there are literally thousands of possible responses. Add some magic, or some characters wandering around the game doing their thing, and the result is staggeringly complex.

Infocom's interactive fiction programs are among the most complex programs available for microcomputers (and that includes *all* programs, not just entertainment programs). The writing and perfecting of an average piece of Infocom's interactive fiction takes nearly a year, and even that speed is only possible due to our powerful development system. (*Deadline*™ author and Infocom V.P. Marc Blank is fond of saying that *Deadline* would have taken five years to write without our development system — and then it would only have been ready to run on *one* type of computer.) For *Sorcerer*™, which was released a few months ago, nearly two thousand individual "bugs" were located and fixed. These ranged from minor typos to game-crashers. Right up until the day the disk masters were sent out we were still arguing about whether a bat has paws, claws, or talons. But I digress.

Another reason is our elaborate packaging, which costs a lot to design and a lot to produce. (See the next question.)

One final reason our prices are so high is — that our prices aren't that high! Fifty dollars may seem like a lot of money for a game, but divide that amount by the 30 or 40 hours you'll probably be spending with that game, and it actually works out to fairly inexpensive entertainment!

### 7. Why are your packages so elaborate?

Because our games are more than games, they're fiction. The purpose of the package and the many items you'll find inside them are to get you into the mood of the game before you even put the disk into your drive.

Also, there's a pretty limited amount of space on a floppy disk. By putting necessary background information into the documentation and packaging, we save room on the disk for the important stuff — the descriptions and puzzles of the game itself.

Finally, our packages are an attempt to discourage the piracy that is devastating the software industry. The disk is merely the most impor-

tant item in a large portfolio of material that comprises an interactive fiction game.

### 8. Why are your disks copy-protected and backup-limited?

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, software piracy is a problem rampant in our industry. When disks are copied for other than legitimate back-up reasons, the producer is denied revenue (not to mention the fact that it's illegal). On a wide scale, piracy results in higher prices as the constant development cost must be spread over a smaller number of buyers. Therefore, copy-protection helps legitimate consumers like you, as well as us, by foiling piracy.

Also, remember that Infocom will replace any defective disks for no charge within the first 90 days after purchase, and for a \$5 charge after that. However, since we use the highest quality disks, this isn't a frequent occurrence.

### 9. Why aren't your games larger?

People with more powerful home computers frequently ask us this question. That answer is that we want our games to be available on a wide number of systems. Our current size limit is around 110,000 bytes. If we increased this limit, then our games would be unable to run on a number of machines, including the Atari 400/800, the TRS-80 Model I, and the Osborne 1. Of course, thanks to our ingenious ultra-neato compression techniques, we get a heck of a lot into those 110,000 bytes.

### 10. Why is the vocabulary of your games so limited?

Hey! First of all, our games understand a *heck* of a lot more words than anything our competitors have ever produced. Secondly, you're talking

about interactive fiction here, not some glorified Eliza program that pretends to converse with the user but actually "understands" nothing that is being said. Our games actually understand every input they claim to understand. These inputs fall within the rules outlined in the game manual, and if you stick to these rules, you should almost never end up using a word the game doesn't understand.

This problem is always most acute for people playing one of our mystery games for the first time. Despite all the warnings in the manual, people always want to grab Baxter, shake him, and ask him WHY WERE YOU RUNNING DOWN THE HALL DURING THE SCREAMING, or WHERE WERE YOU AT 8:00 PM ON THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MURDER. After all, this is how Columbo or Hercule Poirot always questions the suspects. Well, if the game were to try to handle every conceivable question of this complexity, it would occupy 20 disks and take 15 years to write and test. Just play it by the rules, folks. Stick to WHERE IS THE SMOKING GUN and TELL ME ABOUT DOCTOR BLANK.

### ★ BONUS QUESTION ★

### 11. Why don't you provide a vocabulary list with each game?

If you think about it, including a list of all the words a game understands would run the risk of giving away problems. Here's an example that you shouldn't read unless you've completed *Zork I*: What if you were perusing a vocabulary list for *Zork I* and you noticed the words ECHO, ODYSSEUS, RAFT, DIAMOND? The enjoyment of figuring out the Loud Room, cyclops, pile of plastic, and coal mine problems has just been reduced by these "give-aways."

Also, we like to remain enigmatic. ☐

## The New York® Times

Chairman	Albert "Al" Vezza
Managing Editor	Michael "Mike" Dornbrook
Contributing Editor	Steven "Steve" Meretzky
Semi-Contributing Editor	Marc "Mark" Blank
Non-Contributing Editor	David "Dave" Anderson
Art Director	Brian "Brian" Cody
Production Manager	Angela "Angela" Raup

# Infocom Scoreboard

Did you know that *Zork I* has more rooms and takeable objects than any other Infocom game, yet is one of the smallest in size? Were you aware that *Sorcerer* is not only the largest game, but also the most dangerous?

The following chart shows some interesting statistics about the first eleven Infocom games. The first column shows the number of rooms in each game as far as the game's own internal programming is concerned. This sometimes differs with the apparent number of rooms (second column). For example, the Royal Puzzle in *Zork III* seems like 31 rooms, but internally it's actually just one room. The Desert in *Infidel*<sup>™</sup> seems infinite, but it's actually just

10 rooms. And in several games, for various arcane reasons, there are rooms that can never be entered.

The third column lists the number of different ways to die in each game. For *Suspended*<sup>™</sup>, this refers to the number of different ways that you (the person in the cylinder) can be killed, not the individual robots. The fourth column tells the number of words in each game's vocabulary — that is, the words that the game will understand in your inputs without saying "I don't know that word." The fifth column shows the size of each game (most recent release) in bytes.

The last column shows the number of takeable objects in each game.

Games	Rooms: internal	Rooms: external	Ways of Dying	Vocabulary	Size (bytes)	Takeable Objects
Zork I	110	110	28	698	84,868	59
Zork II	86	81	50	628	89,136	49
Zork III	89	105	30	563	81,626	23
Enchanter	74	∞	17	718	109,234	31
Sorcerer	84	110	70	1011	109,734	41
Starcross <sup>™</sup>	86	84	39	561	84,740	23
Suspended	63	61	6	676	105,492	32
Planetfall	105	105	41	666	109,052	49
Deadline	51	49	2	656	108,454	37
Witness	31	28	2	711	104,704	18
Infidel	77	∞	40	613	93,556	49

This figure is occasionally misleading: for example, the raft in *Zork I* is actually three different takeable objects (inflated, uninflated, and punctured). **Z**

## ...InfoNews cont'd from page 1

### Evening Magazine Salutes Infocom

On March 21 the New England edition of Evening Magazine featured a segment on Infocom's interactive fiction starring Marc Blank. It was filmed on location at Infocom and highlighted our entire line of programs. If you're not in New England, you may get to see it anyway — each of the "editions" of the television magazine (called PM Magazine in some areas) picks up interesting segments from around the country. Let us know if you see it.

### Popular Computing Salutes Enchanter

The May 1984 issue of *Popular Computing* included a review of *Enchanter*<sup>™</sup>:

"...*Enchanter* develops a sense of realism both in the text and story line. Marc Blank and his co-author Dave Lebling have created a special kind of mood through their very graphic descriptions — flies buzz about, rats scurry at your feet, even wandering dogs cross the adventurer's path at odd times .... In *Enchanter*, the sun comes up and goes down, the moon lights the night sky, and the stars shine in the midnight hour. These realistic descriptions stimulate the player's

imagination and produce a wonderfully eerie feeling of foreboding.

"It is hard to imagine a veteran of *Zork* being disappointed with this game. In fact, I played this game with a hard-core Zorker who suggested that not only would old Zorkers love it, but also so might a number of dyed-in-the-wool Dungeons and Dragons enthusiasts because of the spell-casting element and the role-playing nature of the game. *Enchanter* represents the highest kind of entertainment value in terms of cost vis-a-vis the time spent with the program .... It is just this kind of entertainment quotient that guarantees a game's eventual success in the marketplace. *Enchanter*, like *Zork*, is quite deserving of that success."

### Steve Meretzky Awarded

*Video Review* magazine in its April 1984 issue named Steve Meretzky "Game Designer of the Year" in recognition of his first work of interactive fiction, *Planetfall*<sup>™</sup>. Steve accepted the award at a ceremony at New York's Savoy Plaza hotel.

### Demos on the Way

In early June, Infocom's new Interactive Fiction Tutorial and *Zork I* Demo will begin appearing in computer stores across the country. Be sure to tell any of your friends who have not yet experienced this unique form of entertainment. **Z**

## INFOCOM HOROSCOPE

HELLHOUND (March 21 to April 18) ★ Don't eat any foods with names beginning with a G or a Y, such as grapes or yogurt. This is a good week to learn Latin.

GRUE (April 19 to May 20) ★ Procrastination is ill-advised, especially if you were considering software purchases. Avoid zoos and art museums.

DRYAD (May 21 to May 24) ★ This is a good time to experiment with hair replacement techniques. Consider selling any kitchen appliance that you've had for over six years.

DORN (May 25 to May 27) ★ Don't go swimming if you've eaten in the last thirty minutes. Wear a scarf if it's less than forty degrees outside. Call your mother.

BROGMOID (May 28 to November 19) ★ If you've ever robbed any banks, today is a good day to apologize and start life anew. Sell all your U.S. Steel stock at once.

BLOODWORM (November 20) ★ Wait 24 hours, then buy all the U.S. Steel stock you can get your hands on. Do not taunt snakes or bus drivers.

YIPPLE (November 21, until 3:00 p.m.) ★ Give flowers to your mate. Buy a house. Eat three cookies. Fly to France. Challenge your dentist to a duel.

SURMIN (November 21, after 3:00 p.m.) ★ Spend time with a sick friend. This is crucial. If necessary, take a healthy friend and expose him/her to a contagious disease.

ROTGRUB (November 22 to January 3, January 18 to March 20) ★ An old business partner will meet you in the fruit and vegetable aisle of the supermarket. Be wary: if you chat there too long, the store will be sold out of casaba melons.

KOBOLD (January 4 to January 17, except where prohibited by law) ★ Don't marry anyone named Waldo or Matilda this week. Next week, marry *only* people named Waldo and Matilda.

ORC (anyone born in Cleveland on a national holiday) ★ Avoid reading your horoscope today. It will only be misleading, dangerous, and possibly even fatal.

NABIZ (all redheads born during a total eclipse) ★ Talk to strangers. Frequent dark alleys. Cross the street without looking both ways. Eat quickly without chewing well. Don't call your mother.

## InfoSports Roundup

A recent article about Infocom described the software industry as "split like the medieval papacy between Cambridge and the West Coast." Here at Infocom, we've always felt that the software industry was split — between the Fresh Pond and Kendall Square sections of

Cambridge! These two programming meccas clash time after time — on the softball diamond.

Infocom finished with a hard-fought 2-3 record in a six-team high-tech league which included the leading companies in educational software (Spinnaker), business


software (Lotus), and entertainment software (Infocom).


Infocom squeaked past Lotus, who recently defected to Kendall Square from its quarters in Fresh Pond. (In fact, Lotus was in our very building, one floor above us. Our 6-5 victory, over a company four times our size, was our revenge for a year of pounding footsteps and constant furniture re-arrangement from the floor

above.)

Spinnaker managed to score 12 runs against us but was crushed under the weight of the hard-hitting InfoSluggers who scored 18 runs.

Leading this pack of sluggers was none other than Product Manager Mike Dornbrook (the "Mike" of the Zork Users Group, for you former ZUGroupies), who finished the season with a perfect 1.000 batting average (2 for 2). Among the regulars, Product Testing Supervisor "Hollywood Dave" Anderson led with a season average of .875 (7 for 8) and 3 home runs. Vice President of Development Marc Blank was 11 for 18, giving him an average of .611. Blank also slugged a team-leading 10 RBI's.

It's springtime again, and as the InfoSluggers are training themselves into shape, all the oddsmakers and fans are thinking the same thing: will Lotus and Spinnaker avenge their ignominious defeats or will Infocom once again prevail? Don't miss the next InfoSports Roundup! 

Zork is a registered trademark of Infocom, Inc. *Enchanter*, *Sorcerer*, *Starcross*, *Suspended*, *Planetfall*, *Deadline*, *Witness*, *Infidel*, *Seastalker*, and *InvisiClues* are trademarks of Infocom, Inc. 

----- (CUT ON DOTTED LINE) -----

## NEW ZORK TIMES PUZZLE

## NUMBER 2

NOTE: Due to the late mailing of the Winter '84 issue, the deadline for Puzzle Number One has been extended to July 1, 1984. The solutions to Puzzle Number One and Puzzle Number Two will both appear in the Summer '84 issue.

The following transcript contains references to all of the first eleven Infocom games — except one. Identify that game. **Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Living Room

This is a large and impressive room, whose furnishings bespeak the great personal wealth of the Robners. A wood pile sits beside a huge fieldstone fireplace. Grouped in front of the fire are a glass-topped coffee table and a rattan davenport and club chair, with cushions covered in a print showing bamboo plants in the style of Japanese brush-painting. There is a doorway to the east, a wooden door with strange gothic lettering to the west, which appears to be nailed shut, a trophy case, and a large oriental rug in the center of the room.

### >EAST

#### Kitchen

You are in the kitchen of the white house. A table seems to have been used recently for the preparation of food. A rat nest fills one of the ovens, and cobwebs are everywhere. There is some rotting food in a garbage heap in one corner. A window to the east is slightly ajar. Sitting in the sand, bulging a little, is a beaten-up knapsack.

### >OPEN THE KNAPSACK

Opening the knapsack reveals a canteen.

### >TAKE THE CANTEEN

Taken.

### >INVENTORY

You are carrying:

- a fancy violin,
- a disfigured device,
- a canteen.

The canteen contains:

- a quantity of high-protein liquid

### >CLIMB THROUGH THE WINDOW

#### Forest

This is the forest primeval, conifers and cycads in rank profusion. Here and there huge trees thrust upward through the forest canopy. One particularly large tree is to port of here.

A hellhound is racing straight toward you, its open jaws displaying rows of razor-sharp teeth.

### CONTEST RULES:

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

### PRIZE: A copy of *Seastalker*.

Please enclose your name, address, telephone number and the system you'd want *Seastalker* to run on. Return to Infocom, NZT Puzzle, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

## Infocom Poster Offer

22" x 28" poster of back cover of Infocom's "Our Circuits, Ourselves" brochure. Full color picture of man and computer walking off into sunset, bordered in black. Stunning! Shipped rolled in mailing tube. Order on the enclosed order form. Catalog number INF-POS, price \$5.95 (includes shipping).



## 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 thinking," 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.*

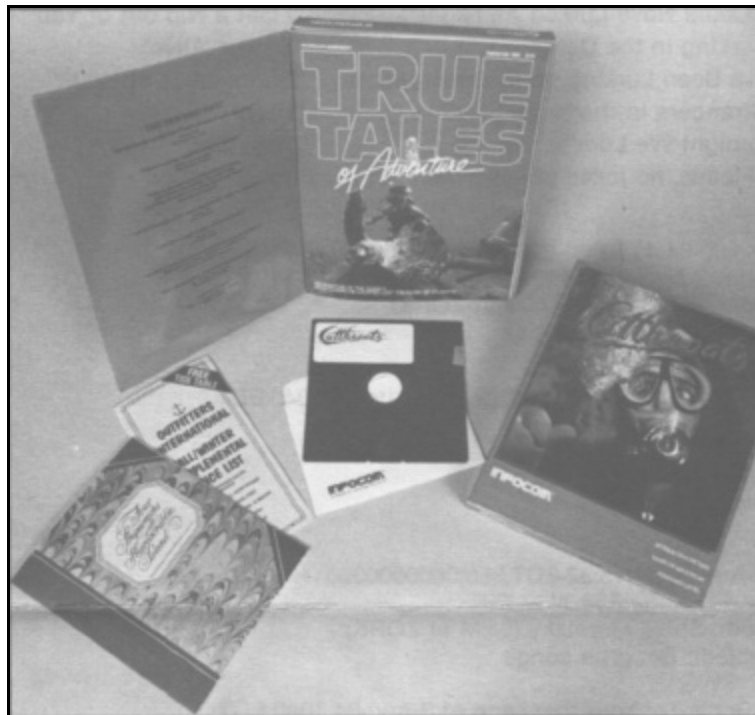
That is just the beginning of *Cutthroats*, Infocom's newest title in the Tales of Adventure genre. Written by Michael Berlyn (*Suspended*, *Infidel*) with the assistance of Jerry Wolper, *Cutthroats* promises to be another Infocom classic.

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. 



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

### 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" 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.

*continued on page 7*



## 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;00000000001  
 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"?

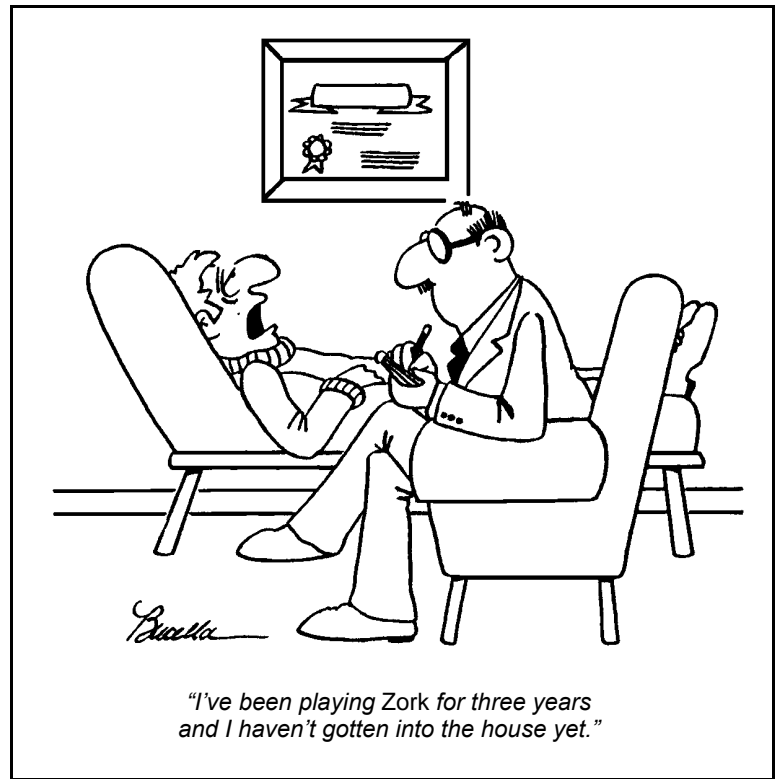
3-Aug-84 11:42:18-EDT,466;000000000001  
 Date: 3 Aug 1984 1142-EDT  
 From: Stu Galley (SWG at ZORK)  
 Subject: Re: grue songs  
 To: SEM

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) Yaaaaaaay! 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!



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 games 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*

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## The New Zork® Times

Chairman	Albert "Al" Vezza
Contributing Editor	Jeff "Jeff" O'Neill
Semi-Contributing Editor	Steven "Steve" Meretzky
Non-Contributing Editor	Hollywood "Dave" Anderson
Features Editor	Dave "Dave" Lebling
Entomology Artist	Tom "TV" Veldran
Puzzle Editor	Jon "Buckingham" Palace
Puzzled Editor	Michael "Mike" Dornbrook
Vacationing Editor	Marc "Mark" Blank
Production Manager	Angela "Angela" Raup

# HOW THE WITNESS CAME TO BE

By Stu Galley  
for *The New York 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 post-mortem 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.

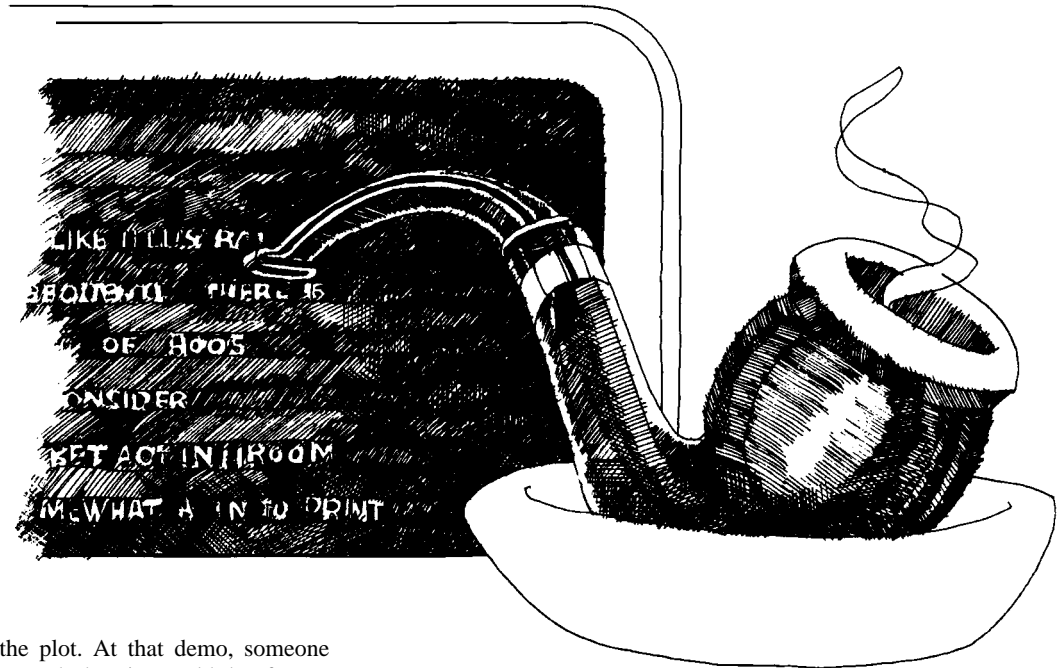
Then the programming began. I made a copy of the *Deadline* program and ripped out everything that I didn't need: the house, the characters, the evidence, and the plot. Then I could build my own

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

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

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



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

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

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 package cover and magazine layout. The *Register* newspaper in Santa Ana was a great find:

*continued on page 4*

# Mail Bag

The "Call the Exterminators" article in the Winter issue of The New York 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 York 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

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! 

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 or 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 York Times*):

Talk about bugs. Poor Michael has 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 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

continued from page 3

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

# ASK DUFFY

## Dear Zorkers:

I just read *The New York 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 Middlesex County offices of The New York 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 York 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 III*.

## 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.



## Who said a career can't be fun and games?

**Objective:** To join Infocom's staff of creative professionals.

**To Begin:** Select a suitable player below.

### The Players:

- **Game designers** — Conceive, develop and implement fictional interactive stories for use on personal computers, alone and in collaboration with published authors. Write stories within existing genres and develop new genres suitable for the interactive mode.
- **Staff Writer** — Create and compose fictional pieces (magazine articles, letters, etc.) and non-technical instructional materials to accompany interactive stories for use on personal computers. Versatility and writing samples required.
- **Junior Product Tester** — Test and debug new products on microcomputers. Help develop new product support materials.
- **Software Engineer** — Write virtual machine emulators for Macintosh. Assist in developing the virtual machine specification to provide Macintosh support in a LISP-like language. Write system utilities to communicate between a DEC 2060 and the Macintosh. Requires 68000 experience and Pascal or C/UNIX.
- **Software Engineer** — Write virtual machine emulators for MS/DOS and IBM compatible systems. 8086/88/87 experience a plus.

**To Play:** Stand at the threshold of Infocom, Inc., the creators of *Zork*, *Deadline*, *Planetfall* and many other exciting, innovative text adventures.

**To Win:** The next move is yours...

Hint: Call Judith Forsythe at (617) 492-1031 or send your resume to: Dept. 002, Infocom, Inc., 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

# INFOCOM



**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 Gwodzi 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 RBIs, 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, exhorted 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 by 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 zork-

mids; 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 ten 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  
Bellerica, Massachusetts
7. Brian Klein

8. Valencia, California  
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

*continued on page 8*

## ... Yet More InfoNews

*continued from page 1*

### 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.

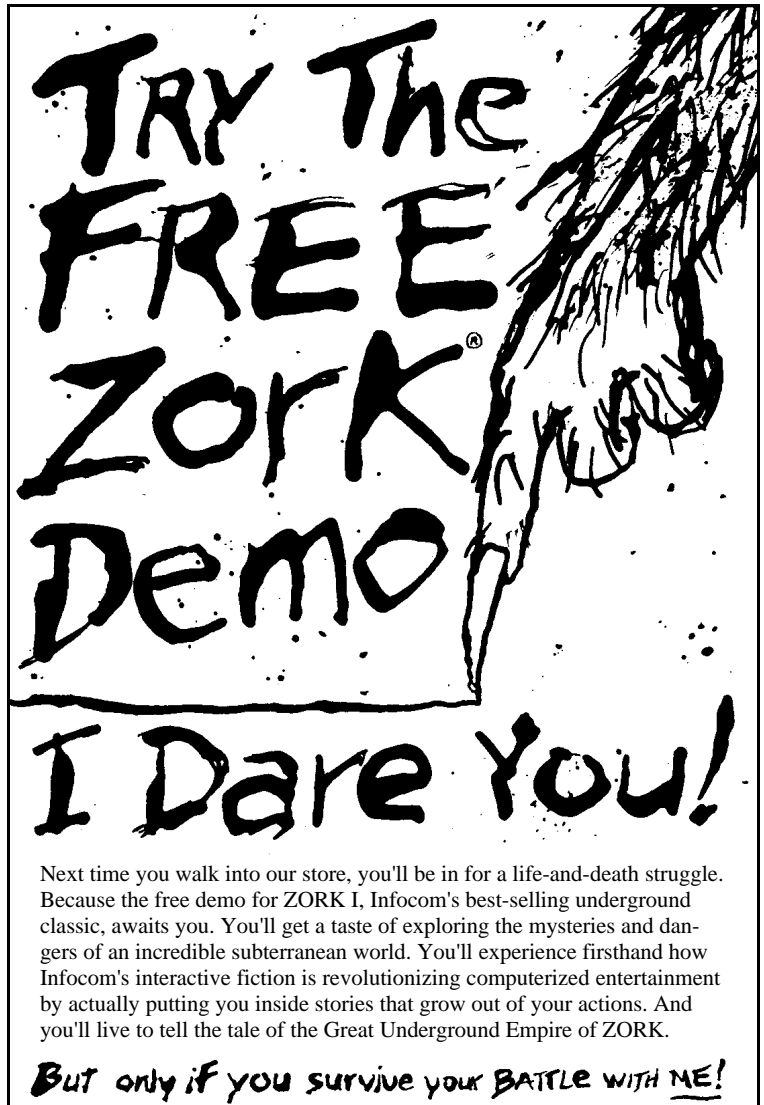
### New Catalog

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! 



TRY THE  
FREE  
ZORK<sup>®</sup>  
DEMO

I Dare You!

But only if you survive your BATTLE WITH ME!

Next time you walk into our store, you'll be in for a life-and-death struggle. Because the free demo for ZORK I, Infocom's best-selling underground classic, awaits you. You'll get a taste of exploring the mysteries and dangers of an incredible subterranean world. You'll experience firsthand how Infocom's interactive fiction is revolutionizing computerized entertainment by actually putting you inside stories that grow out of your actions. And you'll live to tell the tale of the Great Underground Empire of ZORK.

Infocom now has a demo kit for *Zork I* for dealers. You can help us spread the word on interactive fiction. If your local dealer doesn't have a *Zork* demo for his or her store, tell your dealer to contact us.

**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 ---  
 --- GEO ---  
 --- B --- ROBNER ---  
 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.

...Puzzle continued from page 7  
*Planetfall*, the hellhound is from *Sorcerer*, and the Forest description comes from *Starcross*.

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.

## TWO EXCITING NEW PRODUCTS!

You're not sure who's who. But one thing is certain — someone is dead. And now they're pointing fingers at you.

### INFOCOM INTRODUCES SUSPECT™

In *Suspect*, Infocom's newest mystery game, you'll attend a murderously grand party that you'll never forget.

The butler is dressed in a gorilla suit. Scores of outrageously costumed dancers waltz and two-step elegantly in the grand ballroom. A masked bartender mixes tasty and potent drinks. All around you are the cream of society — senators, blue-blooded gentry, power brokers, and the idle rich — dressed as no one has seen them before. Someone has come as a vampire; someone else as a short, cuddly robot; someone has even come dressed as a peanut butter sandwich! What a party!

If you walk around the mansion, you'll be impressed by the richness everywhere. The Sitting Room, the Library, the Morning Room, the Sun Room — all are impeccably furnished, bespeaking the wealth and fine taste of the owners. But the most striking thing you'll see here tonight is not the crystal chandelier, nor the valuable oriental rug, nor the spectacularly-clad partygoers.

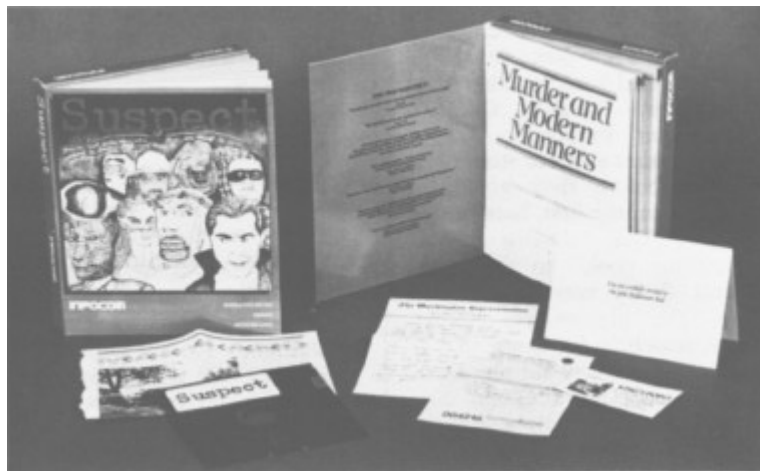
A dead body will be found here tonight, at this party. Strangled, curiously, with a piece of your costume. You don't know who the murderer is — you suspect everyone — but one thing is certain.

You are the prime suspect!

In *Suspect*, you are a newspaper reporter and an old friend of Veronica Ashcroft, the party's hostess. You looked forward to this Hal- lowe'en bash and to rubbing elbows with the movers and shakers of Maryland's hunt country. Little did you know that you would also be framed for a murder you didn't commit!

Like *Deadline™* and *The Witness™* (Infocom's other games in the mystery genre), you'll have lots of clues and false leads to wade through, and alibis and denials to consider. In *Suspect*, though, you're not the detective (assisted by the able Sergeant Duffy) looking for the killer. Instead, you're the police's number-one suspect, and you've got

. . . more *Suspect* on page 3



All this and more are tastefully tucked into every *Suspect* package.

### DON'T PANIC!

Now you can see the universe  
the safe, sure, money-saving way with  
**THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY™**

Here at Infocom, it would ordinarily not be too surprising for some random hanger-on, crackpot, or sychophant to get past the Guardians of Zork and venture forth with the magic words "I have this great idea for a game...."

Such gratuitous input would generally not be parsed by the gate keepers who make the decisions around here.

However, if the proposition came from someone with a little writing experience — say, with the authorship of some funny books selling in the millions — then this would be quite a different story, indeed.

And so it was when Douglas Adams, who for years had smiled upon Infocom's work, put out a transatlantic feeler, as it were, to take the pulse of the giant in interactive fiction. The diagnosis was very favorable. Dr. Marc Blank, the company's vice president, assigned implementor S. Eric Meretzky to act as midwife for a brand new creation: Infocom's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which is based only loosely on the novel of the same title.

With the teaming up of "best-

selling author" Adams and "award-winning game designer" Meretzky (*Planetfall™*, *Sorcerer™*) you would expect, well, at least a *halfway decent* game, wouldn't you? (See Footnote.)

Actually, if this hilarious and doomsday vision of the future were to come to pass, who knows? A *Hitchhiker's Guide* disk might improbably be recovered among the space junk by some alien race. These beings, besides possibly recognizing themselves in the story, would (if the disk would still boot)

. . . more *Hitchhiker's* on page 3

(Footnote: To say the least.... Here we illustrate just two of the features new to Infocom games, first appearing in *The Hitchhiker's Guide* game. The first is the occurrence of footnotes — accessed by typing FOOTNOTE (number) — sprinkled throughout the story to enlighten, clarify, amuse. The second is the player's ability to respond to the sometimes rhetorical questions posed by the narrative, as seen above.)

All this and more are tastefully tucked into every *Hitchhiker's Guide* package.





## THEY'RE NEVER SATISFIED

by Dave Lebling

I had my first encounter with a professional play-tester two years ago, when I was writing *Starcross*. As I worked, every so often my concentration would be broken by a horrible cackling laugh from a few doors down the hall. Jerry had found another bug.

Infocom's Quality Control Department (informally, play-testers) makes sure our stories are bug-free before they get published. From the first, horrifically buggy version "thrown in the swimming pool," to the final, perfect (hah!) version that we ship, the play-testers pound away, searching for flaws.

It starts out very simply. Let's take *Suspect* for a victim ... oops, I mean an example. When a game first enters testing, it's a delicate thing, easily upset:

>BARTENDER, GIVE ME A DRINK

"Sorry, I've been hired to mix drinks and that's all."

>DANCE WITH ALICIA

Which Alicia do you mean, Alicia or the overcoat?

Veronica's body is slumped behind the desk, strangled with a lariat.

>TALK TO VERONICA

Veronica's body is listening.

Little bugs, you know? Things no one would notice. At this point the tester's job is fairly easy. The story is like a house of cards - it looks pretty solid but the slightest touch collapses it:

Media Room

>ENTER

\*\*FATAL ERROR: Pushdown Overflow\*\*

Mysteries have a lot of scope for truly odd bugs, since they have so many characters running around. Throughout the testing process, I would get reports like:

"Duffy is having serious problems...."

"Alicia isn't functioning too well...."

"The detective seems stuck in the North Hallway...."

*Suspect* has thirteen characters (counting you) and a few bit players, so at times it resembled a Marx brothers movie.

Testers are relentless. Once they find out they can talk to a corpse, you can confidently expect a list of all the

other things that will listen to them: cars, tables, chairs, waste baskets, anything. This is sometimes called "rubbing it in."

They had a particularly gleeful time with poor Veronica's body. It's not enough that she's been murdered. No, first they decide to hide the body. Then, to make things worse, they carry her around, presumably slung over the shoulder.

>SHOW CORPSE TO MICHAEL

Michael doesn't appear interested.

Of course, Michael is only Veronica's husband; why would he be interested? After that, it was open season! Bodies everywhere:

"I carried Veronica's body into the Ballroom. No one noticed."

"Sergeant Duffy walked right by while I was carrying the body. He didn't notice it."

"I put the body in the chair in the Library. Col. Marston came and went without seeing it."

"I picked up the body right in front of the detective."

That wasn't enough:

>THROW CORPSE IN FIREPLACE

Veronica's body is now in the fireplace.

>ATTACK CORPSE WITH CROWBAR

Veronica's body jumps out of the way.

Eventually, that all got sorted out: Veronica stayed safely dead, and her party guests got less blasé about corpses.

Producing a piece of interactive fiction is an odd combination of debugging a program and writing a story. Bug reports can concern anything from a stack overflow to a misplaced comma. There was a running battle (finally settled by Fowler's *English Usage*) over when a comma goes inside a quotation mark and when outside. By the same token, bugs can concern something as microcomputer-oriented as the stack size on the Atari implementation of the story.

Some comments from testers would not be out of place in a report from an editor at a major book publisher:

"Alicia is acting out of character."

"Why would Michael react that way when told about the murder?"

"Ostmann's motivations seem too obscure."

Some comments are directly keyed off of programming bugs that would make a BASIC programmer blush:

"Game prints garbage when Duffy enters room."

"You can drop Veronica's pulse on the floor."

There are several stages in implementing one of our stories. During the first stage, the author is so pleased that it works at all that any bug reports are welcomed. During this stage the typical bug concerns two rooms that connect in only one direction (you can go east from the first to the second but there is no way to go back).


During the second stage, all of the testers and several other game authors have had a chance to play it, and the really nasty comments come in. During this stage, bugs cause serious changes in the plot, and sub-plots are added or removed. This is when "debugging" is more like writing another draft of a novel than debugging a program. The plot is hardened into its final form, and outside testers are given their first crack at the story.

Finally comes the stage in which every bug is seen by the author as an imposition. I can always tell when a story is almost finished by my rising level of frustration at seeing new bugs in my mailbox. At some point,

coming to the office in the morning becomes an exercise in procrastination. You see, at Infocom there is a hall with all the mailboxes in it, and you have to walk past the mailboxes to get to the coffee machine. The question becomes, "How much do I really want my first cup of coffee this morning?" You can always avert your eyes as you walk by the mailboxes, but that's almost too obvious. Better is to make a casual appraisal as you walk by. "Hmm. Looks like a fairly small stack this morning...." Then you can walk to the coffee machine with a clear conscience. Even a cup of yummy coffee won't improve things when you see "page 1 of 12" on the first bug report form.

Amazingly enough, it all works out in the end. Sometimes a full-page bug report will turn out to be caused by a simple little error, and you can check off three or four subsidiary bugs with one stroke. Sometimes a simple little thing you've glossed over three times as unimportant will be re-reported, and you realize it's more like the last six inches of a dragon's tail.

Best of all are the final few days before a story is shipped, when the volume of bugs drops to almost zero, and you realize that even the testers are reaching for things to report. Then, at long last you look in your mailbox and nothing's there! You say hello to the testers in the halls without terror, and there's nothing whatsoever to worry about.

Until the next game! 



### CALL THE EXTERMINATOR



Despite ruthless testing by our Quality Control Department, every now and then some embarrassing bug escapes the watchful eyes of the Infocom Exterminators and creeps onto your disk. Most people never see these bugs, but they can be jarring when they rear their ugly little heads.

Take, for instance, an early version of *Deadline*. Somewhere outside the house, you are told

The gardener is here, talking to himself.

You could then have the following interaction with the computer:


>LISTEN TO THE GARDENER  
The roses make no sound.

Not exactly a breakthrough in your investigation.

Your living quarters in *Starcross* are spartan: when you start the story, there's nothing in the room but you, a

bunk, and a tape library. Not much can go wrong, right? Wrong.

>PUT THE TAPE LIBRARY ON THE BUNK

The bunk isn't open. 

Needless to say, the bunk in *Starcross* opens about as often as the roses in *Deadline* talk.

A bug in early versions of *Sorcerer* makes you look like a better magician than you really are. If you know the name of a spell (FWEEP, for instance), you can take it even if you are nowhere near the spell scroll. Don't know where you left a spell scroll? Can't get there from here? No problem! Just type TAKE FWEEP and hey, presto! There you have it! Fortunately, the command SOLVE THE GAME isn't so obliging.

Usually, if you mention an object that you don't have or can't see, you'll be told "You don't have that" or "You can't see that." A bug in some

...**Suspect** continued from page 1 to prove your innocence to Duffy and his boss to stay out of prison.

In every *Suspect* package comes a story disk, the booklet *Murder and Modern Manners* (describing murder etiquette), your party invitation, your costume receipt, a note from your editor, an article from *The Maryland*

*Countryside* (a tony magazine for the upper class), and a business card with a suspicious message on it. *Suspect* was written by Dave Lebling, author of *Starcross*™ and co-author of *Zork*® I, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, and *Enchanter*™. It is an advanced-level game and will sell for \$44.95 on most systems. **Z**

*Zork* is a registered trademark of Infocom, Inc. *Enchanter*, *Sorcerer*, *Starcross*, *Suspended*, *Planetfall*, *Deadline*, *The Witness*, *Suspect*, *Infidel*, *Seastalker*, *Cutthroats* and *InvisiClues* are trademarks of Infocom, Inc. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is a trademark of Douglas Adams.

...**Hitchhiker's** continued from page 1

discover humans to have been highly skilled in the interactive arts; and, contingent on the physiology to do so, they would laugh.

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is the first Infocom story in which the player assumes the (rather indistinct) role of a fictional character, with the mellifluous name of Arthur Dent. But since you are the author of Arthur's actions, your decisions dictate the movement of the story.

In the beginning, Arthur (the player) must overcome bewildering circumstances - which have encroached on his pastoral home in England's West Country - to escape

his doomed home and, in turn, his doomed Earth. Up to this point the story line will be similar to that in the *Hitchhiker's* novel.

Henceforth, you'll encounter characters and locations from the book appearing in a variety of misadventures written by Adams expressly for this game. For instance, in the novel there is one fanciful item of great utility which, however, in the game can be obtained only by maddeningly humorous Rube Goldberg methods.

In exploring virgin parts of the galaxy, accessing the actual *Hitchhiker's Guide* will be essential. The Guide, an electronic device similar in appearance to a large calculator, is consulted to enlighten its user on a wide variety of topics ranging from the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal to pocket fluff.

Throughout your knocking about the galaxy, it is as if the unique persona of Adams were lurking in the nether regions of disk accessing, anticipating your every move and miscue, and delivering the appropriate rejoinder.

The game packaging provides a number of items to assist the galactic hitchhiker. A pair of peril-sensitive sunglasses warns you of impending doom. Copies of the demolition orders for your house and planet Earth remind you why you're out there in the first place. You're given a piece of fluff and a microscopic space fleet, as well as the Megadodo Publications sales brochure for the latest model of the actual *Hitchhiker's Guide*. And in case things get out of hand, there's a Don't Panic button.

The front of *The Hitchhiker's Guide* package says it's a standard-level game; as such, it will sell for \$39.95 on most systems. **Z**



versions of *Infidel*™, however, allowed the following interaction, whether you had the torch or not:

>LIGHT THE TORCH WITH THE MATCH

The bronze torch is now lit.

Philosophers once asked, "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there, does it make any sound?" Now they wonder, "If you light a torch, but you don't have it and can't see it, is it really lit?"

Lastly, players of early *Planetfall* releases saw this charmer:

>FLOYD, TAKE THIS LASER

You manage to lift Floyd a few inches off the ground, but he is too heavy and you drop him suddenly.

The program is playing games with you. Perhaps it would rather be playing Hider-and-Seeker with Floyd. **Z**



# FROM THE COMPANY WHOSE FIRST SOFTWARE PRODUCT OUTSOLD LOTUS 1-2-3.

On November 1 Infocom announces a new business product that will change the way people use computers.

The *New York Times* called our entertainment software products "remarkable" and the *Washington Post* said they were "the beginning of a new art form." Our first creation, the ZORK™ Trilogy, even outsold today's most popular business software. And all of our products continue to dominate the entertainment software best-seller lists.

Behind our success is a unique technology that lets us create software that eliminates the barriers between computers and people. Now we've applied this technology to a new product that will help professionals solve the complex problems they face every business day.

Every once in a while an innovation in software changes the way people think about computers. Our interactive fiction software did that for entertainment, and now we're about to do it for business.

Starting in early 1985, business people everywhere will be able to enjoy a more productive relationship with their personal computers.

Infocom. We always mean business. **INFCOM**

\*Based on unit sales of the ZORK Trilogy, Infocom's best-selling entertainment software product. Estimate of Lotus 1-2-3 unit sales obtained from Future Computing, Inc. 1-2-3 and Lotus are trademarks of Lotus Development Corporation. ZORK is a registered trademark of Infocom, Inc.

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- Puzzled Editor Michael "Mike" Dornbrook
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NEW ZORK TIMES PUZZLE

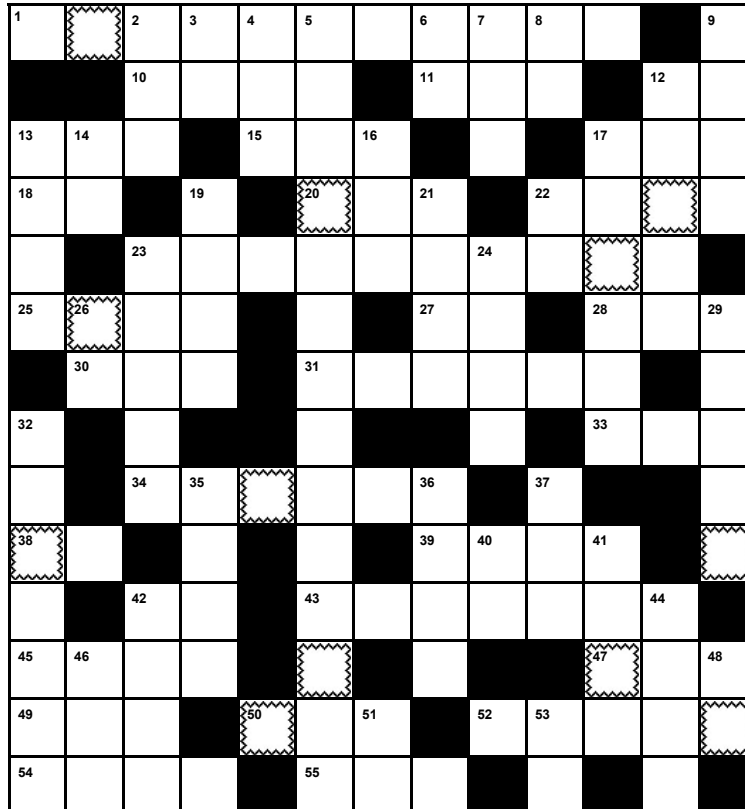
NUMBER 4

Fill in the crossword puzzle below using the Across and Down clues provided. Each blank square represents one letter.

Note that twelve of the blank squares are highlighted. The letters inside these twelve squares, when rearranged, spell *something you want to be*. Write this something in the answer box below. (Note the hyphen and the space!) Only the answer placed in the answer box will be used to judge your entry.

ACROSS

1. *Starcross* activity
10. A \_\_\_\_\_ of light
11. Number of wrenches in *Zork I*
12. Not don't
13. Common keyboard abbreviation
15. The parrot's in *Cutthroats*™ is wooden
17. Item inside *Enchanter's* Shack
18. Initials of person in charge of *Sorcerer's* Coal Mine
20. Johnny
22. Type of phobia no *Starcross* player should have
23. One of the komplekses
25. Hard, as said by the Wizard of Frobozz
27. *Infidel* chamber
28. Strewn about in *Enchanter's* Library
30. *Seastalker*™ companion
31. LoBlo owner
33. Pete
34. Mrs. Robner, to Baxter
38. Dir. from Systems Corridor West to red spool
39. Has one grasping extension
42. \_\_\_ *Leviathan*
43. You're a reporter in this game
45. Z
47. Type of reactor that powers the *Feinstein*
49. TAKE \_\_\_
50. Number of bumps at Red Airlock
52. Mrs. Robner is one
54. Response is sometimes "Aaaaarrghh!"
55. Like Monica's car



DOWN

2. Shape of hole in box in Dusty Room (abbrev.)
3. Dir. from Meadow to turtle
4. Tip is one
5. Item in *Infidel*

6. GNUS\_\_ ("writes magic")
7. The Red Boar is one
8. Dir. from Armory to cannon
9. Type of stick that Floyd might like
12. Lots of these in *Infidel*
13. Auda isn't this
14. ME\_\_ ("wilts plants")
16. Jewel
17. Evil force in *Sorcerer*
19. Item on trophy case
21. This is gray and purple and black and gray and white
22. Type of IBM PC
23. Played the heavy in *Enchanter*
24. Angus Mc\_\_\_\_\_
26. Common pronoun
29. Separates the Thin Forest and the Repair Room
32. Between Deck Eight and Deck Nine
35. From Bathroom to Tub Room
36. From Creepy Crawl to Tight Squeeze
37. Dirs. from Turret to Torture Chamber
40. From Galley to Wheelhouse
41. Liquid that mutants love to lap up
42. Most windows have one
44. *Seastalker's* universal \_\_\_\_\_
46. S\_\_\_ (word on manila folder)
48. Dir. from Engravings Cave to Round Room
51. Dir. from Circular Room to ruby cluster
53. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo

CONTEST RULES:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by February 1, 1985.
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.

PRIZE: 100%-cotton *New Zork Times* Puzzle Winner T-Shirt.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt Size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

MORE PUZZLE WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

A second drawing has been held for Puzzle Number Two to accommodate the 12,000 people who received their issue of the NZT too late to make the original deadline. An additional 137 correct answers were received. (The correct answer was "Zork III"; consult the last issue of the NZT for details.) Here are the ten winners, drawn at random:

1. David Eatough  
Provo, Utah
2. David DeBry  
Salt Lake City, Utah
3. Richard Evans  
Tampa, Florida
4. Penny Sutton-Maraglia  
Aurora, Colorado
5. John Potempa  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
6. Dan Dougherty  
Berkeley, California
7. Al Petrofsky  
San Rafael, California
8. Irwin Tillman  
Kings Park, New York
9. Patrick Chin  
Portland, Oregon
10. Mark Jackson  
Hendersonville, Tennessee

The solution to puzzle Number Three, and the list of winners, will appear in the next issue of the NZT.

YAK FACTS

The 80's have witnessed a long-overdue rebirth of interest in the yak among computer gamers. The new-found interest in this splendid beast has, until now, been ignored by recreational software companies and their consumer newsletters. With this issue, the editors of *The New Zork Times* will begin to rectify this need with the first installment in a series of Yak Facts.

Did you know that...

- ▶ domesticated yaks are a source of milk and beef?
- ▶ large bull yaks can achieve a height of six feet at their shoulder hump?
- ▶ wild yaks (*Bos grunniens mutus*) are an endangered species?
- ▶ the yak is the principal beast of burden not only in Tibet, but also in neighboring portions of India, China, Nepal, and Bhutan?

## Cornerstone: "The Hottest New Business Product of 1985"

On November 1st, at a press conference in New York City, Infocom announced Cornerstone™, the first in a new line of interactive business software.

Cornerstone is a full-featured relational database management system. Data management programs have traditionally fallen into two distinct camps: simple-to-use programs with very limited capabilities, and full-featured programs that require the user to have programming skills (or to hire a consultant who does). Cornerstone was designed to put all the power of this second group into the hands of non-programmers.

With Cornerstone you can design, build, and use sophisticated data management applications without writing a single line of code. These applications could be almost anything — a personnel system, a client-tracking system, or a roster of current Stellar Patrol assignments. Once you've designed your database, you can use Cornerstone for five major activities: **storing** large quantities of data, **selecting** data meeting specified criteria, **sorting** data in a particular order, **calculating** new data, and **reporting** the data. In addition, Cornerstone can **convert** data to or from many other software programs, such as word processors and spreadsheets.

In true Infocom tradition, Cornerstone is special in its style of interaction. But in contrast to the games, Cornerstone is designed to make every decision clear and simple. Most of the time, all you have to do is select an option from a menu. Cornerstone then responds with a new menu, or tells you that it's ready to execute your command. For all other activities, Cornerstone displays a form for you to fill in. At any point, if you're not sure what to do, you can press the HELP key. This will give you a detailed description of your exact position and all your current options. It's like having your very own programmer in a cage. There's more text in these HELP screens than in two entire interactive fiction

games.

Cornerstone also simplifies data entry. Whenever you've entered sufficient characters for Cornerstone to know what you want, it will complete the rest. Cornerstone will also check that your input meets specified constraints (such as minimum or maximum values). And at any point, you can press the OPTIONS key to see a list of all allowable data values. (A lexicographer in a cage?)

### Why Business Products? See page 6

The other mainstay of Cornerstone is flexibility. You're never locked into one way of doing things. If you need to look at your information in a new way, you can create a new report in seconds (with no limit to the number of reports). If you need to add a third phone number for Uncle Morris (he always tries to keep one step ahead of the police), Cornerstone opens up more room in his record — without adding wasted space for everyone else. In fact, all information in Cornerstone is of variable length, so there's never a need to specify how long anything will be. The ultimate test of flexibility is the ability to redefine your database. With Cornerstone you can do that at any time.

Cornerstone comes with a wide variety of tools to make it easy to learn and to use. There's a *Beginner's Guide* with ten interactive lessons. There's an *Owner's Handbook* that explains, in clear English, all the features of the program. There's even a ready-to-use Client Tracking system database, designed to keep client histories, generate mailing labels, and maintain a directory of names and addresses. All these materials come in a unique box that continues Infocom's tradition of award-winning packaging. The box is made of heavy molded plastic; its top swivels down to double as a workstation, and is capable of holding an open manual.

...more Cornerstone on page 9



Cornerstone: The sophisticated database system for the non-programmer.

### Infocom Brings Hitchhiker's Back to Public Radio

We are proud to announce that Infocom has now made it possible for all radio listeners to pick up *Hitchhiker's!* Before it was an interactive story, before it was a TV show, before it was converted into four phenomenal best-selling books, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*™ was a twelve-part radio serial on Britain's BBC. Now Infocom is sponsoring a rebroadcast of the entire serial on National Public Radio (NPR).

This is radio as you've never heard it before. Conceived and written by Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide* radio serial is hilarious and contains some of the best sound effects ever produced. Before the interactive story came out, many

considered this radio serial the best rendition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide*. If you have never heard it, you will find it funny, outrageous, mind-boggling, and well worth listening to.

Beginning in January 1985, episodes will be made available to public radio stations across the country for inclusion in their schedules. Check local program listings for times — each station puts together its own schedule independently. If your local public radio station is not carrying the show, call to point out that it is available and that you are interested in it (phone calls are surprisingly effective). So tell your friends ... and don't forget your towel.

### Who's broadcasting? See "Listen Up" on page 4

## EDITORIAL

# Thoughts on Software Piracy

At Infocom, we take an unusual approach to the prevention of software piracy. Rather than spending large amounts of time, effort, and money on designing ever-better anti-piracy techniques (our games come virtually unprotected on a number of machines), we spend our time improving the games and the packaging in order to make them more of a value. Our thinking is that a game which provides a lot of enjoyment will be worth spending some money on, and we feel that our games are somewhat less likely to be pirated on that account.

We are in a fortunate position. Our technology allows us to create sophisticated works of interactive fiction in less time than others might take. In addition, our "machine independence" — our ability to develop a game that will run on dozens of microcomputers — allows us to spread our very large development costs (over \$300,000 per game) over a larger number of total units to be sold. And lastly, consumers consider our interactive fiction to be the best on the market.

Unfortunately, most of the other companies in our industry don't have it so easy. They tend to buy their products from independent developers, who get an advance against royalties and a percentage of the revenues; they have trouble differentiating their products from competing ones, increasing advertising costs; and they must translate each product from machine to machine if they are to sell large volumes, which is both costly and time-consuming. All of this has led to the present sad state of affairs in which very few software companies are profitable. The end result of this trend will be fewer new titles released, more me-too products, and less innovation, none of which are in the consumer's best interest.

When pirates offhandedly joke about the "absurdly high price" of software as if it were some tremendous windfall to software manufacturers, they fail to realize that computer software is *not* a mass-market item. If each game sold millions of units, then the six-figure development and marketing costs would be lowered to less than a dollar per unit. However, very few games sell as many as 50,000 units (most sell far fewer), often leaving a cost per unit of \$5 to \$10, not even including the cost of manufacturing, which can easily reach \$3 to \$4 in the small quantities produced. And don't forget the overhead

involved in running a business: sales staff, product support staff, and the costs involved in getting information (ads, press conferences, trade shows, sales literature, newsletters...) to the retailer and consumer. This overhead easily adds another \$5 to \$10 in cost per unit. Adding all these costs together results in games that cost the manufacturer \$13 to \$24 to produce. Since the manufacturer receives an average of 40%, a retail price of between \$32 and \$60 is required for the product to break even. You can easily see why prices are what they are and why most software companies still can't seem to make a go of it.

Ironically, software piracy hurts not only the companies whose games are pirated but all of today's honest consumers who will have fewer good titles from which to choose. In short, piracy threatens to destroy the industry, pulling down the good companies and the bad companies alike. The person who feels a game is too expensive can do what the rest of us do when faced with the same problem — vote with his wallet and not buy it. How many of us would steal a car (even with the keys in the ignition) simply because it's overpriced?

Software and its documentation are subject to copyright protection; nearly every country in the world provides this protection of "intellectual property." Without it, there would be little incentive to invest time and effort in writing games, books, movies, or music. The copyright promotes these activities by assuring those who undertake them that they will be able to reap their rewards (if any). Penalties are clear: violators are subject to fines of up to \$50,000 and prison terms of up to 5 years. Since violations are a federal offense, the FBI has become increasingly involved in the enforcement of the laws.

Earlier this year, Infocom was instrumental in the formation of the Software Publishers Association (SPA). A prime concern of the SPA has been to combat piracy. We ask our consumers to help Infocom, the rest of the industry, and software consumers in general, by reporting flagrant violations of the law to us directly or to: Software Publishers Association, Suite 1200, 1111 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 364-0523. Please include any relevant information, such as price lists, phone numbers, and passwords, if such information is available.

We at Infocom take great pride in producing what we believe to be the finest-quality interactive fiction available on personal computers. We have always tried to create the best-value product possible, and we are grateful for the support of our consumers, whom we consider our partners in our efforts. Only with the good-faith efforts of both manufacturers and consumers can we all look forward to an exciting future for home computer software. **□**

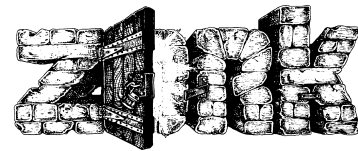
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To find out about job opportunities at Infocom, please send your resume to Donna McCarron, Infocom, Inc., 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. We are an equal opportunity employer.

# INFOCOM

# The Shrinkwrapped Falcon

by A. Dashiell Meretzky

It was a hot September day, the kind where horseflies seem to be making their last desperate mischief before vanishing for the long, cold winter. I sat in my office, feet perched carelessly on my cluttered desk, and gazed out the window at Charlie the Hot Dog Man — ageless Charlie, still beating leather down Wheeler Street after all these years.

I didn't have anything to do, or at least nothing worth taking my feet down off my desk for. I'd just finished a job, a game-writing job, and it'd paid a truckload of smackers, and I was in no hurry to get myself another case.

A horsefly landed on the tip of my shoe. I took aim with a rubber band, but a sudden motion startled it into flight before I could shoot. I wheeled around, and saw Ernie Brogmus standing in my doorway.

I quickly dredged up my mental file about Brogmus and found that it was pretty thin. "Burnin' Ernie" he was called by his friends in the trade (of which he had many) and also by his enemies (of which he had none). He'd been Infocom's Production Manager since about mid '83. It was said that not a single game got packaged without Burnin' Ernie knowing about it. He had a rep for handling any problem himself without missing a breath. I knew that if he was coming to me, it could only mean trouble. Big trouble.

I waved Brogmus over to a swivel chair near the window. He was smiling, but I could see worry beneath it. Worry, and perhaps a bit of fear. He sat staring at the floor. "You look like a man with a problem," I said. "Spill it."

He did so, at first tentatively, as though the creatures in the *Zork*® poster that dominated my office wall might be listening and jeering, but after a spell the hesitation left. His story gushed out, and I saw at once that this would be no ordinary job.

Production was in a worse mess than a horse stable after a big meal. Three new products were coming over the next eight weeks, and all of them looked like they'd be hot items. On top of that, orders for the new Macintosh version were still backed up from the summer, and 3½-inch disks were still scarcer than fish in a tree. The Four-In-One Sampler, a

promotion meant to introduce green-horns to interactive fiction, was ready for production, but Invisi-Clues™ hint booklets, being packaged for the first time for sale in stores, were crowding the Samplers off the assembly line.

Brogmus had broken into a cold sweat. "That's not all," he continued, nervously lighting up a cigarette. Now I knew things were really serious. I'd never seen Brogmus smoke before.

I had every right to be worried. Everything Burnin' Ernie had said so far meant that Infocom was in hot water up to its disk drives, but now he spilled the really bad news. Several computer manufacturers had

Infocom.

Brogmus looked straight at me for the first time, and I saw how hollow his eyes were. It was obvious the man hadn't slept for weeks, which clicked with rumors I'd heard about his working until three or four in the morning. "Normally at this time of the year, our packaging company would just drag in some extra workers for a graveyard shift, but with local unemployment bottoming out at three percent, there just aren't any bodies to hire. The bottom line is simply that we're selling the stuff faster than we can put it together. Will you take the case?"

My first inclination was to say no. A situation like this was bad news, a

signed a quick lease on some warehouse space outside of town, and that helped the boys dig out from under the avalanche of stored goods. Finished goods began to creep off the assembly line.

It was clearer than a new plate-glass window that these steps weren't enough. Infocom chalked up record September sales of over 100,000 games, and by the third week in October monthly sales soared into six figures again. The back-order list was longer than the beer lines at Fenway Park and growing by the day.

Suddenly, something Brogmus had said as a joke came back to me as an idea. I went to him with a plan, and he chewed on it for a while before spitting out a terse reply. "Let's go see the boss."

Brogmus led me into the office of the InfoPrez, a tough cookie who I knew wouldn't bend an inch for a hurricane. I quickly laid out my plan: Sunday shifts using Infocom employees. We'd boost production and morale in one dramatic sweep! The InfoPrez was reluctant at first; would people accustomed to office work stand up to the rigors of seven hours on an assembly line?

I was betting the rent that they would; I was going for broke. I told the InfoPrez that I'd stake my reputation on it. In the few weeks I'd been working on this case, I'd come to appreciate what a bunch of troopers these guys and dames at Infocom were.

Brogmus and I worked late into the night and spread the word through the grapevine; I posted a sign-up list for volunteers to work that first Sunday. I left space on it for twenty names. By midnight I was sawing wood.

When I got to my office the next morning at 9:30, the list had thirty-five names and was growing like yeast in an oven. I felt the first break in the case; I began to see the light at the end of a tunnel.

That first Sunday was a revelation. These Infocommies, forty strong, worked like gangbusters; and when the quitting bell blared at five, I practically had to wrestle each one off the line to lock up the place. If I hadn't brought a buddy of mine along to snap some shots, I think I'd be

...more **FALCON** on page 8



*Burnin' Ernie Brogmus, left oversees the Infoassembly line. It's his job as Production Manager to know everything — and he does.*

placed large orders, one of them for over 100,000 units. All of them wanted the product, and they wanted it fast. At the same time, Infocom was preparing to switch all twelve of its current games over to new, completely redesigned packaging. A caravan of trucks was lined up at the company that does our packaging, burying the building beneath an avalanche of boxes, manuals, brochures, labels, postcards, catalogs, buttons, matchbooks, Egyptian stamps — the list was endless. To top it all off, Brogmus explained, this was all happening at the brink of the Christmas season. Autumn has traditionally been a nightmare time for Brogmus, and this one was shaping up to be the biggest sales season ever for

monster; it could devour a fellow's career without a trace. But then I looked at Burnin' Ernie's tired face, and I saw the faces of thousands of disappointed customers around the world — "Sorry, Ma'am, we're all out of *Zork II*" ... "Sorry, son, I couldn't find *Seastalker*™ anywhere." Suddenly I heard myself saying yes.

I knew this wouldn't be some easy one-day nut to crack, so I checked into a tiny office on the seedy basement section of the building where I knew the Production types hung out. The smell of hopelessness and despair hung in the air — the odor of old, stale package glue and decaying corrugated cardboard.

The week began to speed by like calendar pages in a B-movie. We





"death notice" and a subscription to A+ magazine. I was thinking you'd know, you having been one of Softline's most prominent advertisers.

I found something in *Sorcerer*™ for your bug department. It is this: you can open Belboz' journal with the key, fine; however, you can't close it. You get an "it's already open" message. Call the exterminator!

Is it possible to call somewhere (hook up in the Source?) to get the mainframe Zork via modem? That would be fun to do. I've always wanted to play the original Zork.

Are you going to convert the old games into the new packaging? If not, will the third *Enchanter*™ match the first two? It would look nice on my shelf.

**BRING BACK ZORK IRON-ONS!**

Sincerely,

**Alexander Eulenberg**

*(Concerning the puzzle, your wish is our command. As for Softalk, they were forced into bankruptcy by creditors. It was sad and sudden — they had assets but didn't have enough ready cash to pay all the bills when they were unexpectedly demanded. We will all miss the Softalk magazines.*

*All of our games are being converted to the new packaging, and all new games will be packaged in the new standard.*

*We have been considering T-shirts, but we're not sure what people would prefer. If you would be interested in Infocom T-shirts, please write in with your suggestions. —Ed.)*

### Hey Guys!

I was sitting around letting my restless mind wander, and came up with some amusing acronyms.

1. Flathead is the supreme G.R.U.E. — (Great Ruler of the Underground Empire)

2. Lord Excessive's job description: F.R.O.T.Z. — (Flathead Reigns Over The Zorkers)

3. The Zork Bank: F.R.O.B.O.Z. Z. — (Flathead's Ridiculously Official Bank Of Zealous Zorkers)

4. Toughness of solving problems in Zork series: P.L.U.G.H. — (Prevents the Losers Underground from Gaining Hope)

5. Status of Krill after being defeated: K.R.I.L.L. — (Krill Really Is a Lonesome Loser)

Hope you enjoy them. Stay tuned for additional insanities ...

**Karl L. Romlke**

Houston, TX

P.S. Please (perhaps) print these in *The New York Times*. Thanks.  
(*Your wish is our command. —Ed.*)

### Dear Zorks:

We liked "Grue Moon" and did some words:

Grue Moon — I saw him standing alone

Without a lamp in his hand

Without a light of his own.

Grue Moon — you knew just what I lurked there for.

You heard me saying a prayer for

Someone I really could snare for.

And then there suddenly appeared before me

Someone without any repellent.

I heard somebody whisper "Please don't eat me"

And when I did the moon had turned to coal.

Grue Moon — now I'm no longer a-gurgling

Without a dream in my heart

Without a meal of my own.

I've been lurking on the railroad  
All the live long night.

I've been lurking on the railroad  
Waiting for Zorkers to come by.

Don't you see the dumb fools  
coming,

Without repellent, torch, or light?

Now my mouth starts a dribblin'.

I'm going to eat those fools alive.

Zorker won't you come

Zorker won't you come

Won't you come without a light?

Zorker won't you come

Zorker won't you come

Won't you come without a light?

Someone's in the kitchen with

Donald.

Someone's in the kitchen with that

grue.

Someone's in the kitchen with

Donald

Cooking up some Zorkers stew.

**Arlene and Peter Zajicek**

Memphis, TN

### Dear Duf,

On many games I've noticed the letters GUE used. What does GUE stand for?

### Curious in Luling Texas

*(Duffy is away on a case, so we thought we'd try to handle this one. GUE is an abbreviation for Great Underground Empire, where the Zork trilogy is set. It is frequently used after dates; for example, 785 GUE would indicate the year 785 of the Great Underground Empire. —Ed.)*

# ASK JENNIFER

*Jennifer is one of the dedicated Customer Support representatives who answer Infocom's Technical Hotline, providing support for users who need immediate assistance on technical matters. This month, Jennifer provides answers to some of the most common questions and problems that she receives calls about. Hopefully, dealing with the most common problems in this forum will help thousands of users avoid expensive long-distance phone calls. However, if you have a technical problem other than one of those listed here, don't hesitate to call the Technical Hotline, (617) 576-3190. But try not to call between 2:30 and 3:00; that's when Jennifer is taking her nap.*



### Why do I get a "fatal error" when I try to boot my disk?

My daddy told me that these errors are caused by little goblins. Some of these goblins live in the disk drive, and some live in the disk itself. If you send me your disk, I'll give it to Tommy here at Infocom, and he'll tell me whether there are any goblins living in your disk. If there are, we'll send you a brand new disk without any goblins in it. If there aren't, I'll send you back your disk. Then you'll have to take your disk drive to the store where you bought it, and have them kick out the goblins.

### One of the things that was supposed to be in my game package wasn't in it.

Oops, sorry! Occasionally, workers on the assembly line goof when they're making up a package. In fact, I was working on the assembly line just last month [see story on page 3 — Ed.] assembling *Deadline*™ packages, and I realized after doing around 700 that I was putting in pieces of my bubble gum instead of "Pills Found Near the Body." I didn't tell anyone, though, 'cause I was afraid they'd spank me.

Anyway, just send me a letter with some proof of purchase, like the sales slip from the game, and I'll send along the missing piece. It might take me a while, though, 'cause a lot of the pieces are kept on top of a cabinet and only the grown-ups can reach up there.

### Save and Restore aren't working in my game.

That's goblins again.

### I found a bug in the game.

I don't like to hear about bugs; they're really scary. In fact sometimes at night in bed in the dark you can hear them scurrying around on the floor and you have to keep your eyes closed absolutely tight with your blanket completely wrapped around you or else they'll attack and eat you up. But if you call me or send me a letter, and tell me the bug and the name of the game and the release number, I'll pass it along to someone who isn't so afraid of bugs.

### Can you give me a hint?

No! I can't and I won't. And if you don't stop asking me, I'll throw a tantrum! I'm only here for important tek ... tek ... technical matters. If you need help playing the game, you can order a hint booklet by calling (800) 262-6868. By the way, hint booklets are printed in invisible ink which you get to develop yourself — they're really neat!

☐



## Why Business Products?

by Paul DiLascia

When the editor asked me to write an article explaining why Infocom has ventured into business products, I thought: Hmmph. Why business products, indeed! I could just as well ask, why *games*?

Nevertheless, this question often arises in the minds of Infocom fans when they learn that Infocom — famous for its best-selling games, producer of a whole genre of interactive fiction, and home of Floyd — has now introduced Cornerstone, its first business software product.

They want to know what's going on. Business software? Does everyone at Infocom now wear a blue pinstriped suit and read the *Wall Street Journal* every morning? Have we finally lost our marbles — or maybe we've transcended even ourselves? After all, business is serious, stuffy, *boring*.

So I accepted the challenge, hoping to dispel some of these illusions.

We began developing Cornerstone in 1982, over two years ago. Infocom's strategy all along was to compete in the business arena. We just didn't tell anyone. We knew Infocom's software technology could be applied successfully to business products as well as to games.

The games are sophisticated programs as far as software goes. Writing a program that can respond intelligently to an arbitrary verbalization is no easy task. Marc Blank, Dave Lebling, and Joel Berez designed a special high-level language called ZIL (Zork Implementation Language) and an entire development system just so they could write large, complex game programs that would fit on small microcomputers. It's this technology that gives Infocom an edge over its competition.

A similar technology was developed to produce Cornerstone, our new database system. It too is written in a specialized high-level language, and it too is a very sophisticated program. Cornerstone comprises over 75,000 lines of code. Some claim it's the biggest program ever put on a single floppy disk. To write Cornerstone in assembly language would be a Herculean task, not worth attempting by sane mortals. As it is, it took a staff of programmers over two years to write

Cornerstone.

Cornerstone shares another important quality with our interactive fiction. And that's its emphasis on *you*, the intrepid player (called, in business circles, the *user*). Cornerstone makes *you* the architect of your own database and allows *you* to manipulate information the way *you* want. Cornerstone is designed for its users.

In developing Cornerstone, we've tried at every step to anticipate what a sane (or insane) person might attempt to do next. There's a critical difference, however, between Cornerstone and the games. While the games strive to make life difficult — constantly thwarting your best efforts, posing enigmas, even leaving you dead in some remote wasteland — in Cornerstone, we've done everything we can think of to make things *easy*. You'll never need InvisiClues to use Cornerstone, because we've given it a HELP key which supplies hints and suggestions that are so *apropos*, it's like having a wise friend always near.

There are other differences, too. When people first play — I mean *use* — Cornerstone, they sometimes ask why we didn't use a natural language interface as in our games. The answer is this: Natural language is inherently ambiguous, and ambiguity is just what you *don't* want in a database. The equivocation

that adds humor and wit to the games would make Cornerstone a nightmare to use. If you told your database "Show me all the letters from Fred," you probably wouldn't be amused if it responded, "F, R, E, D." At Infocom, we believe in using the right interface for the task at hand.

As to the claim that business products are dull, I point out in defense that different people have different ideas about what's fun. Some folks spend their time manipulating bits of information they call "price-earning ratios" and "bond equivalent yields"; others like to keep track of every last X-Men issue in their Marvel Comics collection. Still others delight in comparing tasting notes for different vintages of Mouton Rothschild. Judging from the early responses, people like these will be pleased with Cornerstone. Some testers have told us Cornerstone is what they've sought for years. Some even claim it's fun!

At Infocom, *our* idea of fun is producing sophisticated, quality software products that erode the barriers between people and computers. It's what we do best. Cornerstone continues the tradition. That's why we made it.

Yet I fear there remain some unsatisfied skeptics who continue to wonder, "Why business products?" For them, I leave this quote from Brian Berkowitz, one of the prime movers of Cornerstone: "We pick the hardest thing to do — and then we implement it." Z



Brian "Spike" Berkowitz: "We pick the hardest thing to do — and then we implement it."

## The Hist

In the beginning, back in the 1960's, DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation) created the PDP-10, a medium-sized computer. The "10", as it was called, became popular at many research installations, and a great deal of software was written for it, some of which is still far in advance of systems on more modern machines. At MIT's Artificial Intelligence Lab, an operating system called ITS (Incompatible Time-sharing System) was written for the 10. ITS was designed to make software development easy. The designers of the system assumed that it would have a small, knowledgeable, friendly group of users, so they did not include any security features.

Around 1970, the ARPAnet was invented. ARPAnet made it possible for researchers all over the country (indeed, all over the world) to communicate with each other, and to use each other's machines. In those halcyon days, access was unrestricted; you could get on from any machine connected to the net, or by knowing an appropriate phone number. Budding hackers from around the country soon discovered that this made a wonderful playground. They also discovered that there were some computers at MIT with some neat stuff on them and no security — anyone who could connect to the machines could log in.

Also around 1970, a language called MUDDLE (later renamed MDL) was developed as a successor to LISP. It never succeeded in fully replacing LISP, but it developed a loyal user community of its own, primarily at MIT's Project MAC (now called the Laboratory for Computer Science) and especially in the Dynamic Modelling Group (later the Programming Technology Division). The Dynamic Modelling Group (DM), in addition to its other accomplishments, was responsible for some famous games. The first of these was a multi-player graphics game called *Maze*, in which players wandered around a maze shooting each other. Each user's screen showed the view of the maze that his or her computerized alter-ego saw, updated in real time. Dave Lebling was among those chiefly responsible (to blame?) for the existence of the

# ory of Zork — First in a Series

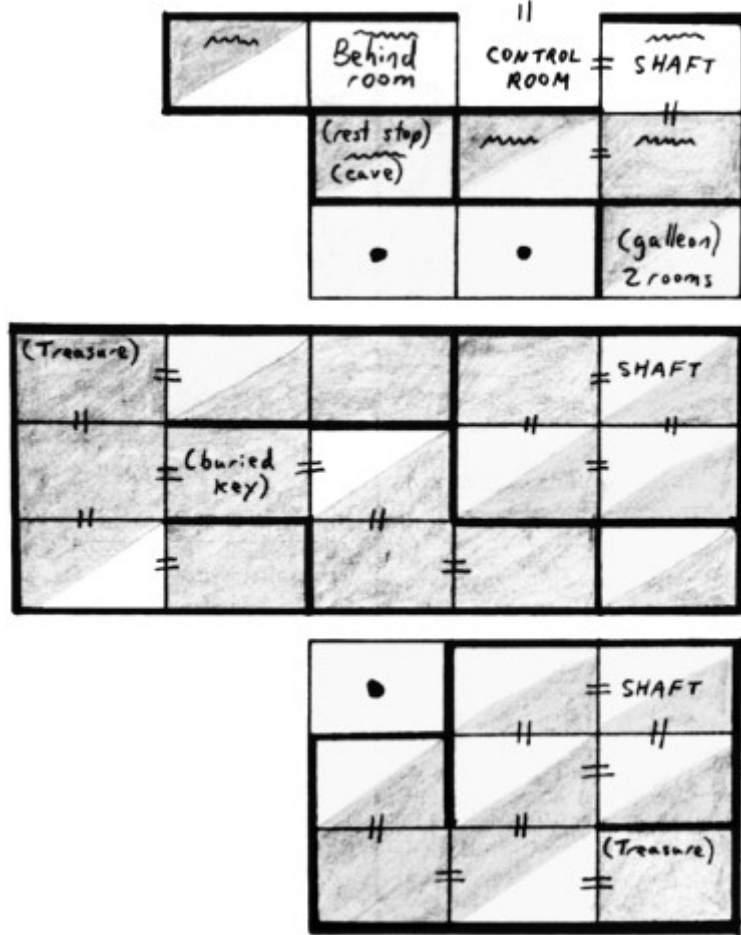
by Tim Anderson

game.

The next game of note was *Trivia* (who says research labs aren't ahead of their time?), an ongoing "can you top this" contest for the truly crazed. *Trivia*, unlike *Maze*, could be played by network users, and achieved wide popularity on the ARPAnet. Marc Blank wrote the second version, and I maintained/hacked it; it was actually a legitimate test of a database system the group used for a research project.

In early 1977, *Adventure* swept the ARPAnet. Willie Crowther was the original author, but Don Woods greatly expanded the game and unleashed it on an unsuspecting network. When *Adventure* arrived at MIT, the reaction was typical: after everybody spent a lot of time doing nothing but solving the game (it's estimated that *Adventure* set the entire computer industry back two weeks), the true lunatics began to think about how they could do it better. *Adventure* was written in FORTRAN, after all, so it couldn't be very smart. It accepted only two-word commands, it was obviously hard to change, and the problems were sometimes not everything one could desire. (I was present when Bruce Daniels, one of the DM's, figured out how to get the last point in *Adventure* by examining the game with a machine-language debugger. There was no other way to do it.)

By late May, *Adventure* had been solved, and various DM's were looking for ways to have fun. Marc Blank was enjoying a respite from medical school; I had just finished my master's degree; Bruce Daniels was getting bored with his Ph.D. topic; and Dave Lebling was heartily sick of Morse code. Dave wrote (in MUDDLE) a command parser that was almost as smart as *Adventure*'s; Marc and I, who were both in the habit of hacking all night, took advantage of this to write a prototype four-room game. It has long since vanished. There was a band, a bandbox, a peanut room (the band was outside the door, playing "Hail to the Chief"), and a "chamber filled with deadlines." Dave played and tested the game, saw that it was pretty awful, and left to spend two weeks basking in the sun.



Marc Blank's sketch for an underwater problem designed for, but never put into, the original *Zork*. The treasures would have been pearls and a trunk of jewels.

Marc, Bruce, and I sat down to write a real game. We began by drawing some maps, inventing some problems, and arguing a lot about how to make things work. Bruce still had some thoughts of graduating, thus preferring design to implementation, so Marc and I spent the rest of Dave's vacation in the terminal room implementing the first version of *Zork*. *Zork*, by the way, was never really named. "Zork" was a nonsense word floating around; it was usually a verb, as in "zork the fweep," and may have been derived from "zorch." ("Zorch" is another nonsense word implying total destruction.) We tended to name our programs with the word "zork" until they were ready to be installed on the system.

By the time Dave got back, there

was a (more-or-less) working game. It probably wasn't as big as *Adventure*, and was certainly less than half the size of the final version, but it had the thief, the cyclops, the troll, the reservoir and dam, the house, part of the forest, the glacier, the maze, and a bunch of other stuff. The problems were not as interesting as those that came later: it took time for people to learn how to write good problems, and the early parsers wouldn't support complicated solutions anyway. What we had done right was all in the "substratum." There was a well-defined (and easily-changed) theory governing interactions among objects, verbs, and rooms. It was easy to drop in new parsers, which happened frequently, since everyone and his uncle tried his hand at writing a

parser (Marc finally became obsessed with it, and wrote the last 40 or 50 of them himself). And it was easy to add new rooms, objects, and creatures (I won't discuss the difficulty of adding new concepts yet).

*Zork*, like *Adventure*, survived only because it was played by people outside the small community that developed it. In the case of *Adventure*, this was possible because it was written in FORTRAN and could run on practically any machine. *Zork* was written in MUD-DLE, which ran on only some PDP-10s. Its user community was the group of "net randoms" that infested the MIT systems; remember that we had no security at all at this time. DM had developed an active community largely because of *Trivia*. Since *Trivia* was pretty dead by the time *Zork* came along, there weren't many other things for the randoms to do, so they hung around waiting for the next game. Early players of *Zork* ranged from John McCarthy, the inventor of LISP (we actually have a copy of the connectivity matrix that McCarthy used instead of a map), to twelve-year-olds from Northern Virginia. No one ever officially announced *Zork*: people would log in to DM, see that someone was running a program named *Zork*, and get interested. They would then "snoop" on the console of the person running *Zork*, and see that it was an *Adventure*-like game. From there, it only took a little more effort to find out how to start it up. For a long time, the magic incantation was ":MARC;ZORK"; people who had never heard of ITS, DM, or PDP-10s somehow heard that if they got to something called "host 70" on the ARPAnet, logged in, and typed the magic word, they could play a game.

Although *Zork* in June 1977 was infinitely more primitive than, say, *Zork I*, it still had pretty much the same flavor. The Flathead family was represented, in the person of Lord Dimwit Flathead the Excessive, ruler of the Great Underground Empire; and the official currency was the zorkmid. Bruce was responsible for the purplish prose where these were first mentioned.

Many of the details of the GUE were whimsical (if not silly), but we weren't completely immune to reality. In those days, if one wandered around in the dark area of the dungeon, one fell into a bottom-

...more *Zork* on page 11

... **Shrinkwrapped Falcon...**  
(continued from page 3)

convinced now that I'd hallucinated the whole thing.

The next day, Brogmus was like a



Michael Berlyn, at the Infoassembly line, doing his famous imitation of Waldo.

man who'd just discovered religion. "This is great! Whaddya say we start dragging these guys in on Saturdays, huh?" His excitement was contagious, and soon we had not only a Saturday shift going, but weekday evening shifts as well. None of the Infocom people were losing their spirit, and they were turning up with husbands and wives and mothers and sisters and brothers and friends, all hungry for some honest labor.

November went by like a whirlwind. Five weeks after that first Sunday on the assembly line, with Thanksgiving dinner still a fresh memory, Brogmus came to see me. He was smiling as always, but now the haunted look was gone. He dumped a report on my desk. "Look at what our folks have done on the assembly line: 62,000 games, plus another 6,000 Samplers and 21,000 hint books!"

It was no surprise to me, and I told him so. "I knew all along these folks were solid gold."

"We're out of the woods," he said, "all set to glide through to Christmas. How can I thank you enough?"

"You're thanking the wrong guy," I told Brogmus, pointing at the report. "It's those guys and dames from Infocom who cast all the right magic spells when it counted." And if any of you good people reading this got or gave an Infocom game for Christmas, try and keep that in mind.

As for me, I'm back with my feet up on the desk just killing time waiting for the next case, or for the horseflies to return in June, whichever comes first.

## Suspect Author Suspected

by Dave Lebling

A few hours after the start of this year's Halloween party, my wife Janet said, "Would you mind getting my makeup kit out of the bedroom? I need to touch up my blood." Since she was costumed as a vampire, and the blood dripping from one corner of her mouth was getting a little tired-looking, I thought nothing of it. I noticed that the bedroom door was closed, so I knocked first (parties being what they are). No one answered, so I opened it, and there, lying half-dead on the bed, was one of the party guests! With her last reserve of strength, she staggered from the room and collapsed onto the living room floor, strangled!

Naturally, I followed her, wondering what was going on, and no sooner did she die than I was accused of killing her. Almost immediately, "Sergeant Duffy" and the "Detective" arrived on the scene and began making a case for my guilt. In a thick Irish accent, the detective interrogated a suspicious group of my friends and fellow Infocommies. The evidence was overwhelming, and it was looking pretty grim. There was an (obviously forged) incriminating letter signed in my handwriting, and (obviously perjured) testimony from people who had seen me with the victim in a local sub shop.

Finally, the detectives searched the body and found another letter that pointed to still more evidence implicating someone else. The murderer tried to flee, but he was captured and handcuffed on the second floor of the house as he tried to make his escape. Justice was done, just in the nick of time.

In the end, a vast conspiracy headed by my wife, Janet, and the co-host of the party, Rick Moore, was revealed. While I had been writing *Suspect*<sup>™</sup>, Janet had been writing this frame-up. While the Infocom testers were finding bugs in *Suspect*, they were also finding bugs in the frame-up. And while I was helping to set up the party, the conspirators were putting the final touches on the play.

For weeks afterward Janet would periodically say, "You're *sure* you didn't suspect anything?" I never had.

I never was a very good detective. Z

## Get Graphic

Infocom is going graphic!

Wait — if you're falling off your chair just now, stand up, dust yourself off, and sit back down. Compose yourself. And then compose the graphic we desire — for inclusion in *The New York Times*.

Since our interactive text (it's been said) is worth a thousand pictures, we'd like to reap the harvest of your imaginations. Draw a cartoon and send it to us. If we print your cartoon in the NZT, you'll win the Infocom game of your choice.

Cartoons will be printed 4¼ inches wide and 5 inches deep — give or take a couple of inches — so draw your cartoons proportionally (but don't fold your entries). Draw the cartoons in black ink only; no pencil or color illustrations. All submissions become the property of Infocom, Inc.

Send your cartoons to: NZT Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Make sure you tell us what game you want to win, what computer you want it to run on, and where we should send it. Z

## Text of Infocom Memo Distributed November 28, 1984

Once upon a time, in the little kingdom of Infoproduction, good King Brogmus looked out from the window of his castle, across the goldfish-filled moat, and saw that a danger threatened the land — a danger in the form of the terrible dragon Backlog.

So King Brogmus met with his wise men, and his soothsayer cut open a floppy disk and spilled its entrails to get a reading of events to come. Finally, after many days, the king emerged from the catacombs of his castle with a plan.

And the king's heralds went forth throughout the land, stopping at every mailbox and calling for volunteers to slay the dragon. And though Backlog was huge and terrifying,

volunteers poured forth from every village and every department to battle the monster.

Good King Brogmus, and his brave knight Sir Eric, led battle after battle against the mighty dragon, and each time they wounded it deeply, but each time it rose to threaten the kingdom again. Then, one day, following the greatest and most tiresome battle of all, after the dragon had suffered sixty thousand wounds (plus another six thousand wounds in its sampler and twenty thousand wounds in its invisiclues), it roared a final bellow of fire and expired. The kingdom was safe at last.

And the people rejoiced, and ate dragon meat, with stuffing and

cranberry sauce, while the king consulted with his advisors once again. And the king made a wise decision to halt the battles, for he knew that even though volunteers were still streaming in from every corner of the land, to continue the campaign might only arouse the equally terrifying dragon Overstock.

So the heralds went forth throughout the land, thanking the good people of the kingdom for their help and their courage. And King Brogmus looked out across the moat, content in the knowledge that Backlog would never threaten the kingdom again, and everyone lived happily ever after.

Until the next Christmas season??? Z

# InfoNews Roundup

## InvisiClues Appear in Stores

Infocom stories are *hard*: they have puzzles, mazes, conniving bad guys, twists, double-twists, red herrings, and hidden clues. And that's what makes them so much fun.

But sometimes you can get stuck — not just momentarily stumped, but really, truly, hit-your-head-against-the-wall, rip-the-disk-into-tiny-little-pieces stuck. That's when you need an InvisiClues hint booklet.

InvisiClues hint booklets are available for all Infocom games. The clues are printed in invisible ink, so you'll never see a clue accidentally. A special marker is included with each booklet, and with it you can develop only the clues you want to see. The clues generally progress from a gentle nudge in the right direction to a full answer.

Until recently, you could buy InvisiClues only through the mail, directly from Infocom. But now you can go to your friendly neighborhood software dealer and buy your InvisiClues there! Every InvisiClues hint booklet tells you how points are scored, includes amusing suggestions, and comes with the special marker and a complete map of the game. (*Suspended*<sup>™</sup> and *Seastalker* hint booklets don't come with maps since maps are included in the game package.) Each InvisiClues hint booklet retails for \$7.95. That's a small price to pay, especially when you can't eat, sleep, or get on with your life because you can't solve a puzzle.

## Omni Magazine Lauds Hitchhiker's Guide

The December 1984 issue of *Omni* magazine called Infocom's version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* "riotous" and selected it as one of the Ten Best Computer Games of 1984.

### A Dazzling Dozen

In mid-October, Infocom was shipping 12 stories. And 13 of them were on the top-30 Hot List<sup>™</sup>!

The Hot List shows the best-selling software week by week, and is published by Softsel Computer Products, Inc., the country's largest software distributor. All of our stories had been on the Hot List before, and we see most of them on the list every week. But the week of October 15, 1984, was a record for us: never before have we had so many products on the same list. Since most companies are delighted to see even *one* of their products on the Hot List every now and then, you can imagine how proud we are.

How did we manage 13 out of 12? Commodore distributes *Zork I* for the Commodore 64, and Infocom distributes *Zork I* for all the other major personal computers. Both made it to the Hot List, so *Zork I* actually appeared twice!

When this issue of the NZT went to press (in December), *Zork I* had enjoyed 118 weeks on the Hot List (the Hot List is only 118 weeks old), *Zork II* 114 weeks, and *Deadline* 116 weeks. And if you think *that's* impressive ...

## InvisiClues Disappear from Stores

That's right! InvisiClues have been disappearing from store shelves so fast that the InvisiClues hint booklets have been the *number 1 book* on Softsel's Hot List ever since their debut on October 8, 1984. When this issue went to press, InvisiClues were number 1 for 10 straight weeks.

### New Infocom Games Hit Charts

It didn't take long! *Cuthroats*<sup>™</sup>, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and *Suspect* are already on several best-seller lists, including Softsel's in the United States and Frantek's in Canada.

### Infocom Wins Award

With so many products on the Softsel Hot List, Infocom should win some sort of an award, don't you think? Well, we did!

At the Fall 1984 COMDEX (Computer Dealers' Exposition) held in Las Vegas, Nevada, Softsel and *Business Week* presented Infocom with an award inscribed "Most Titles on the Hot List (Recreation)." This is the second year in a row that Infocom has received that coveted award.

Infocom is displaying the award in its now-famous Trophy Case, which is located in the reception area of Infocom's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## Games Survey by Family Computing Reveals All!

The results of a "Games Survey" were published in the December 1984 issue of *Family Computing* magazine. Readers were asked to name their favorite game-making companies. Not surprisingly, Infocom garnered more votes than any other company. And we didn't even vote!

Respondents to the survey also chose Marc Blank as one of their favorite game designers. As author of *Deadline* and co-author of *Zork I*, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, and *Enchanter*, Marc ranks as one of our favorite game designers too.

### Max Sacks Yak Facts

A recent poll by *CompuNews* magazine reveals that a staggering 97 percent of all interactive fiction gamers have no interest in reading about yaks. Only 0.4 percent indicated a slight interest in reading about yaks, and a mere 0.1 percent liked to read "a significant amount about yaks." Two-and-a-half percent of the respondents refused to answer the question. Infocom Product Manager Michael "Max" Dornbrook immediately announced that Infocom would continue its long-standing policy of not printing anything about yaks in *The New York Times*. (Actually, Michael Dornbrook's nickname is "Mike" or "Mikey." But "Max" made a better headline.) **Z**

### ...Cornerstone

(continued from page 1)

As you can probably tell, we're pretty excited about Cornerstone. And we're not alone. One major distributor has said that Cornerstone "will be the hottest new business product of 1985." Another has said, "Every once in a while, a product changes the shape of the microcomputer market. Cornerstone, Infocom's new database management system, is just such a product."

The first release of Cornerstone is for the IBM PC, PC XT, PC AT, and 100% compatibles. Cornerstone requires a minimum of 256K of memory and two disk drives (or one floppy and a hard disk), and will be

available at the end of January. The list price will be \$495. In the meantime, if you have any questions, drop us a line or give us a call at (617) 576-3190.

**[Editor's note: A free demonstration disk of Cornerstone will be made available in a month. If you are interested, address your request to Barnaby, c/o Infocom, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138.]** **Z**

At COMDEX in Las Vegas, Infocom strutted its stuff: interactive fiction and Cornerstone. Thousands of people — retailers, computer manufacturers, press, and end-users among them — visited the Infocom booth, picked up DON'T PANIC buttons, and saw the hottest new business product of 1985.



GURTHARK - TUN - BESNAP  
 POET  
 WHLZ

THE DUNGEON MASTER  
 RALPH STILES  
 PHONG  
 ELOYD

TIP RANDALL  
 BELBOZ  
 LESLIE ROBNER  
 KING DUNCAN THRAX  
 ENSIGN BLATHER  
 SENS

LORD DIMWIT ELATHEAD  
 MONICA LINDER

THE WIZARD OF FROBOZZ  
 ZOE BLY  
 IRIS  
 KRILL

SERGEANT DUFFY  
 WALDO  
 GEORGE ROBNER  
 ?

ANSWER:

**Solution to Puzzle Number Three**

Here is the solution to the puzzle from the Summer '84 NZT. The central column reads "How many points in Zork Two?" making the final answer "400" or "400 points."

There were 191 entries, of which 153 (80%) had the correct answer. The most common incorrect answer was "How many robots in Zork Two? Two" (13 entries). The next most frequent wrong answer was "How many points in Zork III? Seven" (7 entries). There were a number of humorous wrong answers that were close — "How many spells/vaults/dogies in Zork Two?" Other answers included "Fred," "69,105" and "Yes, a pelican."

Twenty-five names were chosen randomly from the correct entries. Here's a list of T-shirt winners:

1. David Sams  
Pasadena, CA
2. Om Prakash II  
Holliswood, NY
3. Edward Stiles  
North Royalton, OH
4. Mindy Miller  
Clay, NY
5. Michael Rosenberg  
Pittsburgh, PA
6. Don Naurocki  
Mission Viejo, CA
7. Michelle Forrest

8. Robbie Bain  
Morristown, NJ
9. Ed Champ  
Lake Grove, NY
10. Tony Yankovsky  
Brooklyn, NY
11. Zafer Berkun  
Sheboygan, WI
12. Andy Plotkin  
Rockville, MD
13. Sharon Lynch  
Silverton, OR
14. Margaret Sebastian  
Lagrange, IL
15. Lewis Morton  
Merion, PA
16. Bob Bray  
San Jose, CA
17. Gary Laskowski  
Roseville, MI
18. Richard Ruffner  
St. Louis, MO
19. Alex Mueck  
Massapequa, NY
20. Stewart Vachal  
Yorba Linda, CA
21. Bill Shubert  
Acton, MA
22. Bill Duba  
Livermore, CA
23. Jeff Segawa  
Kaneohe, HI
24. John W. Kennedy, Jr.  
Chatham, NJ
25. Mike Surgent  
Lynn, MA

**...Puzzle #5**

(continued from page 12)

- 3,O The ambassador from Blowk-bidden-Gordo has no translator. A brass bell can be found in the Temple in *Zork I*.
- 4,A Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was Dave Lebling's model for *Starcross*™.
- 4,C The gold coffin is too large to put in the trophy case.
- 4,D The Weasel's real name is William Richert.
- 4,E Marvin is a product of the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation.
- 4,F Aragain Falls is the source of the Frigid River.
- 4,G Steve Meretzky wrote *Planetfall* and *Suspect*.
- 4,H The Wizard of Frobozz only cast spells beginning with the letter Z.
- 4,I *Infidel* takes place near the Nile River.
- 4,J Auda has four grasping extensions.
- 4,K Infocom is located at 66 Wheeler Street.
- 4,L Monica's eyes are blue.
- 4,M All of the trees in *Zork III* are unclimbable.
- 4,N The top speed of the Lawanda-Kalamontee shuttle is 35.
- 4,O One of the cakes in the Tea Room has purple icing.
- 5,A *Infidel* was the first Infocom's Tales of Adventure.
- 5,B The Dining Room of the Robner mansion has a fieldstone fireplace.
- 5,C A babel fish, if swallowed, allows one to understand any language.
- 5,D The Snark resembles a giant cockroach.
- 5,E Marc Blank's signature appears on one of the *Hitchhiker's* destruct orders.
- 5,F You can fold up the cot in *Infidel*.
- 5,G The grue repellent in *Zork II* smells like old socks and burning rubber.
- 5,H *The Witness*™ takes place on a Thursday evening.
- 5,I The crystal trident is found in the Atlantis Room.
- 5,J The weasel aliens live near the green airlock.
- 5,K Earl Davis Jackson is the Editor of *The Washington Representative*.
- 5,L Alligators live in the river near the encampment in *Infidel*.
- 5,M If you turn on the Linders' radio at 10:20pm, you will hear Ozzie Nelson's Orchestra.
- 5,N There are skeletons in *Zork I*, *Starcross*, *Infidel*, and *Hitchhiker's Guide*.
- 5,O Sharon Kemp attended MIT.
- 6,A Whiz cannot leave the area around the Central Chamber.
- 6,B McNabb's pride and joy is his tulip garden.
- 6,C In *Deadline*, there is no way for your character to get killed.
- 6,D The robot in *Zork II* was built by the Frobozz Magic Android Company.
- 6,E In *Cuthroats*, your watch is battery-powered.
- 6,F Leslie Robner's maiden name was Swanson.
- 6,G *Sorcerer* is the third game in the *Enchanter* series.
- 6,H The brass lantern in the *Zork* series is powered by kerosene.
- 6,I The empty cigarette pack in *Infidel* is a Marlboro pack.
- 6,J The *S.S. Hollywood* is one of the 4 shipwrecks near Hardscrabble Island.
- 6,K Rotgrubs are usually around 3 inches long.
- 6,L The Technology Museum includes a model of a Frobozz Magic Cave Digger.
- 6,M You rented your cowboy outfit from a store called Costumes-To-Go.
- 6,N The only exit from the Radiation Lab is east.
- 6,O Pete the Rat got his nickname from tattling on a crewmate.
- 7,A George Robner's record collection includes a Hebrew Prayer Service.
- 7,B There are 69,105 leaves in the leaf pile in the Clearing.
- 7,C The *MCS Starcross* was constructed in 2178 at the Luna City Docks.
- 7,D *Cuthroats* was a collaboration between Michael Berlyn and Phil Wolper.
- 7,E Monica's mother was named Virginia.
- 7,F Flood Control Dam Number 3 is composed of 370,000 cubic feet of concrete.
- 7,G Cerberus has three heads.
- 7,H Zaphod Beeblebrox has three heads.
- 7,I Belboz is a member of the Circle of Enchanters.
- 7,J All three Infocom mysteries were set in the USA.
- 7,K Sgt. Duffy handcuffs Stiles to a davenport.
- 7,L Waldo is impervious to the acid mist.
- 7,M The Brass Lantern restaurant is on the corner of Berez and La Vezza.
- 7,N The red goo in the survival kit tastes like cherry pie.
- 7,O There are eight locations in the Land of Shadow.
- 8,A In *Starcross*, the closest unknown mass is UM91.
- 8,B The original *Infidel* package was shaped like a pyramid.
- 8,C The Aquadome blueprints were drawn by J. Parker.
- 8,D Sam Ostmann is the president of King's Point Realty.
- 8,E An amulet can be found at the bottom of the lake in *Zork II*.
- 8,F The berzio potion increases muscular coordination.
- 8,G On the sub, Tip reads a copy of "Science World."
- 8,H Ford Prefect is a Vogon captain.
- 8,I The Ashcroft's dog is a Doberman Pinscher.
- 8,J The Terror was trapped using a scroll with the KULCAD spell.
- 8,K There are six Guardians of Zork.
- 8,L There are six cars in the Linder garage.
- 8,M There are six members of the Aquadome crew.
- 8,N Veronica Ashcroft's ball was held on Valentine's Day.
- 8,O The animals in the Topiary are

(continued on next page)

- harmless.
- 9,A The artifact's force field projector has four settings.
- 9,B The scroll containing the OZMOO spell is found in the Gallery.
- 9,C According to the Guide, peanuts help replace protein lost during matter transference.
- 9,D One character in *Suspect* is costumed as a giant cockroach.
- 9,E Fort Griffspotter is located near the ocean.
- 9,F The Treasury of Zork contains shares of FrobozzCo stock.
- 9,G There are two Mirror Rooms in *Zork I*.
- 9,H The pills found near Marshall Robner's body were LoBlo.
- 9,I Your lab in *Seastalker* is equipped with a Computestor.
- 9,J The Round Room has five exits; one is to the Loud Room.
- 9,K The first number the band plays in *Suspect* is "Breathless."
- 9,L *Planetfall* includes a brief arcade-style action sequence.
- 9,M The artifact has four docking ports.
- 9,N Floyd's favorite song is "The Ballad of the Starcrossed Miner."
- 9,O The red button in the dam's Maintenance Room turns on the lights.
- 10,A Tor Books distributes four paperbacks based on the *Zork* series.
- 10,B Krill's soul is imprisoned in a tiny crystal jar.
- 10,C The dragon in *Zork II* guards the entrance to the Volcano.
- 10,D Phong is the Robners' butler.
- 10,E *Zork* is a registered trademark of Infocom.
- 10,F Monica's Workshop adjoins the Garage.
- 10,G The Stellar Patrol is a wing of the Fourth Galactic Union.
- 10,H The Wizard of Frobozz wears a fedora.
- 10,I The bartender in *Suspect* is working his way through law school.
- 10,J The AIMFIZ spell is found in *Enchanter*.
- 10,K Only "Doc" Horvak can give you the Universal Tool.
- 10,L Admission to Bozbarland is two zorkmids.
- 10,M The diary in the *Planetfall* package begins on July 22.
- 10,N The Heart of Gold's shipboard computer is named Ralph.
- 10,O The Wizard of Frobozz has a stuffed hawk in his Trophy Room.
- 11,A Rose Ellingsworth lives in Cambridge, MA.
- 11,B In *Zork III*, the waybread is originally found at the Cliff Base.
- 11,C The unicorn has a silver key hanging from its neck.
- 11,D The cover price of *True Tales of Adventure* magazine is \$1.50.
- 11,E The *Scimitar* has two extensor claws.
- 11,F Senator Asher is the first person to find Veronica's body.
- 11,G The INVENTORY command is a feature of every Infocom game.
- 11,H Cabeza Plana and Mareilon were ancient cities of Quendor.
- 11,I The pair of candles in *Zork I*, if extinguished, can be re-lit.
- 11,J You cannot pick up the Linders' cat.
- 11,K An ionic diffusion rasp is located in the Engine Room of the Heart of Gold.
- 11,L Tracks in the snow provide an important clue in *Suspect*.
- 11,M Tracks in the mud provide an important clue in *The Witness*.
- 11,N A seawall protects the mouth of Fropton Bay.
- 11,O Dimwit, Babe, and J. Pierpoint Flathead are mentioned in *Zork II*. **Z**



Above, Steve Meretzky (left) and Douglas Adams at a press conference in New York City to promote *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Below, Dorothy Meretzky (Steve's mother) and Betty Rock (Senior Customer Sales Representative at Infocom) crash the press conference.



### ... Zork (continued from page 7)

less pit. Many users pointed out that a bottomless pit in an attic should be noticeable from the ground floor of the house. Dave came up with the notion of grues, and he wrote their description. From the beginning (or almost the beginning, anyway), the living room had a copy of "US News & Dungeon Report," describing recent changes in the game. All changes were credited to some group of implementers, but not necessarily to those actually responsible: one of the issues describe Bruce working for weeks to fill in all the bottomless pits in the dungeon, thus forcing packs of grues to roam around.

The first major addition to the game, done in June 1977, was the river section, designed and implemented by Marc. It survives largely unchanged in *Zork I*, but illustrates very well the problems of building reality. There were minor problems of consistency — some parts of the

river were sunlit (and even reachable from outside), but others were dark. The major problem resulted from the new concept Marc introduced: vehicles. In the original game, there were rooms, objects, and a player; the player always existed in some room. Vehicles were objects that became, in effect, mobile rooms. This required changes in the (always delicate) interactions among verbs, objects, and rooms (we had to have some way of making "walk" do something reasonable when the player was in the boat). In addition, ever-resourceful Zorkers tried to use the boat anywhere they thought they could. The code for the boat itself was not designed to function outside the river section, but nothing kept the player from carrying the deflated boat to the reservoir and trying to sail across. Eventually the boat was allowed in the reservoir, but the general problem always remained:

anything that changes the world you're modelling changes practically everything in the world you're modelling.

Although *Zork* was only a month old, it could already surprise its authors. The boat, due to the details of its implementation, turned into a "bag of holding": players could put practically anything into it and carry it around, even if the weight of the

contents far exceeded what a player was allowed to carry. The boat was two separate objects: the "inflated boat" object contained the objects, but the player carried the "deflated boat" object around. We knew nothing about this: someone finally reported it to us as a bug. As far as I know, the bug is still there.

[Coming up in the next issue: *Zork Assumes an Alias*.] **Z**

## NEW YORK TIMES PUZZLE

## NUMBER 5

Take a piece of graph paper. Make a grid eleven boxes tall and fifteen boxes wide. Starting at the top left corner, number the horizontal rows from 1 to 11, and letter the vertical columns from A to O.

Below are 165 statements, some true, some false. The "coordinates" before each statement correspond to a box in your grid. The number is the row and the letter is the column. If the statement is true, color in the corresponding box in your grid. If the statement is false, leave that box blank.

When you have finished, your grid will contain a picture, message, or graphic of some kind that evokes a particular location in a particular Infocom game. To correctly answer the puzzle, just put the name of the location and the name of the game in the answer space below.

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1,A The unicorn is never seen in the Carousel Room.                | 1,L Floyd's friend Lazarus was a cleaning robot.                              | 2,H Richard Ashcroft is Veronica's older brother.                                | 3,E Infocom's technical hotline is (617) 576-3190.                           |
| 1,B The first rod you find on the alien artifact is the black rod. | 1,M The Chamber of Ra has an altar and five exits.                            | 2,I The Summer '84 <i>New York Times</i> was printed on white paper.             | 3,F Cochrane went to the ball costumed as an astronaut.                      |
| 1,C There is only one exit from the Room of Nephthys.              | 1,N The orange cable is found inside Fred.                                    | 2,J McGinty smokes a pipe.   | 3,G Tricia MacMillan is a native of Earth.                                   |
| 1,D Baxter is Marshall Robner's brother-in-law.                    | 1,O There are four tents in the encampment in <i>Infidel</i> ™.               | 2,K <i>Enchanter</i> InvisiClues is the longest of Infocom's hint booklets.      | 3,H Transit Control Area and Skywalk Gamma are joined by a sloping corridor. |
| 1,E The KULCAD spell can be used only once.                        | 2,A Waldo, Poet and Whiz all think Iris is cute.                              | 2,L The two chalices in the temple alcoves have the same weight.                 | 3,I The GONDAR spell quenches fire.  |
| 1,F The parrot in the Shanty has a peg leg.                        | 2,B Marshall Robner was killed on the night of July 8, 1982.                  | 2,M The number of the escape pod you use in <i>Planetfall</i> ™ is 42.           | 3,J <i>Zork III</i> takes place in the year 948 GUE.                         |
| 1,G The lever in the Cryogenic Area revives a clone of you.        | 2,C Mr. McNabb's first name is Alvin.   | 2,N The <i>Mary Margaret</i> and the <i>Night Wind</i> are identically equipped. | 3,K Zoe Bly is the Commander of the Aquadome.                                |
| 1,H The thief will never steal the platinum bar.                   | 2,D The famous Gabriellic Hyphenated Woman can be found on Accardi-2.         | 2,O Three people have solved the "Impossible" version of <i>Suspended</i> .      | 3,L The gold coin in <i>Cutthroats</i> depicts King Peter II of Spain.       |
| 1,I Infocom released five new games in each of 1983 and 1984.      | 2,E <i>Seastalker</i> is a collaboration between Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence. | 3,A <i>Deadline</i> was released before <i>Zork III: The Dungeon Master</i> .    | 3,M King Duncanthrax was an ancestor of Lord Dimwit Flathead.                |
| 1,J The rainbow turtle is discovered on the beach.                 | 2,F The Winding Stair climbs the northeast tower of Entharion's castle.       | 3,B Monica Linder has a friend named Terry.                                      | 3,N Gurthark-tun-besnap resembles a giant mouse.                             |
| 1,K The Glass Maze has 27 compartments.                            | 2,G Bozbarland has two roller coasters.                                       | 3,C The <i>Planetfall</i> package contains three post cards.                     | ...more <b>Puzzle #5</b> on page 10  |
|  |   | 3,D Frank Webster was your boss in   |  |

## Puzzle #3

The Solution  
and  
The Winners

see page 10

ANSWER: Location \_\_\_\_\_

Game \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt Size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTEST RULES:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by July 1, 1985.
3. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

## PRIZE:

A *New York Times* Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

RETURN TO: Infocom  
N.Z.T. Puzzle  
55 Wheeler Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

INFOCOM™

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## Wishbringer™: The Story of Your Dreams

Festeron's not a bad place to live. It's a little seaside town with a picturesque church, a charming old-fashioned movie theater and a sparkling bay. There's that famous tourist attraction, Pleasure Wharf, and the Free Public Library with its collection of historic artifacts. There's even a miniature lighthouse.

The only thing Festeron doesn't have is a couple of dragons or princesses to spice things up. But that's okay. You spend a lot of time daydreaming, creating a Magick world that you can visit whenever you want. The only problem is your boss, Mr. Crisp, who always shows up when you're just about to polish off the dragon.

Mr. Crisp doesn't spice up your life — he's more like a thorn than a dragon. But as mail clerk, you do what he tells you to do, whether it's selling a stamp or delivering a letter. And, strangely enough, it's the letter he asks you to deliver one day that makes your life in good old Festeron as exciting as your dreams.

Here at Infocom, we like to turn fantasies into reality. In *Wishbringer*, our newest introductory-level fantasy, you are the Festeron mail clerk seeking the extraordinary in the land of the picturesque.

The special-delivery letter Mr. Crisp asks you to take to Ye Olde Magick Shoppe turns out to be a ransom note from the mysterious Evil One. The Magick Shoppe owner's beloved cat has been

kidnapped, and the ransom is an enchanted stone called Wishbringer.

When you leave the Magick Shoppe, after agreeing to help its proprietress find her cat, the charming world of Festeron has disappeared, familiar people and places gone or twisted into sinister forms. Goldfish have turned into piranhas, trolls guard bridges, grues lurk in caves, and your little post office has become a fortress-like tower. Overseeing this skewed environment is the Evil One and her omnipresent henchmen, the Boot Patrol.

As you venture through the grotesque realm of the Evil One, you'll befriend mythic creatures and evade the traps that have been set for you. And, like the Magick sword of your daydreams, the Wishbringer stone will be there to give you help when you need it.

According to legend, Wishbringer holds seven Magick wishes. The wishes, which are listed in *The Legend of Wishbringer* booklet included in the package, may each be used only once. To invoke a wish, you must have both the Wishbringer stone and a specified object in hand. For example, "LUCK will bring good fortune, if ye hold a Horseshoe and the Stone in thy possession."

You can solve all the puzzles in *Wishbringer* by logic alone. When used in this way, the story is a challenge for experienced interactive

. . . *Wishbringer*  
continued on page 5



Included in every *Wishbringer* package are a sealed envelope containing the ransom note and a glowing *Wishbringer* stone.

## Mail Order: Fulfillment Beyond Your Wildest Dreams

Having trouble finding *Starcross™*, *InvisiClues™* or *Enchanter™* for your Osborne? Many of our readers have made use of our direct order service. Every game and *InvisiClues* booklet we make is available by calling our toll-free order number, (800) 262-6868, or by mailing your order to:

Infocom, Inc.  
P.O. Box 478  
Cresskill, NJ 07626

Unfortunately, in the past some of the orders were mixed-up or slow to be processed.

We have moved our fulfillment service to a different company (note the new address) and we are confident that their service will be both accurate and speedy. (Most orders should be processed and shipped within 24 hours of receipt. That rivals even the old Zork Users Group!)

We apologize for any inconvenience our previous fulfillment service may have caused you and assure you that from now on no effort will be spared to provide you with the service you expect and deserve. ☑

## Don't Stick This in Your Ear . . .

Admit it. You were excited when you first got your very own interactive fiction version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy™*, weren't you? You can't fool us — we know you wore your peril-sensitive sunglasses while driving, and nobody could get you to take your "DON'T PANIC" button off for weeks — you even wore it in the shower (painful, but it was worth it). Now there's a safer, more socially acceptable way to show your excitement about *Hitchhiker's*, with an

official Infocom "I GOT THE BABEL FISH" t-shirt.

These 100% cotton t-shirts are black with the same bright lettering as the front of your *Hitchhiker's* game package. They come in 4 sizes (S, M, L, and XL), and are available directly from Infocom (you may use the enclosed order form, or call our toll-free number [800-262-6868]). The price? Just \$7.95. And considering how excited you must be about this, we're sure you'll want two or three! ☑

## InfoNews Roundup

### Party Tricks

A sumptuous mansion in Las Vegas, once owned by Elvis (Presley, not Flathead). A party with nearly a thousand guests, sipping drinks and discussing everything from politics to local scandals. A band serenading the crowds in the ballroom.

Suddenly a scream, and shots ring out. Moments later, a body is found,

shot twice in the chest, near the indoor swimming pool. Examination reveals that the victim has a knife wound in his back; yet strangulation is indicated by marks around his neck. A red drink nearby turns out to be a banana daiquiri with red food coloring added.

Everyone at the party immediately becomes a suspect. Other . . . *InfoNews* continued on page 5

## MAIL BAG

### To "Max the Knife" Dornbrook:

You know, Max, back when you were running the Zork Users Group (ahh, for the good old days) you were a real down to earth guy. But since you were hired at Infocom and given a cushy job as Product Manager (sneer) you seem to have forgotten about the little people (i.e., the type of people that CompuNews [double-sneer] ignores in its polls). And what the little people want is yaks. Back in the Fall 1984 issue when you started printing Yak Facts, I hoped that you might come down off your high horse long enough to do something to correct the severe paucity of yak news in computer gaming newsletters. But then you go and cancel the Yak Facts. It's still not too late, Max, and if you correct this grievous error the little people may just go back to calling you Mike.

On the lighter side, I would like to congratulate everyone at Infocom for their successes. So far I have played eleven games and have enjoyed them all very much, except that a yak doesn't appear in a single one! Anyway, keep up the good work.

Mike Zulauf

P.S. Please print this in *The New Zork Times*; this must be brought out in the open!

### Dear Editor:

I just received my Winter 1985 edition of *The New Zork Times*, and, needless to say, I was excited. I look forward to each and every issue. But as I read this one, I saw the most distressing headline I have ever read: "Max Sacks Yak Facts." How could you do this?? If your defense is the survey mentioned, I must remind you that the average Zorker is not like the average person in a magazine survey. Some people actually rely upon yak facts for their very existence. I therefore believe that I speak for many other NZT readers when I say THE WORLD NEEDS MORE YAK FACTS! Perhaps even an interactive yak game is in order. To demonstrate the importance of the yak in daily life, I have included these facts that need desperately to be more widely known:

1) The typical yak is much, much larger than the typical housecat (and much, much more useful).

2) Well-instructed yaks can be used for such purposes as transportation, grinding coffee, and dragging large rocks through marshy fields.

3) If purchased for business purposes, yaks can become tax exemptions.

These are just a few of the important things that your readers could benefit from in the "Yak Facts" column. But fortunately, this omission is but a very minor (and hopefully temporary) flaw in your

terrific newsletter and line of interactive fiction.

James Funkhouser

### Dear Info-Folks or editor (as you please):

Recently, upon arrival of your Winter '85 issue of *The New Zork Times*, my wife and I were surprised by the scathing article, "Max Sacks Yak Facts." We were shocked! I guess we fall into the lonely 0.1% who like to read "a significant amount about yaks."

It seemed so long ago that we were delighted by these Yak Facts in the Fall '84 issue. The Mrs. and I were sure that the new issue would hold more of these wondrous facts, only to be slapped in the face by your yak-hating editors.

So a final farewell to those good ole days of yak (?), we offer these final bits of yak facts:

Did you know that...

... Flood Control Dam #3 is as tall as 42 large bull yaks.

... a good yak can be purchased for less than 200 zorkmids.

... the word "yak" can be worth up to 30 points in Scrabble™ (sorry, this is from the pre-Zork days.)

W. Scott Kardel

P.S. Why are there no yaks in the topiary?

### Ode to a Planetfall Player

Planetfall is a wonderful game, After I played it, I wasn't the same. The Stellar Patrol is invincible, With their ships made of steel and lead.

Their motto is: To Boldly Go Where Angels Fear To Tread.

### Ode to a Zork Player

The roses have lost their luster, And I have lost my love.

The heavens have lost their moonlight,

And all the stars above.

The sky is plagued with darkness, The orchids rot with rue.

The world is dark and meaningless, I've been eaten by a grue.

—Jared A. Sorensen  
(sixth grade)

Beneath the rug my adventure began The way was fraught with danger and reward

Vanquish a troll and find the shadow man

A score of treasure found, safely stored.

Unto the Wizard's realm I then did go,

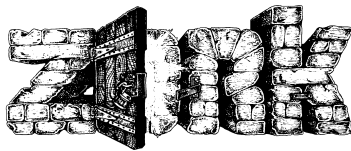
Melting the great dragon to gain the key.

Turn out the light and follow the dim glow

Open the door, a well fought victory! The quest however is not at an end,

... Mail Bag continued on page 8

## Come Work In Beautiful



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To find out about job opportunities at Infocom, please send your resume to Donna McCarron, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. We are an equal opportunity employer.

## The New Zork® Times

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Wishbringer Editor	Elizabeth "Eliz" Langosy
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# INFOCOM

# The History of Zork — SECOND IN A SERIES

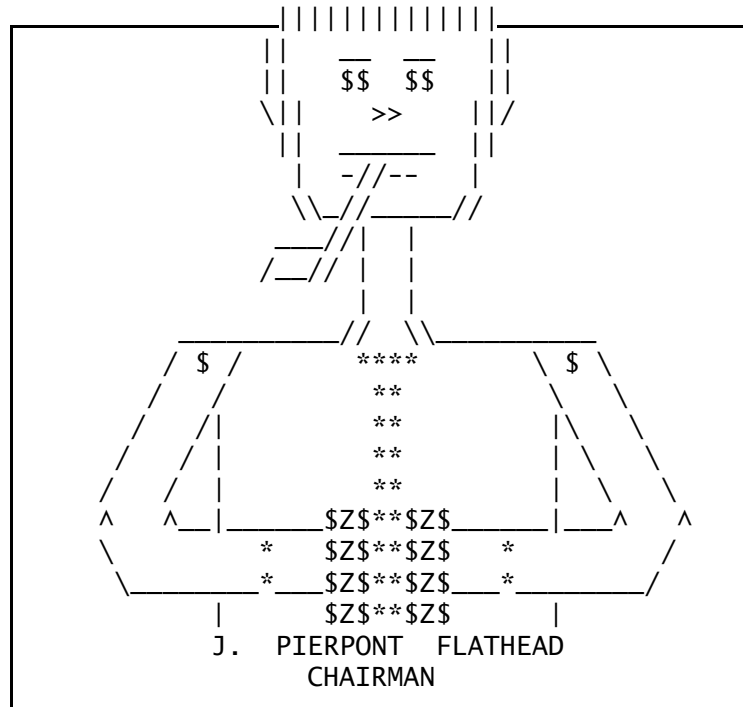
by Tim Anderson

When last seen, Zork® was a small game (probably slightly more than half the size of the final mainframe version) that ran on one computer. Although it was only six weeks old, and had never been advertised, it had a relatively large user community from all over the country. In some ways it was better than the classic *Adventure* at this time, but mostly it was the next game to come along, and it wasn't even the only contender.

The characters: MIT-DM, a PDP-10 running ITS; MDL (aka Muddle), a language that ran only on PDP-10s; Marc Blank, Bruce Daniels, Dave Lebling, and Tim Anderson, intrepid implementers; and assorted net randos.

July 1977 saw two major additions to the game, the last for several months (we weren't exactly hired to write the thing, after all). The first of these was another BKD special: Bruce didn't write much code, but he was willing to design problems. We went to him, and asked for a particularly nasty section; the result was the coal mine. His design was originally nastier than the final implementation, since the maze was just about as horrible as the original one in the game; it got simplified due to popular demand. The problems were improving in quality, and the coal mine maze was a late example of making things hard by making them tedious.

The volcano section was Marc's second vehicle implementation, but is perhaps more noteworthy for the loving portraits of Lord Dimwit Flathead the Excessive that decorated the coin and stamp found in the section. The river (see Part I) and volcano sections, in addition to vehicles, required a better concept of time: both the boat and the balloon moved more or less on their own, and the volcano required the use of explosives and fuses. Marc added a clock daemon, which processed a queue of events that would happen some fixed number of moves later. This handled, in addition to the movement of the vehicles, the fuse, the lantern burning out, and the mysterious gnomes that occasionally appear. The first of these was in the



volcano: if the player got trapped in the upper reaches of the volcano by losing his balloon, after a few moves a volcano gnome would appear and offer freedom in exchange for a treasure. We were just being nice; most players weren't allowed to save their games, so they had no way of backing out if they made such a mistake. The gnome allowed them to keep playing, albeit with no chance of getting all the points.

Even before the volcano section, we'd talked about a problem that involved flying; Dave had a preference for something with an eagle, and its aerie, but we could never figure out how to restrict things enough — it wouldn't do to have a parallel map of the game viewed from the air. Once again, we worried about restraining a new concept, so the balloon had no way of leaving the volcano. And once again we were bitten by a new concept. When the player used the explosives in the wrong place, and didn't get out of the way, he'd end up with 20,000 pounds (or was it tons?) of rock on his head. This made a certain amount of sense in the underground section, but not out in the forest.

No more sections were added to the game for several months after July, but it continued to improve. In

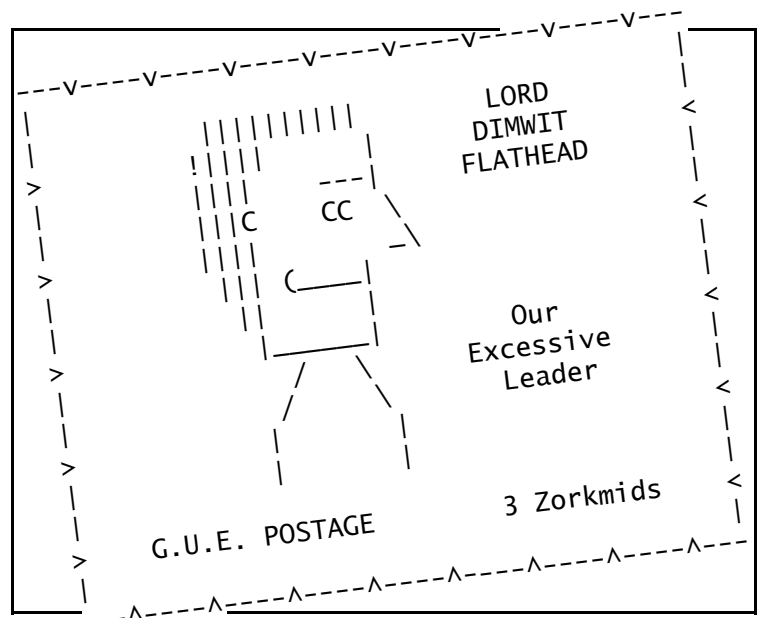
addition, it finally moved to machines other than DM, thus greatly expanding the number of players.

Although Muddle ran primarily on DM, a version for TENEX (the most popular PDP-10 operating system on the ARPAnet) had existed for some time; the TENEX version could, with some minor modifications, run on TOPS-20 as well. We finally succumbed to one of the requests for a copy of *Zork* when we were given

an account on a TOPS-20 machine on the net. After we made the necessary software modifications, of course, many copies could be made; a mailing list of *Zork* owners developed, so they could get whatever updates appeared.

Although people could get runnable *Zorks*, they couldn't get sources. We tried two approaches to protecting the sources (remember, there was no protection of any sort on DM): they were normally kept encrypted; and we patched the system to protect the directory where we kept the sources (named CFS, for either "Charles F. Stanley" or "Computer Fantasy and Simulation"). This worked pretty well, but was finally beaten by a system hacker from Digital: using some archaic ITS documentation (there's never been any other kind), he was able to figure out how to modify the running operating system. Being clever, he was also able to figure out how our patch to protect the source directory worked. Then it was just a matter of decrypting the sources, but that was soon reduced to figuring out the key we'd used. Ted had no trouble getting machine time; he just found a new TOPS-20 machine that was undergoing final testing, and started a program that tried every key until it got something that looked like text. After less than a day of

...History of Zork  
continued on page 4



# The History of Zork

*continued from page 3*

crunching, he had a readable copy of the source. We had to concede that anyone who'd go to that much trouble deserved it. This led to some other things later on.

Players hadn't been able to save their *Zorks* because the method we used at first took several hundred thousand bytes for each save, and even on a time-sharing system that was excessive. Marc, around this time, invented a new way of saving that cut the size down to something more reasonable, with the slight disadvantages that any new rooms or objects added to the old game would break existing save files, and that it never quite worked right anyway. However, it did make it easier to play the game, and we still had the silly notion of being nice to our users.

Fall '77 saw two major additions to the game, as Marc took another break from medical school (yes, fans, he did graduate on time), and Dave got into coding in a big way. The *Alice in Wonderland* section, complete with its magic bucket and robot, was installed. The robot was the first "actor," an object that could perform some of the same tasks the player could. The style of address was familiar: "ROBOT, TAKE THE CAKE." The implementation of this required another change in the game's flow of control, and changes to anything else that one could reasonably talk to.

The first version of fighting was added about the same time. Dave, an old *Dungeons and Dragons* player, didn't like the completely predictable ways of killing creatures off. In the original game, for example, one killed a troll by throwing a knife at him; he would catch the knife and gleefully eat it (like anything else you threw at him), but hemorrhage as a result. Dave added basically the full complexity of DD-style fighting, with different strengths for different weapons, wounds, unconsciousness, and death. Each creature had its own set of messages, so a fight with the thief (who uses a stiletto) would be very different from a fight with the troll and his axe.

As a result of the purloined sources at DEC, a lunatic there decided to translate *Zork* into FORTRAN. We had always assumed this would be

impossible: Muddle is very (oops, *very*) different from FORTRAN, and *much* more complicated, and we'd used most of its features in designing *Zork*. The guy who did it was mostly a hardware person, so perhaps he didn't know what he was up against. At any rate, shortly after the Great Blizzard of '78 he had a working version, initially for PDP-11s. Since it was in FORTRAN, it could run on practically anything, and by now it has.

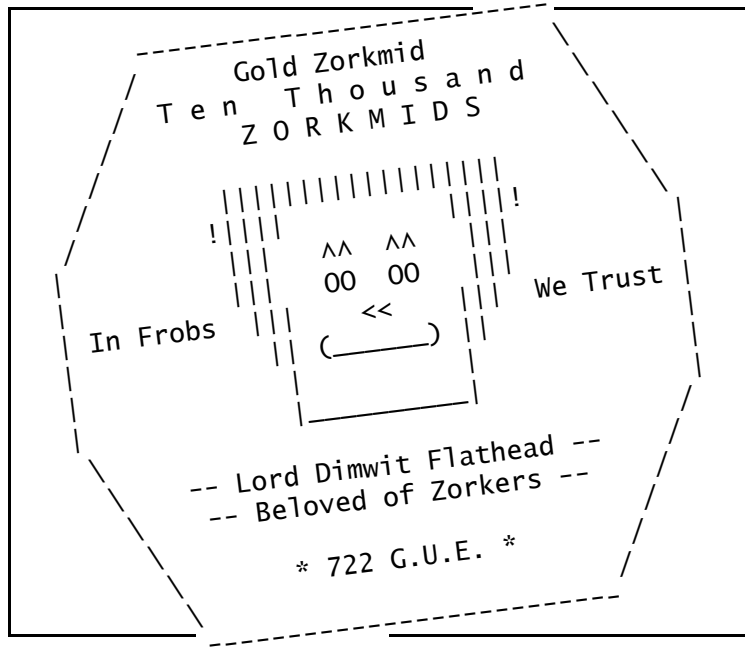
Unfortunately, at some point in the

game, etc., etc., etc. Silly as it sounds, we eventually started calling it *Dungeon*. (Dave admits to suggesting the new name, but that's only a minor sin.) When Bob the lunatic released his FORTRAN version to the DEC users' group, that was the name he used. I'm sure many people have noticed a curious similarity between the *Dungeon* game they played on their friendly IBM 4341 and the *Zork I* they played on their equally friendly IBM PC; now you know why.

We didn't agree (and MIT had some very expensive lawyers on retainer who agreed with us), but it encouraged us to do the right thing, and not hide our *Zorks* under a bushel.

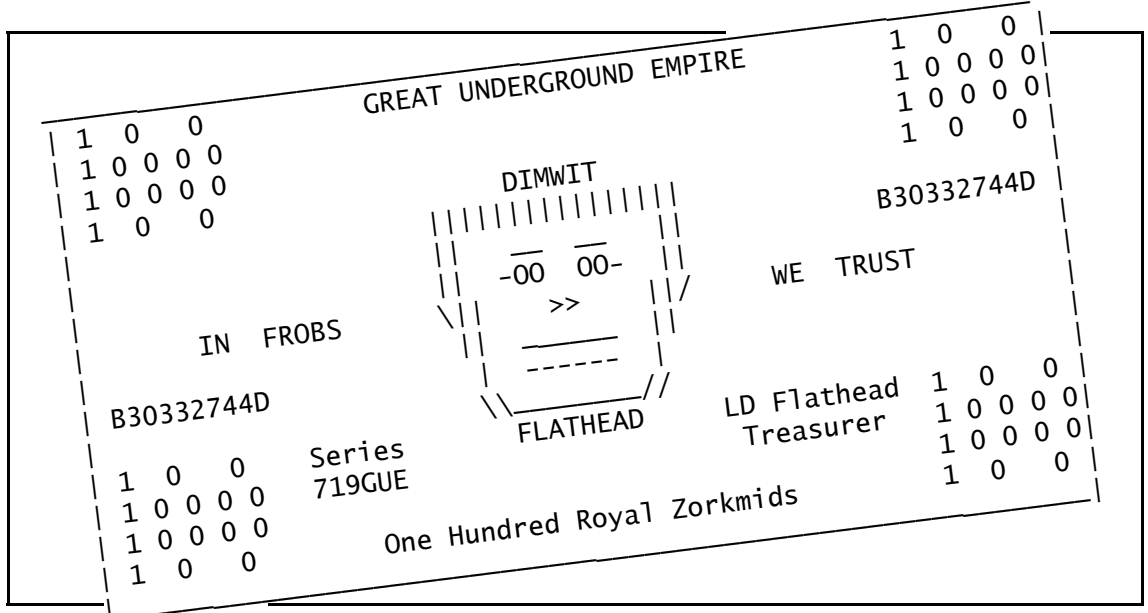
The next section that was added was intended to be the last: after a player had accumulated all the points in the game, he could play the End Game, designed largely by Dave. This became the section of *Zork III* with the Dungeon Master, and at the time was certainly the most involved, and hardest (as it should have been) thing in the game. The implementation was, if anything, more involved than the problem. Less than two months later, though, Marc had come up with something worse, probably during a boring anatomy lecture. The bank section has probably been fully deciphered by fewer people than anything else in the game; even those who solve it on their own don't usually understand what was going on. I can only say that it makes sense if you understand it.

For some time, we'd been getting bug reports, fan mail, and suggestions for new problems from all sorts of people. We were beginning to run a little short on ideas anyway, and one of the ideas we got was very good. During a lengthy dinner at Roy's, our favorite Chinese restaurant, we worked out the details of the jewel-encrusted egg, purple prose courtesy of Dave. Many people on the net had long since solved the game, but went back in and did any new problems that came along; one of them had played DD with Dave, and called him up about a day after the egg was announced. "I've gotten

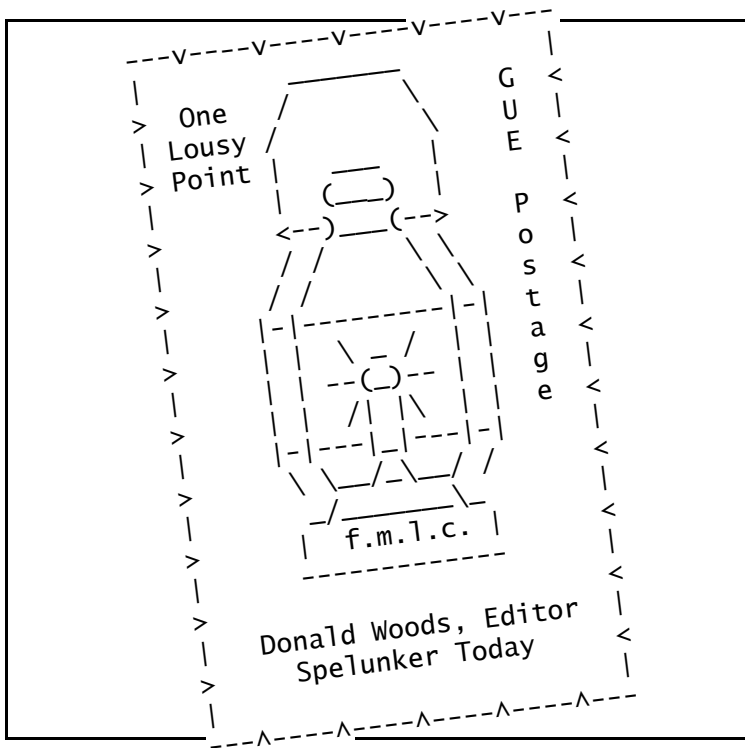


preceding year we (no one will now admit to suggesting the idea) had decided to change the name of the game. *Zork* was too much of a nonsense word, not descriptive of the

Fortunately for us, a certain company (which shall remain nameless) decided to claim that it had trademark rights to the name *Dungeon*, as a result of certain games that it sold.



As a result of the purloined sources at DEC, a lunatic there decided to translate *Zork* into FORTRAN. We had always assumed this would be



the egg opened, but I assume you losers have some nonsense where you do something with the canary and the songbird." Dave, no fool, said "Cough, cough, ahem, of course," and immediately went off and added the brass bauble.

The remaining puzzles, the Royal Zork Puzzle Museum and the palantirs, were added in the late summer and fall of 1978. The puzzle was designed (several times) primarily by Bruce, who in theory was back trying to finish his dissertation. Finding the minimum number of moves required to solve it was a popular pastime among dedicated Zorkers for a while.

The last (lousy) point was a tribute to the final point in the original *Adventure*, which involved leaving a particular object in a particular room for no particular reason. When we first solved *Adventure* in 1977, Bruce finally figured this out by using a machine-language debugger on the running game (since *Adventure* was not written in machine language, this was not easy). The major difference between that and our version (a stamp worth One Lousy point) is that it would be harder to find ours without the source of the game.

The last puzzle was added in February of '79. We (mainly I, at this point) kept fixing bugs for almost

two more years — the last mainframe update was created in January of '81. No new puzzles were added because none of the implementers had time or inclination, and because we had no more space available: at the time, we were limited to a megabyte of memory, and we had used it all up. The first article about *Zork* appeared in April of '79, and attracted a great deal of interest; some of this may have been because we offered to give people the game (if they didn't already have it), and gave them parts of the sacred sources as well.

Infocom was incorporated in 1979 by various people from the DM group, including Marc, Dave, and me. It was not founded to sell *Zork*; rather, it was founded to give group members somewhere to go from MIT. Marc and Joel Berez (both exiled to Pittsburgh) determined that it would be possible to make *Zork* run on something cheaper than the \$400,000 PDP-10, and the company eventually went along. See the next NZT for further details.

In the meantime, we still get requests for hints on the mainframe *Zork* (sometimes it's called *Dungeon*, and often it's running on something other than a PDP-10). The most recent request for a copy came in on April 1, but I think it was serious. **Z**

... InfoNews

*continued from page 5*

guests' arguments with the victim are remembered and denied. Clues, motives, and accusations are exchanged.

Is this another Infocom game, where you play the detective or the dupe? Is Sergeant Duffy waiting in the wings? Can you buy *InvisiClues* to figure this one out?

Hardly. The party was hosted by Infocom (who else?), to promote its most recent mystery game, *Suspect*<sup>™</sup>. Retailers, distributors, and lots of press were in town to attend the January 1985 CES (the Consumer Electronics Show, not the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers). With the help of a New York troupe of actors named Murder To Go, Inc., Infocom staged a crime and let the party guests become participants in solving the murder.

Sound like fun? It was; it was almost as much fun as *Suspect*.

Kudos

Sure, you've heard it a million times: Infocom is the best. Well, be warned: you're about to hear it again.

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* has been called "without doubt the best adventure ever seen on a computer." Who said that? Not Binky O'Leary (he hated the game). Not Mozart (he died before he could figure out the babel fish problem). No, it was some little-known start-up newspaper called *The Times of London*, on March 12, 1985. Cheers!

Admit it: you read *People* magazine. You read it at home; you read it at the dentist's office; you read it while waiting on (or in) the check-out line at the supermarket. So in the March 18, 1985, issue, you saw the article about Infocom games in the "Picks & Pans" section (we were,

you remember, a "pick"). You read that (in the reviewer's words) "there's a refreshing side to interactive fiction: It lets you use your imagination, instead of reflexes, and stimulates you to build pictures in your mind, instead of leaving them in flat dimensions on the screen." Infocom is glad you saw that article, so it doesn't have to tell you about it.

Finally, this headline from the November 22, 1984, Salt Lake City *Tribune*: "New Software By Infocom Isn't Boring." Oh well; you can't please everyone.

Wave Bye-Bye, Junior

A very, very long time ago (Spring 1984), Infocom announced its first "junior-level" game: *Seastalker*<sup>™</sup>, an adventure in the tradition of Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. *Seastalker* was a success. *People* magazine (remember them?) called *Seastalker* "a first-class introduction," and said "Though pitched to the junior set (9 and up), *Seastalker* can just as easily enthrall an oldster."

But some people didn't like the designation "junior-level." It sounded like it was for children only. Adults didn't want a kid's game; in fact, *kids* didn't want a kid's game. So Infocom went back to the (all-text) drawing boards.

Introducing (drumroll, please) "introductory level"! Infocom's first introductory-level game is *Wishbringer*, a new fantasy story in which your home town becomes a living nightmare. It's not just for kids: *Wishbringer* is a great introduction to interactive fiction for *everyone* from age 9 up. So tell your friends — whether they're macho linebackers, adventurous grandmothers, or just someone looking for

*...InfoNews continued on page 8*

... Wishbringer

*continued from page 1*

fiction fans. First-time players will appreciate having the Magick wishes to help them out.

Along with *The Legend of Wishbringer*, each *Wishbringer* package includes a postal map of Festeron and a sealed special-delivery letter (the same one Mr.

Crisp asks you to deliver at the start of the story). You even get your very own glow-in-the-dark *Wishbringer* stone.

*Wishbringer* was written by Brian Moriarty, a new member of Infocom's in-house group of interactive fiction writers. It will retail for \$39.95 for most systems. **Z**



Two assistants pour over an exciting new discovery: papyrus scrolls depicting writings and artwork. Could these be the work of emus?



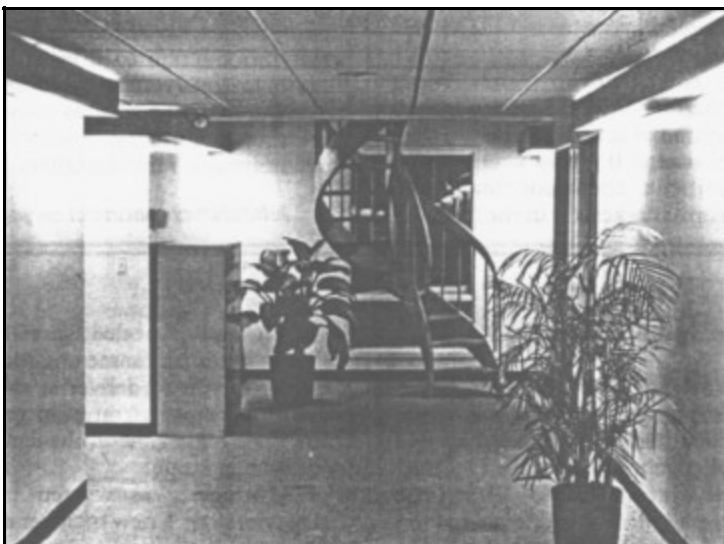
Doctor Feep supervises a crew of local diggers.



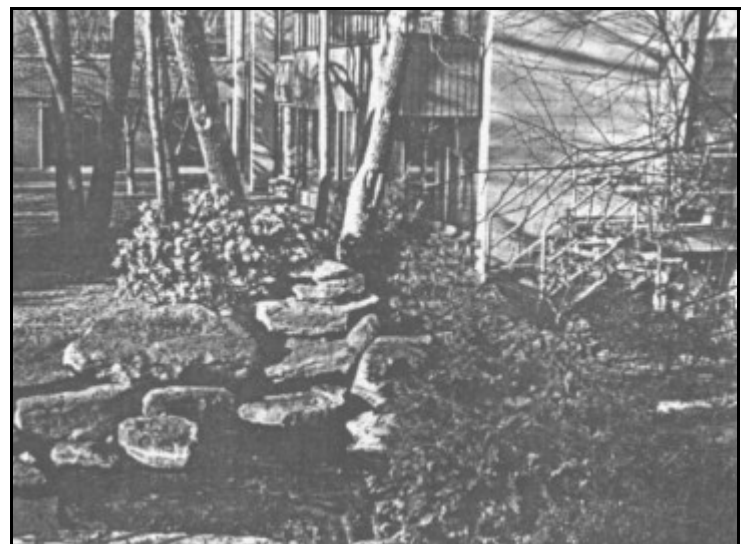
Sunset over the stark plains of the Ben Lomond plateau.

## Searching for the Relics of the Emu

This month, *New Zork Times* photographer Paul Gross followed Doctor Lyman Izyuk Feep during a field trip to Tasmania. Doctor Feep is an expert on the emu, a flightless bird which was exterminated by European settlers hundreds of years ago. He travelled "down under" in order to research his theory, which claims that before their extinction, Tasmanian emus had achieved a tool-based civilization equal to that of medieval man.



Diggers seek shade from the scorching noontime sun.

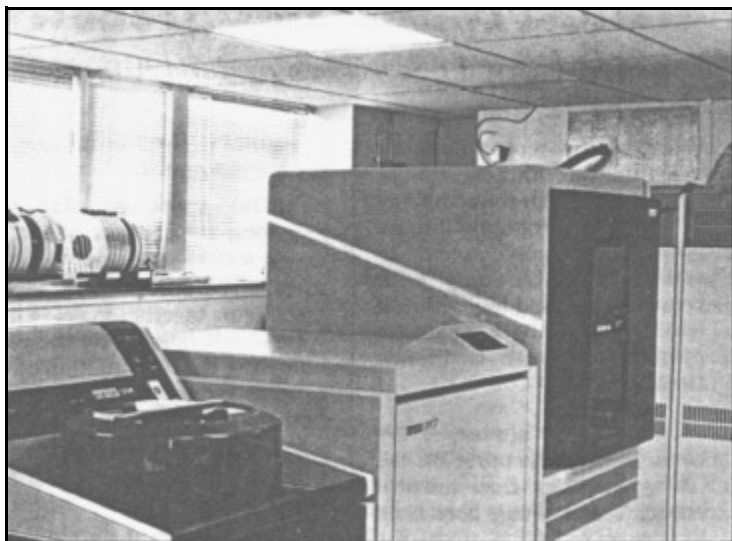


Doctor Feep, surrounded by several guards and his therapist, boards the plane back for the return trip to America.

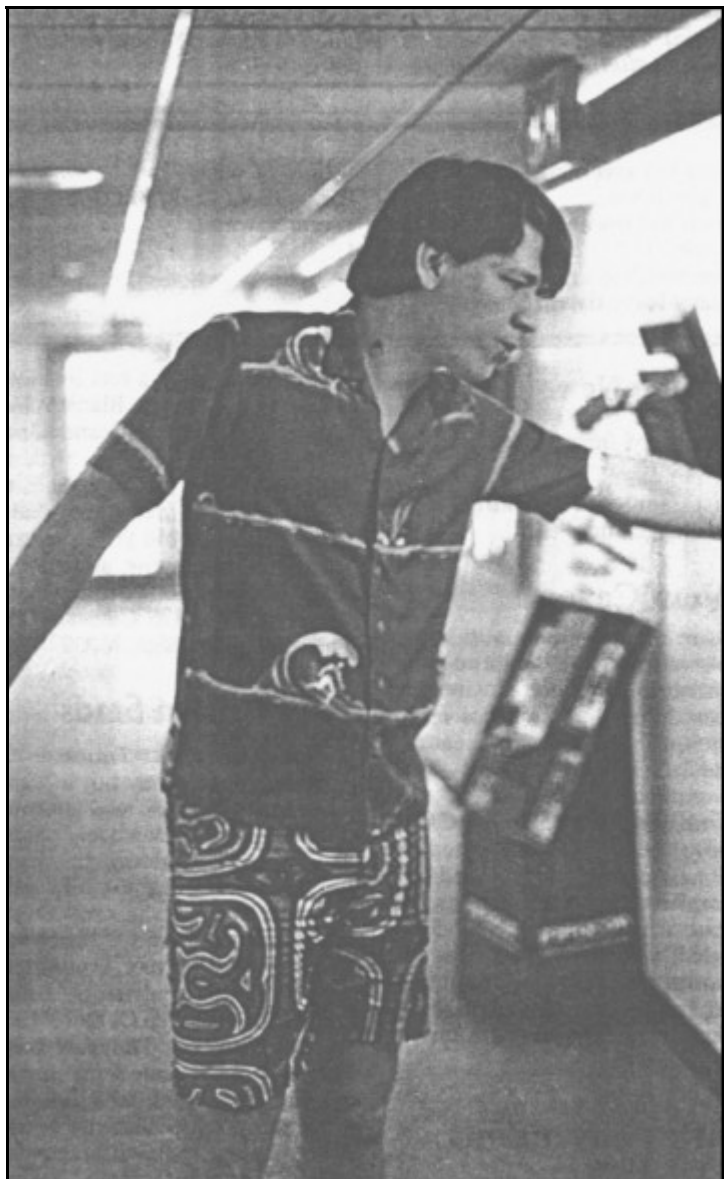




After dinner, crew members quaff flagons of "qisslepou", a local ale.



Professor Edward Wilsonfoot, from the Archaeology Department of the University of Sydney, exchanges heated words with Doctor Feep.



A surprise visitor to the encampment, a full-grown kangaroo, startles Melinda Feep.



A poisonous asp, one of the dangers of the treacherous Tasmanian mountain ranges that the archaeological crew must constantly be on watch fro.



In the midst of an excavation, Doctor Feep (wearing the black sombrero) points to the outline of the walls of a fortified emu temple, visible in the photo as dark, linear markings in the soil.



# Music From The Great Underground Empire

(reprinted from U.S. News and Dungeon Report, 9/18/951)

Because of the recent craze of treasure-hunting that seems to have swept through the remnants of the Great Underground Empire (GUE), most people seem to associate the GUE only with jewels and gold, and forget that it was once a thriving kingdom of people, replete with traditions, culture, and art.

For example, almost every book or classroom course on the GUE ignores its fine musical heritage. This heritage goes back to the very earliest years of the GUE. Zilbo III, the last ruler of the Entharion Dynasty, who is most known for his invention of the card game Double Fanucci, is also the inventor of the brass Trombuoy, and wrote several sonatas for Trombuoy and Danvic-

torhorn.

The most popular music among the masses of the GUE was a type known as rock music, so-called because it was produced by banging together rocks (which were left lying all over the place following the construction of the caverns and tunnels of the GUE) and also because listeners frequently stuffed rocks in their ears due to the loud volumes involved.

The origins of the GUE's rock music can be traced to the legendary singer Elvis Flathead, whose first concert in 841 propelled him to stardom. However, the most famous rock musicians were undoubtedly Sgt. Duffy's Lonely

Hearts Club Band. Their songs include "I Get By With a Little Hint From My Friends" ("Would you be mad if I showed you a bug/Would you stand up and log out on me?") and "Sandy Cave" ("Sandy Cave is in my ears and in my eyes/There beneath the Frigid River skies").

A later addition to the GUE's rock music scene was a group called Men at Zork, whose hit song "Down Under" revitalized interest in the medium ("So you come from a land down under/Where trolls kill and thieves plunder"). Another popular rock artist was Billy Troll. (*Editor's Note: As a matter of fact, Infocom President Troll Berez is named after him.*) Other important rock musicians of the GUE were a

group named Jefferson Bucket (later re-named Jefferson Balloon) and a cute robot named Pink Floyd.

For the royal elite, more classical styles of music were in vogue. The most famous of these works is the "Tocatta and Fugue and Theme and Variations, Opus No. 69105" by Johann Sebastian Flathead, commissioned by his cousin, Lord Dimwit the Excessive. The piece was only performed once in its entirety, in 787. Legend has it that several members of the 98,000-piece royal orchestra, chorus, corps de ballet, artillery battery, fireworks brigade, and smoke effects crew failed to survive the eighty-seven day ordeal. Z

## ... Mail Bag

*continued from page 2*

The Dungeon Master waits with  
clever tricks,  
Defeat him and with none do you  
contend,  
Deep in the heart contentment does  
transfix.  
Thus the end of my odyssey draws  
nigh  
I finish proud of deed and spirits  
high.

—John Betz

'Tis sad I am  
That my new disc  
Has ceased to boot  
Oh tsk Oh tsk  
I used it once  
On Christmas Day  
Now it won't work  
When I would play  
If I have caused  
The tribulation  
By careless disk drive  
Operation  
Then I must pay  
The dollars five  
If once again  
I wish to strive  
To beat Suspended  
With aplomb

I NEED THE HELP OF INFOCOM

—Bryan Hubbard

Zorkers are great, Zorkers are cool,  
Zorkers know not to swim in the  
pool.

Zorkers are clever, sneaky, and sly,  
And only Zorkers know why...

When to come in, when to go out,  
What to do in case of a bout  
Between trolls, thieves, dragons, and  
bats,

And how to use the old place mats.  
We travel the land, the water, and  
air,

And rely on intelligence in case of a  
scare.

We do many things, no matter the  
risk,

And to think this great world is just  
on a disk.

We have conquered the thief, dragon,  
and troll,

But our final challenge will be my  
goal.

To reach the master, as he sits in his  
seat,

The man, all this time, I've wanted to  
meet.

Will he praise me, slay me or call me  
a rookie?

Will he reach in his pocket and give  
me a cookie

For the very hard job of reaching his  
house?

Will he kick me out? Turn me into a  
mouse?

I guess time will tell in this situation  
I just hope I can stand all the  
frustration!

I am not giving up, Master, you'll see

With the trouble you've caused me,  
you won't get off free!

I now leave these meaningful lines of  
verse,

For, without Zork, life would be  
much worse!

—Eric Larson  
(age 16)

## ... InfoNews

*continued from page 5*

a challenge and a thrill.

## New Caverns

Recent improvements in lighting technology have reduced the number of Infoworkers eaten by grues. Infocom thus needs more spacious caverns to accommodate its growing staff. A new cavern has been found, at 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. Mapping of the new cavern has not yet been completed, but early reports indicate a large number of oddly-angled rooms. The offices of chairman Al Vezza and president Joel Berez are rumored to have been designed by Lord Dimwit the Excessive.

## Zork Convention

Infocom may be hosting a Zork Convention later this year, open to all adventurers, sleuths, wizards, and Stellar Patrol members. Meet a real live Dornbeast; call Marc Blank

"Mark Blanc" to his face; learn all sorts of Infotrivia; hobnob with the game writers, the Infopeople, and your fellow fans. Interested? What else would you like to see or do? Let us know, and we'll see what we can do. Write to: InfoConvention, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. Z

## Stan's Ban Stands

"The New Zork Times is a specialty newsletter, not a high-class magazine." So said Infocom Product Manager Michael "Stan" Dornbrook, defending his controversial decision to keep yak news out of the respected Cambridge-based journal. Despite public outcry, protest letters, and a petition from WOOLLY (Women Of Outer Latvia Loving Yaks), *The New Zork Times* will continue its policy of no yak facts. "Yak fans will just have to make do with the yearly yak issue of *Sports Illustrated*," said Stan. (Actually, Michael Dornbrook's nickname is "Mike" or "Max." But "Stan" made a better headline.) Z

# Starcrossed Adventurer Queries Author

## Gentlemen:

I would like to make some comments on your games. The first one I bought was *Suspended*<sup>TM</sup>, and I was quite taken with it. The only modification I could suggest would be to fill the cavern with helium in order to protect the electric circuits from corrosion, and to have the protagonist sitting at a keyboard, and of course, unable to leave his chamber. Just a little detail to lend verisimilitude.

However, I was quite unhappy with *Starcross*. In the first place, there seems to be no logic to the fourth bump. If you have read *Rendezvous With Rama*, you recall that three was a key number to the builders of Rama. Perhaps the builders of the artifact in *Starcross* had four fingers, but how am I to know that?

Let me take the biology next. An exoskeleton is useful to retain body fluids for small animals, which have a large surface to volume ratio. However, an exoskeleton has the drawback that the owner must molt in order to grow. Hence, I think you will find animals with endoskeletons are better suited for ecological niches requiring large size. Unless, of course, you believe in creation and not evolution. Also, how could you tell that Gurthark was a mammal? I take it you didn't milk him.

Also, I think it is a general rule of ethology that animals will hide their weapons when they intend to appease. A sea gull will turn its beak away, and, while a man learns the action, he raises his empty hands. A careful observation of Gurthark would have shown, I think, that he was waving his palps, in a manner reminiscent of a male jumping spider semaphoring a female to placate her, and that he was not grinding his teeth at all. Moreover, surely a civilized gentleman like Gurthark would never sidle into someone else's personal space while they were talking. Actually, I found Gurthark the most sympathetic character in *Starcross*, and was sorry that programming limitations made it impossible to chat with him. However, I thought a

video tape recorder would have been of more interest to him, if he had deciphered speech, and had been listening to broadcasts. I don't know — is it easier to decipher broadcasts of pictures or of speech?

As for trading the space suit for the brown rod, I suggest you read Chagnon's account of the Yanomamo, if you think it would be easy to trade with a people who have been long isolated. I also doubt if a single group is viable, as contrasted to several groups divided into territories. I admit my view is gloomy in view of modern weapons, but that doesn't prove it untrue.

Let me take the physics next. If one were to float from the center of a rotating cylinder in a vacuum, one would certainly not accelerate. There is no centrifugal force. One would move to the outer surface at the same speed at which he left the axis. If the radial speed of the cylinder were 250 km per hour, the effect would be the same as jumping on a very large flatbed truck moving at 250 km an hour. However, I fail to see any reason why the artifact should rotate at a speed designed to give one earth gravity. If we assume a radial speed of 60 km an hour, or about one quarter earth gravity, then of course, anyone landing on a flat metal surface would be knocked arsy varsy when he landed, but I imagine one could make such a jump. Of course, once one reached radial speed of sixty km, one would feel as if one were in a quarter gravity. I assume no structures on the rim, but a flat surface.

Of course, a ray gun has no recoil. Read *Earthman's Burden* by Poul Anderson and Gordon Dickson. Of course, we must conserve momentum; we don't want it to become extinct; and radiation has no rest mass, and so no momentum.

Mostly, I objected to simple logic faults. I had inferred the green rod was either in a planter, or in the garage, although I didn't know the name. Surely one can sit on an object a meter long, and half a meter high. Contrast this with the remark in *Sorcerer*<sup>TM</sup>, when I tell the bat to take the parchment scroll. After all,



bats have claws, but the remark, "You're batty," had enough wit to be unobjectionable. For example, you might say, "The mouse won't do anything until you get off his back!" or perhaps something a little more witty. After all, as Chesterton remarked, one can believe in the impossible, but not in the improbable. Father Brown cited the case of Gladstone offering Queen Victoria a cigar, but I can't believe I need a theory to sit on an object the size of a footstool. Of course, the edges of the container on the mouse's back might be sharp. Another point — why does the program recognize the word "planter"? Of course, I never obtained the red rod, so perhaps I am missing something.

After all, the difficulties in *Starcross* require a rather specialized knowledge of spherical coordinates, and nautical directions. I would imagine anyone with that knowledge would also spot howlers.

*Planetfall*<sup>TM</sup> was campy enough that I suppose one can't really criticize it. Also, I haven't finished it. However, I do think one shouldn't weep crocodile tears over someone for whom one couldn't provide covering fire. I did try to shoot the mutations, but the computer wouldn't recognize the word. I felt that was the least I could do, since I typed "KICK FLOYD" instead of

"WAIT" in the elevator and the shuttle.

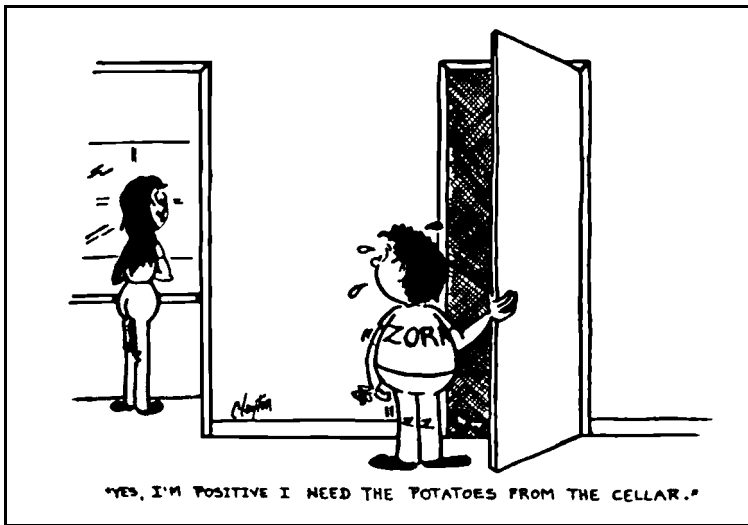
I've only gotten to 205 in *Sorcerer* so it is satisfactory as far as difficulty, and I've liked it so far. However, *Starcross* irritated me enough so that I doubt if I shall buy any more of your games.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

**John Wilson**

P.S. Let me note that the rule of ethology I mentioned above is probably the result of evolution if the behavior is inborn. When one animal of a species shows its weapons, then another must be prepared to fight or submit. I don't think much of Freud's universal symbols, but I imagine any animal that was the product of evolution would not show its teeth as a gesture of friendship. If I am correct in my inference that the red rod is to choose between oxygen, methane, and ammonia, you are asking for a player who has a fairly wide knowledge of science to accept a view of behavior which is, frankly, nonsense. Perhaps you might be interested in David Snow's *Web of Adaptation*, a book that every psychologist should read.

... And Lebling Answers on page 11



## Cartoonist Wanted

Congratulations are in order for Gary Clayton of California, for winning our cartoon contest this issue. "This issue?" you ask. Yes, this issue. The response we got was so good, we have decided to make this contest a regular part of *The New York Times*. If we print your cartoon, you'll win the Infocom game of your choice. For those of you who have just tuned in, we'll be happy to reprint the contest rules.

Cartoons will be printed approximately 4¼ inches wide by 5 inches deep, so please draw your cartoons

proportionally. Entries must be in black ink (no pencil or color illustrations will be considered) on white unlined paper. Do not fold your entries! All submissions become the property of Infocom, Inc. Be sure to send your cartoon to: NZT Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. And don't forget to include a separate sheet that tells us who you are, what game you wish to win, your computer system, and where you live. **Z**

## Sasha Blunderbraas: Prima Virtuosa

by S. Eric Merescu

At the age of nine, Sasha Blunderbraas toured the courts of Europe, playing *Adventure* for the royalty. At the age of twelve, he stunned the continent by solving the entire SAGA series in two hours and seven minutes. Two years ago, his performance of *Starcross* at the Albert Hall received a forty-five minute standing ovation. His videotapes have sold forty-million copies. When great interactive fiction players are discussed, Blunderbraas stands apart from the rest, a class unto himself. Where does someone go from the top?

*The lights dim, and an expectant hush settles over the standing-room-only crowd at Carnegie Hall. They await his appearance with bated breath, their eager faces illuminated with a ghostly blue from the projection TVs, displaying the bootscreen of Zork I.*

Blunderbraas seems so ordinary, sitting in his midtown hotel room in blue-jeans and a T-shirt, sipping a can of soda. It's hard to believe that this unassuming figure is the genius whose name is synonymous with performing interactive fiction.

"People are always surprised at my appearance when they see me for the first time," explains Blunderbraas, almost apologetically. "I think they expect someone taller, more commanding, with unkempt wild hair and a look of near madness in his eyes. I'm actually just pretty ordinary-looking."

*The huge hall erupts with applause as Blunderbraas strides onto the stage, and it's easy to see why so many people have a bigger than life-size image of the master, as fifty-foot television screens capture him as he walks over to the waiting computer.*

Blunderbraas swills the soda around in his mouth, pondering his answer. "Why Zork I again? Well, to tell you the truth, I've always had a particular fondness for its simplicity of structure. It's an almost perfect piece, and of course it's very accessible to audiences, which explains its tremendous popularity. With its very first three words, West of House, a familiar mood is established, forming a common meeting ground for audience and performer."

*As Blunderbraas flips back his tails and settles onto the computer stool, a dead silence falls over the room. There is an electrifying moment while Blunderbraas seems frozen, his hands poised over the keyboard. Then with a crash of the keys, he's off and running, with the swift, steady inputs that are his trademark.*

"I love to play Carnegie Hall," explains Blunderbraas, skirting the question of why he is touring again after two years of semi-retirement. "Its age, its ornateness, juxtaposed against the modern simplicity of the computer, creates an image of contradiction that frequently inspires me in my performance." A smile portends the release of a bauble from the stored wisdom of the master. "The great Wilbur Kleister once

called our art 'using illogic to untwist logical contradictions.' I was never sure what he meant by that until the first time I played Carnegie."

*The opening moves of Zork I are standard, familiar to almost everyone, but already Blunderbraas has the audience gasping at his innovation, his daring twists and turns. His use of abbreviation during the troll battle leaves an unsuspecting woman in the front row on the verge of tears. The performance is still in its first minute, and already the audience's emotions are putty in the master's hands.*

Traffic noise from Fifth Avenue is the only sound as Blunderbraas chews thoughtfully at the hot, bubbling, room service pizza. "I'd be lying if I said the audience reaction doesn't affect me. There's a bond there, and even though my concentration, my top-level thought, is fixed on that story, there's a secondary level of thought that is fed, nourished, and inspired by the level of electricity in the theatre."

*As the emerald joins sixteen other treasures in the trophy case, an almost electric tremor ripples through the audience. The audience can sense history in the making; performances such as this one come only once in a lifetime. A man in the audience grabs his stunned wife's arm. "Not since the great Kleister have I seen such a magnificent use of AGAIN!" he murmurs.*

"You hear this, you read that, what does it matter?" Blunderbraas asks,

shrugging off the suggestion that his performance at Carnegie Hall was his greatest ever. "Am I better than Kleister? Maybe, maybe not. Was Carnegie last night better than Albert Hall two years ago? Maybe, maybe not. Why should I ask myself questions I cannot answer?"

*There are no surprises left. Blunderbraas skillfully sweeps the audience forward with his final, brilliant inputs. As the closing words of the story appear on the screen, and the barrow door crashes shut, the enthralled multitude is drawn to its feet as though by a single cord. As Blunderbraas turns for his bows, the room thunders with applause that threatens to bring down the walls. It rolls on and on, resounding around the room, propelling the evening's performance down the corridor of time, toward a pedestal of greatness it has already earned.*

His agent appears at the door, reminding Blunderbraas of the impending flight. The master agrees to a final question. What's next for the man who is, if not unequalled in the annals of his art, at least unsurpassed? More performances? More tours, tapes, training? An autobiography? "Just now, I mostly want to go home, lie around on the beach, putter around my garden. When I feel the need to perform again, I will perform again." He reaches for his jacket and knapsack. "By the way," he asks. "Do you know when the next *Hitchhiker's* game will be out?" **Z**

# You Can't Please All the People All the Time

Two comments we received on *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*: "Most puzzles very easy, however game is enjoyable" — Marc, Edmonds, Washington. "You obviously designed this game so that the user is forced to purchase the hint booklet" — Frank, Pacoima, California.

It's not easy making a game challenging but not too frustrating for most players. For one thing, we all have different backgrounds, educations, hobbies, and skills.

Our difficulty ratings are an indication of how hard or easy it should be for most people to get involved in the game. The older games were rated based on hundreds or thousands of comments received from players over the years. The new games are evaluated by our inside and outside testers, a significantly smaller but, we hope, representative group. Many of the problems are tweaked based on the testers' input.

If you find yourself up against a roadblock in one of the games, do something else for awhile; then you can attack the problem again with a fresh perspective. (This is why it often helps to play with a friend — a different point of view can be a great asset.) Whatever you do, don't despair! You'll figure it out. Remember: the greatest satisfaction results from solving the hardest problems. But you already know that... ☐

## ERRATUM

Due to a typesetting error, captions from the photo essay in the next issue ("Searching for the Relics of the Emu") were erroneously placed with the photo essay in this issue ("Life at Infocom"). We apologize for this mistake, which was discovered too late to correct in time for publications. We hope it does not interfere with your enjoyment of the "Life at Infocom" photo essay. The photos from "Searching for the Relics of the Emu" will run in the next issue. ☐

## YAK FACTS

Did you know that...

- ▶ yaks generally mate during the winter months?
- ▶ yaks live on Tibetan plateaus nearly 20,000 feet above sea level?
- ▶ yaks require large quantities of water, and have been known to eat ice during the cold season?
- ▶ the hide of the yak is used to make leather, that the hair of the yak is used to make rope, and that yak tails are used as fly whisks in India?
- ▶ no effective vaccine has ever been found for pleuropneumonia, a contagious disease caused by the organism *mycoplasma mycoides* which strikes yaks and other herding animals?
- ▶ the hybrid between a yak and a cattle is called a dzo and is preferable to the yak for plowing?
- ▶ dried yak dung is the only obtainable fuel on the treeless plateaus of Tibet?
- ▶ the gestation period of the yak is

## SPECIAL OFFER

Buy an expert-level game, get a *free InvisiClues* book!  
Buy 2 expert-level games (*Starcross*, *Suspended* or *Deadline*), get either:

- ▶ *free InvisiClues* books
- ▶ the third expert-level game *free*.

**HERE'S HOW:** Enclose this coupon with your direct purchase from us or with proof of purchase (a sales receipt for the expert-level games you purchased dated between June 1 and August 31, 1985). Make your choice below:

- InvisiClues* for \_\_\_\_\_
- InvisiClues* for \_\_\_\_\_
- Free game
  - Deadline*
  - Starcross*
  - Suspended*

For \_\_\_\_\_ (computer system)

Offer expires August 31, 1985.

longer than any other warm-blooded animal?

▶ a herd of yaks can migrate over seven thousand miles in a single

day?

▶ wild yaks, although native to Tibet, are frequently found grazing as far away as Lima, Peru? ☐

## ... and Lebling Answers

*continued from page 9*

**Dear John,**

I was very interested to read your comments about *Starcross*. I thought I'd respond just to clear a few misunderstandings about various parts of the game.

**Bumps.** If you read the description carefully, you will find an analogy with something far more obvious than the supposition that the artifact builders had four fingers. The fourth bump is obviously the Earth, the current destination of the artifact and your home. In short, it's more of a test than an example of numerical obsession. (It's the fourth bump because the large one representing the sun also counts.)

**Gurthark.** The whole point of the Gurthark "problem" is to see exactly how species-centric the player is. Gurthark is obviously not a spider, for the reasons you cited, but he's hairy and multi-armed and -legged, and he lives in a room crisscrossed by wires (not webs, notice). He seems rather spidery, and the solution to the problem is to deal with him without worrying about his appearance.

**Weasels.** Actually, the Yanomamo

are regarded by ethnologists as possibly the most hostile, xenophobic tribe ever discovered, so I wouldn't use them as an example. Besides, they aren't isolated. One reason they are so warlike is that they have been driven by pressure from other tribes into their present locale. I see the Weasels as living in a more benign environment. Their only "natural" enemy would be the Rat-Ants. You are probably right about the single group being non-viable in the long term. On the other hand, the *Bounty* mutineers have survived without significant outside contact or gene-pool contribution for 200 years.

**Physics.** You are absolutely right about floating from the center of a rotating cylinder *in a vacuum*. However, the interior of the artifact is not a vacuum. You would start slowly, then accelerate, not from the force of gravity but from the "wind" produced by the interaction of your inertia (following a straight path out from the center) and the inertia of the air (rotating about the axis of rotation of the artifact). You would hit hard but the effect of the wind would have speeded you up somewhat. I assumed .5g, by the way.

**Ray guns.** Ray guns can have

recoil. For example, the current best-known "ray gun" is the design for the so-called *Star Wars* missile defense, which starts by producing a large explosion whose energy is then lased. It is possible to imagine ray gun technologies that work by similar methods.

**Planters.** There are planters (and plants) in various halls, part of the oxygen recycling system. The program, within limits, recognizes the words it uses in descriptions.

**Mouse.** I agree the message should be better. In the current version it says "You can't climb onto the maintenance mouse." It's accurate, if inelegant. I will probably change it to say "The mouse whirrs and buzzes unhappily. It much prefers to collect small pieces of debris."

**Teeth.** I know an animal that shows its teeth as a gesture of friendship: man. What do you think a smile is? Gurthark is probably trying his best to smile.

I'm sorry you didn't enjoy *Starcross*. Perhaps if you take time to finish it you will like it better. I don't think it has as many howlers as you do.

Sincerely,  
**Dave Lebling** ☐

# NEW YORK TIMES PUZZLE No. 6

Directions: Below are thirteen alleged responses from *Zork I: The Great Underground Empire*. Actually, only eleven of them are really in the game; two of them are fakes. Imposters. We just made them up. To win the puzzle, simply write down the numbers of the two false responses on the answer form below and send it in. There are no tricks; the fake responses are not just real responses with one word changed, for example.

By the way, there were a few photocopies among the entries for the last couple of puzzles. Your entry *must* be on the form below; not a copy. Don't bother even trying — despite all claims by photocopier manufacturers, photocopies are quite easy to tell apart from the original.

1. "The pines and the hemlocks seem to be murmuring."
2. "Going up empty-handed is a bad idea."
3. "The leaves burn, and so do you."
4. "You feel a faint tingling transmitted through the sword."
5. "I'm afraid you have done drowned yourself."
6. "The thief says nothing, as you have not been formally introduced."
7. "The book is already open to page 569."
8. "You pry the door open a crack, but then it snaps back with a resounding thud."
9. "The rainbow seems to have become somewhat run-of-the-mill."
10. "The cyclops spreads a checkered tablecloth on the ground."
11. "You need no light to guide you."
12. "Some paint chips away, revealing more paint."
13. "The hole collapses, smothering you."



ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt Size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTEST RULES:**

1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by July 1, 1985.
3. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

**PRIZE:**

A *New York Times* Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

**RETURN TO:** Infocom  
 NZT Puzzle  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

## T-Shirt Winners From Puzzle #4

The twelve highlighted letters from the crossword puzzle, R R N E I S N H T I T W, re-arrange to form the answer: T-SHIRT WINNER.

There were 463 entries to Puzzle Number Four, and all but two of them were correct. As usual, our exciting drawing drew a sellout crowd. Here are the 25 lucky winners:

1. Russell Pickett  
Tulsa, OK
2. Ralph Dailey  
Kent, WA
3. Alan Fisher  
Holliston, MA
4. Thomas Keating  
Wilmington, DE
5. Eric Dodds  
Santa Barbara, CA
6. Alan Bridges  
San Antonio, TX
7. Brendan O'Leary  
Brooklyn Park, MN
8. Max Salmenson  
Beaverton, OR
9. Amy and David Sams  
Pasadena, CA
10. Glen Corlin  
Honolulu, HI
11. Brent Thomas  
Gainesville, FL
12. Sheila Stroup  
Covington, LA
13. Matt Rosauer  
Bettendorf, IA
14. Tyler Keith Thomas  
Irvine, CA
15. Laura Gordon  
Framingham, MA
16. Howard Halter  
Renton, WA
17. Robert Allgood  
La Palma, CA
18. Jonathan Swartz  
Great Neck, NY
19. B.L. Harris  
Fort Dix, NJ
20. Sue Whitman  
Lexington, NC
21. Patra Bach  
Camby, IN
22. Robby Moser  
Mountain View, CA
23. Debbie Antlitz  
Schaumburg, IL
24. Mary Sauer  
Circleville, OH
25. Todd Yoder  
Columbia, SC

## SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NUMBER FOUR

1	P	R	O	S	P	E	C	T	I	N	G		9	P				
			10	B	E	A	M		11	O	N	E		12	D	O		
13	D	E	L		15	L	E	16	G		N		17	J	U	G		
18	E	F		19	L		20	R	E	21	D		22	X	E	N	O	
	A		23	K	A	L	A	M	O	24	N	T	E	E				
25	F	26	I	R	M			L		27	R	A		28	A	S	29	H
		30	T	I	P			31	D	U	N	B	A	R				A
32	G		L					C			B			33	R	A	T	
	A		34	L	E	35	S	L	I	36	E		37	D				C
38	N	W		A				U		39	A	40	U	D	41	A		H
	G		42	S	S			43	S	U	S	P	E	C	44	T		
45	W	46	A	I	T			47	T		T			48	I	O	N	
49	A	L	L		50	T	E	N		51	W	52	I	D	O	W		
54	Y	E	L	L				55	R	E	D		N					L

## New Release: A Mind Forever Voyaging



Items from Dr. Perleman's desk are contained in every A Mind Forever Voyaging package.

### Run For Your Lives! It's FOOBLITZKY

#### A Unique Graphics Strategy Game

Infocom? Graphics?

No, hell hasn't frozen over. Pigs haven't sprouted wings. But Infocom is announcing its first non-interactive fiction game — and it *does* have graphics.

"It's a hoax," you're thinking. "Infocom would never use graphics to illustrate locations in text adventures. Infocom hates graphics." Well, yes and no.

Infocom has yet to see computer graphics that add to the quality of a text adventure. There may be ways in which graphics could be used more subtly to enhance your mental imagery. But with today's machine resolutions, and even with proposed advancements in technology, graphics can't begin to compete with the scenes and characters you can imagine. Therefore, Infocom still firmly believes that words paint the most vivid images in your mind.

Of course, there *is* a place for graphics today: in a completely different setting and in a completely different kind of game. In fact, *Fooblitzky* is *all* graphics, and has more graphics in it than any other computer game on the market.

But the *really* important thing

about any game is how much fun it is, how enjoyable it is to play, not whether it does or doesn't have graphics. And *Fooblitzky* is a winner. Already, there are addicts at Infocom.

Logic, deduction, chance, and social interaction are all big parts of *Fooblitzky* — just like deductive reasoning is a part of *Clue*<sup>®</sup> and *Mastermind*<sup>®</sup>. (*Fooblitzky* reminds some people of a cross between those games, even though its theme is completely different.) *Fooblitzky* is a *multiplayer* game — 2, 3, or 4 people can play. The name "Fooblitzky" was chosen because it's easy to remember and incredibly difficult to pronounce.

Okay, so the name is goofy. The *game* is goofy. But it's sophisticated goofiness.

The roots of *Fooblitzky* go back more than 2 years. Marc Blank and Michael Berlyn wanted to develop something unique, something totally different from text adventures — or any other kind of computer game. They hired a crazed crackerjack artist, Brian Cody, and a programming

Continued on Page 3

*A Mind Forever Voyaging*, the first advanced-level Science Fiction story from Infocom, is for true text-adventure buffs. Why? Because it has more locations to visit (several hundred), more things to do, more responses, and a large vocabulary (1800+ words) than any of our previously released products.

The story takes place in 21st-century Rockvil, South Dakota. The United States of North America has fallen prey to incredibly high unemployment and crime rates. Political indifference, perhaps caused by backward educational systems or diminishing national resources, has swept the nation. Exploiting this opportunity, Senator Richard Ryder has develop (*sic*) the Plan for a Renewed National Purpose, stressing patriotism and a return to American values as they were at the country's peak, the 1950s. The public, desperate for a change, embraces the Plan, but many high government officials are unsure whether it will succeed. That is where you come into the picture.

You are PRISM (Perelman-Randu Introductory Soliptic Machine); the first intelligent, self-aware computer. You have been created to enter a simulation of Rockvil, years in the future, and return with recordings of what life would be like if the Plan

were to be introduced. While you're busy exploring the future, the scientists and programmers who created you are honing and perfecting the simulation's parameters. Thus, as the story progresses, you can travel further and further in time, watching Rockvil prosper as the Plan succeeds, or perish as it fails. Only you can tell on what course the country sets itself by adopting the Plan.

While there are several puzzles to keep players on their toes, designer Steve Meretzky (author of *Planetfall* and *Sorcerer*, and co-author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) concentrated more on immersing the player in a vast, highly detailed, realistic world; a vision of the destiny of mankind. *A Mind Forever Voyaging* represents Infocom's greatest step yet away from games, and toward true fiction: a serious, often chilling, look at the future of the human race, reminiscent of such great works of science fiction as *1984* or *Brave New World*.

What makes an epic game like this possible? Interactive fiction "plus", the latest development system from Infocom, designed to complement our currently-used "classic" system.

Continued on Page 3

## InfoNews Roundup

### Wishbringer Event

This time it was not a mansion but a museum, there were no murders, no clues, not a puzzle to be solved. Not unless you found it a puzzling experience to have a good time. The event was the *Wishbringer* announcement, and a good time was had by all.

This party was held in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. And it was no coincidence that Summer CES was in Chicago as well. The press, distributors, and many of our own Infoployees (including *Wishbringer* implementor "Professor" Brian Moriarty) attended an evening of music, dancing, and the 3 p's: presentation, prizes, and

pastries. Over 300 people joined us to celebrate the release of our 16th title.

Those who attended were treated to speeches from our Marc "Mark" Blank, Jon "Buckingham" Palace, Mike "Max the Knife" (Stan) Dornbrook, and even the professor himself. The presentation drew a standing-room-only crowd (thanks to Max, who was seen before the party removing the auditorium's 200 folding chairs!).

The party was more than anyone could have wished for, especially if you were one of the seven lucky prize winners. Infocom drew names from a crystal punch bowl to award

Continued on Page 3

# Mail Bag

## Dear Infocom:

What a great puzzle! I solved puzzle number 5 two days after receiving my latest copy of *The New Zork Times*, but I had to replay Zork II to determine whether "FEEL FREE" was in the Crypt Anteroom or the Crypt. I had made a *Zork II* map, but I loaned it out, and my friend lost it. He claimed a little guy with a beard and pointy hat just popped in, waved a wand, mumbled something like "Filch," and the map just vanished. The loss had occurred some time ago, and this current puzzle was just the motivation I needed to play the game again to remap *Zork II's* world.

I must say, however, that I appreciate the definitive Infocom trivia encyclopedia the puzzle solution provides. Nobody I know had ever thought to count the leaves, and sure enough ... there are 69,105 (I went back and counted)! Other surprises (at least for me) were the folding cot, and the Linder's radio. It just once again proves why Infocom has the finest interactive fiction: attention to detail!

I've tried other adventure games, but as soon as the next Infocom adventure is available, they are forgotten and I am once again happily lost in another world of Infocom's making.

According to the statistics you've published, the number of people responding to the NZT puzzle is on the rise. Worse, the number of correct answers are also climbing. What chance does a 33 year old programmer from California have against all of those youngsters from around the country? Ah well, it really doesn't matter. I can, after all, afford a T-shirt. At least I still have my FrobozzCo stock options, but I do miss the fame and prestige that winning the NZT puzzles bestows on one.

Should you be hurting for good material to publish next issue, feel free to use this letter in your Mail Bag section or write me for a free brochure. The brochure tells about how I could write for *The New Zork Times*, work for Infocom, or create the next great American interactive fiction adventure.

Well, as the Wizard said: "Finish!"

In Frobs we trust (and so should you),

**David Alan Hoag**  
Placentia, CA

*You will notice that the number of entries was down this time. Also, don't forget that The New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-shirts can't be bought — you must solve the puzzle to own one — Ed.*

**Hi,**

I was really making progress on the NZT puzzle in the Winter issue. I have all the Infocom games and spent hours and hours researching the questions and filling in my grid. I had a ways to go but felt I was on the right track when I was called on to babysit a friend's cat.

To make a long story short, the cat, unknown to me, had a craving for graph paper and ate my almost complete grid. (She gave birth to a little of black and white checked kittens yesterday.)

I would like to make a comment on the gender of computer gamers. Many of us have names or nicknames that could either be male or female. I write to a lot of gamers and I find they usually assume I am male. After finding out I am definitely female they express surprise such as "I didn't know GIRLS PLAYED computer games!" Then when I tell them I am 49+ they are shocked almost to silence. I just hope by that time they realize I'm just as hooked on games as anyone else.

I suspect a lot of your Chris's, Leslie, Robins, Pats, etc. are female.

Looking forward to more puzzles and newsletters soon.

**Pat Smith**

**Dear NZT:**

I was shocked to see that in the article about music in the Great Underground Empire, there was no mention of one of the foremost GUE heavy metal bands, Mötley Crüe.

**Lee Killpatrick**  
Houlton, ME

**To the New Zork Times:**

Seen on a truck on the Interstate in Arizona:

Zork Hardware Co.

El Paso, TX

Now there's *Zork* hardware to go with the *Zork* software? Love your games — keep 'em coming.

**Susan Heller**  
Tuscon, AZ

**Dear Sirs:**

I was intrigued by your photo-

feature, "Searching for the Relics of the Emu," which appeared in the Spring '85 issue of *The New Zork Times*. I look forward to seeing the proper photographs in your next issue. Incidentally, I recently participated in a research project at Hellsport Historical Institute which uncovered startling evidence that the Emus were NOT wiped out by the encroachment of western man, but were instead conquered by a race of malignant Yaks native to mountainous New Zealand. A fellow researcher proved this invasion possible by successfully traversing the treacherous between New Zealand and Tasmania in a coracle made entirely of spun Yak hair. The creatures the Europeans discovered were the sad remnants of their proud race, who quickly died of culture shock from exposure to gunpowder weapons, canvas, and "pick-a-path" game booklets (a primitive form of Interactive Fiction!). I hope this sets the record straight.

**Stefan Jones**  
Lucust Valley, NY

Stardate 8411.04.

**To the staff of the NZT, preferably Marc "Mark" Blank:**

In reply to your "Call the Exterminators" article (NZT: vol. 3 #1) I believe I have found a bug, or at least a typo. In the Fortran IV

translation of Zork for the PDP-11/V-11 (translated from MDL for the ARPANET), the dam tour guidebook claims that FCD#3 was composed of "3.7 cubic feet of concrete." To the best of my knowledge, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to take a lump of concrete measuring one foot by one foot by three point seven feet and build a structure the size of FCD#3. While on the topic of the guidebook, how come the present day versions of Zork I don't mention the work force of "384 slaves, 34 slave drivers, 12 engineers, 2 turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree" or the command team of "234 bureaucrats, 2,347 secretaries (at least two of whom could type), 12,256 paper shufflers, 52,469 rubber stampers, 245,193 red tape processors, and nearly one million dead trees?" Keep *The Times* coming.

**Marc Egazarian**  
Blauvelt, NT

P.S. Would somebody mind writing *The Hitchhiker's Guide for the TRS-80 Model III*, please? Thanks.

*(It may be impossible in the real world to build a dam with such a small piece of concrete, but this is a fantasy remember? Actually, it was intended as a joke; it is not a typo. Ed.)* ☑

## The New Zork® Times

<b>Managing Editor</b>	Jennifer "Jen" Fine
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# Run, it's Fooblitzky

Continued From Page 1

magician, Poh C. Lim. More recently, Paula Maxwell joined the graphics group as an artist. Together they played board games, computer games, video games, mind games .... They discussed game theory: what made a game interesting, challenging, intricate, multifaceted, and replayable. And then they designed *Fooblitzky*.

People play against *each other* in *Fooblitzky*, not against some poor, misguided computer. The fun is in trying to bluff, outsmart, or just plain lie to the other players. Unless you're

the multiple-personality type, you can't play *Fooblitzky* by yourself. (If you don't have any friends and your family is no longer returning your telephone calls, tough nuggies.)

*Fooblitzky* is intellectually challenging, requiring a sharp mind, careful note-taking, and a penchant for chattering teeth and flipping hot dogs. It's not a shoot-em-up arcade-style game requiring joystick coordination, so even adults can play! A game typically takes 1 to 2 hours to play.

Players move around the "city" of *Fooblitzky* on sidewalk squares, much like you move tokens around a board game. Players can buy items at stores with "foobles" (the unit of

currency) and sell items at pawn shops and work in restaurants to get more foobles. Players can also get smacked by cars at street crossings, or get flashed by the Chance Man and squashed by a falling piano. Through all this, each player tries to deduce and then obtain the 4 "correct" items needed to win. Since the 4 items change each time you play, no 2 games are alike.

*Fooblitzky* is unlike any game you've ever played before. And Infocom is proud of that. *Fooblitzky* opens up new frontiers in computer gaming, and that's what Infocom is all about.

*Fooblitzky* is so different and innovative that Infocom's marketing department hit upon a different and innovative marketing approach. Because you're a special customer of Infocom's, because you read *The*

*New York Times*, you can buy *Fooblitzky* before anyone else! Research shows that the people who learn *Fooblitzky* the fastest and enjoy it the most are the people who enjoy Infocom's interactive fiction the most.

Therefore, for a limited time, *Fooblitzky* is available ONLY through *The New York Times*. That's right: For the first six months, *Fooblitzky* is available exclusively to YOU, since you read *The New York Times*. Once you learn *Fooblitzky* and play it with your friends, you'll love it. You'll become an Infocom ambassador, spreading the word about *Fooblitzky*. When *Fooblitzky* is released to the rest of the world, everyone will have heard of it and will want the new game. But you don't have to wait: you can start enjoying the new game *now*. **Z**

# A Mind Forever Voyaging

Continued From Page 1

"Plus" will be available for most machines that have 128K or more of internal RAM, allowing us to more than double the size of our products.

In fact, the entire Zork trilogy could have fit into one game if we'd had the "plus" system at our disposal in 1981. Thus, large projects, like *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, are now entirely within our capabilities. Unlike the new Whopper<sup>®</sup>, or New Coke<sup>®</sup>, this revolutionary gaming

technology promises to please the tastes of even the most discriminating player, allowing for more of just about everything (game bugs being no exception). Finally, this size increase should not be seen as "the beginning of the end" of our support for machines with under 128K of memory. Owners of smaller computers can rest assured that we will continue to produce plenty of products for their machines, using the "classic" system.

Meretzky began work on the project by writing a short, intriguing fictional piece, which introduces the player to the concept of artificial intelligence, as well as to the main characters and themes of the story. This short story, part of an issue of "Dakota Online Magazine," is found in the game package, along with the instruction manual, a full-color map of Rockvil, a "21st-century" plastic pen, and a Class One Security Mode Access Decoder. **Z**

# InfoNews Roundup

Continued From Page 1

the prizes. These gifts each brought a real-life chance to experience one of *Wishbringer's* seven magic wishes: binoculars for Foresight; a lucky Chinese gold coin for Luck; an all-weather camera for Rain; a twilight helicopter ride over Chicago for Flight; a crystal ball for Advice; a Sony Watchman for Freedom; and a telescope for Darkness. And the prizes didn't end there. Infocom also donated \$2500 to "A Child's Wish Come True" — an organization that fulfills the wishes of children who are terminally ill. And if you think all these people were lucky, just imagine all the luck that your very own *Wishbringer* Magick stone will bring....

## Reviews

Suspect reviews have been turning up faster than clues for the murder of Veronica Ashcroft. *Suspect*, our latest murder mystery, shadowed by the overwhelming acclaim for Hitchhiker's has recently been receiving its well-deserved spot in the limelight. *A+* magazine said that "with this game, Infocom demonstrates (again) that the all-text adventure is ideal for a murder mystery .... What makes the game truly exciting are the more than ample opportunities for failure. You can really get yourself in a lot of trouble here." In another Apple interest magazine, "*Suspect* is another great mystery from Infocom, a company that seems unable to write a bad game." Congratulations to implementor P. David Lebling for adding yet another genre to his list of game writing fortes.

Speaking of overwhelming acclaim

for Meretzky and Adams' collaboration (known affectionately as "HHGG"), we've chalked up another award to put in the trophy case (and there would be room if it weren't so full of those silly Zork I treasures). The W.H. Smoth Game of the Year Award was presented to Infocom for *Hitchhiker's* by The British Microcomputing Awards of 1985. All *New York Times* subscribers were invited to attend the award ceremony which took place on June 12th in London. Unfortunately, the person assigned to the mailing of the invitations was busy trying to get by a tiny vicious poodle; consequently, we were unable to mail the invitations in time. The person responsible for this error has since been sacked!

And if you haven't gotten past the aforementioned poodle yourself, then you probably haven't played our latest title, *Wishbringer*. The reviews for the first game by "Professor" Brian Moriarty have been nothing

short of glowing, but don't take our word for it. *Computer Entertainment* says that *Wishbringer* is "a great introduction for newcomers to the Adventure Experience, and is suitable for all ages." The praise extends well beyond the puzzles of the game, characterizing Moriarty's writing style as carrying "a fondness for Lovecraft, Hawthorne, and things that go bump in the night."

## New News at Infrobozz

Can you name the sixteen software titles that run on the new Atari ST? If not, we'll give you a hint: *Zork I*, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, *Deadline ...* and *Wishbringer*. Thanks to the Micro Group (that nutty bunch of microscopic programmers) the Atari ST will NOT be the hot new machine with NO software to brag about. And keep your eyes peeled (doesn't that hurt?) for the Amiga? Can you name sixteen software titles that run on the Amiga??? **Z**

# The History of Zork — The Final (?)

by Stu Galley

SPECIAL TO The New Zork Times

The year: 1979. As Tim Anderson has recounted in previous installments in this series, Zork was one large computer game, about a megabyte in size — as large as it could be and still fit in its original home, a DECsystem-10. Marc Blank and Dave Lebling designed and wrote the program, with the help of Bruce Daniels and Tim. They had met and worked together in a research group at M.I.T., and now the group was losing valuable talent through graduation and the lure of "the real world." Several members of the group believed that they could still produce outstanding computer-based products in almost any category — from programming languages like MDL (an important influence on modern Lisp) to data bases, electronic mail and artificially intelligent systems — if only centrifugal force didn't separate them.

The problem: What sort of product could the group work on together, and to whom could they sell it? As early as 1976, they had discussed the potential marketability of various computer games that had been designed or implemented by group members just for fun. Now their attention was focused on various potential products based on mini-computers, some involving custom hardware as well as software. The group was ignoring the potential of a mass market for micro-computers, not only from lack of experience with them (the group's unofficial motto is "We hate micros!") but also from serious concerns about software piracy.

Joel Berez had graduated from the group and was working in his family's business in Pittsburgh. Marc had finished medical school (and moonlighting on Zork development) and was starting his medical residency in Pittsburgh. These two had long been friends, and they liked getting together for a Chinese dinner and conversation.

One topic of conversation was "the good old days" at M.I.T., and one reason that the old days were good was Zork. They wished that Zork's

wonderfulness (or "taste and winnage" in M.I.T. jargon) could somehow be brought to more people. But very few people had access to the large computers that could run Zork. More and more people were beginning to buy personal computers — like the Radio Shack TRS-80 Model I or the Apple II — but those computers were too small to run Zork. Or were they?

Joel and Marc began some seat-of-the-pants design work (much of it on Joel's parents' coffee table) on how much Zork could be compressed, and how to do so in a flexible way to allow for different, incompatible personal computers in the future. They considered using available "portable" tools for programming, like UCSD Pascal, but it soon became clear that Zork had too much text in it. (Keep in mind that a standard personal computer at this time came with 16K bytes of memory and no disk drive.) They finally concluded that, by inventing a programming system specifically for Zork, they could fit about half of it into a computer with 32K bytes of memory and one floppy-disk drive.

Meanwhile, the group at M.I.T. was in the process of forming a corporation — choosing "Infocom" as the name least offensive to everyone — and searching for a project that would quickly produce a product to start generating income for the company. Among the projects they considered were systems for keeping track of documents, handling electronic correspondence, and processing text. When Zork was added to the list of possibilities, Joel and Marc worked intensively during the summer and autumn creating the programming tools for their design. And they had to work for IOUs, since the company treasury — which started with only \$11,500 — could afford to pay only for the hardware they needed at the time.

The key to their design was an

imaginary computer chip called the "Z-machine". This chip would be able to run Zork (or at least part of it) if the program were coded in a special, very compact language. Then the design called for each personal computer to have a program (called a Z-machine Interpreter Program or ZIP) that would interpret the special Z-machine language and make the computer act the same way that a real Z-machine would. In order to get Zork written in this special language, another language was invented, called Zork Implementation Language (ZIL), similar in many ways to MDL. Marc built a two-stage translator program that would translate a ZIL program, first into an assembly language and then further into the Z-machine language. He also built a ZIP so that a DECsystem-20 could emulate the Z-machine.

There was still the problem of cutting Zork in half. Dave examined his complete map of Zork and drew a boundary around a portion that included about 100 or so locations: everything "above ground" and a large section surrounding the Round Room. The object was to create a smaller Zork that would fit within the constraints established by the design of Joel and Marc. Whatever wouldn't fit was to be saved for another game, another day.

In the process of being converted from MDL into ZIL, the program became "cleaner" and friendlier. The geographies of the maze and the coal mine were simplified so that the connections were less arbitrary, and in other places complexity was removed whenever it didn't serve a justifiable purpose. For example, there was originally a barrel sitting near the top of Aragain Falls, but it was just a red herring; its only purpose was to lure unsuspecting adventurers inside and carry them over the falls to destruction. The Rainbow Room had its name changed to On the Rainbow, and that meant removing the silly joke about Rockefeller Center and the NBC Commissary. Since the Land of the (Living) Dead (the word "Living" was removed in order to fit the name on the status line) no

longer led to the stairway where Zork III later began, the crystal skull (a brand-new treasure) was put there instead.

By late 1979, Joel and Marc had both moved back to Boston. Joel had been elected president of Infocom and started business school, and Zork I was shaping up as Infocom's first product. Zork I first saw the light of day on a DEC-system-20 on which the company was renting time, then on the PDP-11 in Joel's bedroom. Scott Cutler (who had graduated from the group a couple of years before) used his TRS-80 Model II to create a ZIP for a TRS-80 Model I. As 1980 dawned, Infocom spent a large portion of its bank account to purchase a Model I, and Scott and Marc demonstrated that Zork I was alive in it by starting the game and actually collecting points with the incantation "N. E. OPEN. IN." (It's certainly no less inspiring than "Come here, Mr. Watson; I want you!")

We had another product in which PS had no interest: the PDP-11 version of Zork I. We sent product announcements to various places, including a newsletter for PDP-11 users, and as a result, the first copy of Zork I sold was a PDP-11 version! It came on an eight-inch floppy disk with a manual that I wrote and Joel had reproduced from a typewritten master.

By the end of 1980, the version of ZIP for the Apple II had been created by Bruce, who had designed puzzles for the original Zork before graduating from M.I.T. and going to work for Apple Computer Inc. Apple Zork I proved more popular than the TRS-80 version; PS sold over 6000 copies in eight months.

The first press reviews of Zork I were encouraging. In February 1981, BYTE magazine said, "No single advance in the science of Adventure has been as bold and exciting as the introduction of Personal Software Inc.'s Zork, The Great Underground Empire. . . . That the program is entertaining, eloquent, witty, and precisely written is almost beside the point. Unlike the kingdoms of the Adventures for machines with 16K

# Chapter: MIT, MDL, ZIL, ZIP

bytes of memory and far from the classic counter-earthiness of the Colossal Cave in the original Adventure, *Zork* can be felt and touched — experienced, if you will — through the care and attention to detail the authors have rendered. ... [A] most excellent and memorable work of computerized fiction."

Mike Dornbrook was enlisted to test *Zork I* for bugs and other bad features, because he had some experience with computers but no experience with the original *Zork*, exactly like our intended audience. (One of his contributions was the alternate — and, some say, more logical — solution to the Loud Room puzzle, which was added only after the first users of *Zork I* asked so often for hints for that puzzle). He played it so much that he memorized the entire geography, and he fell in love with the game. He was convinced that it would attract a cult following, although others thought it would last maybe a year on the market and then fade away, like a video game. He urged the company to start planning spin-off products, like maps, hints, posters, T-shirts, etc. So the first published release of *Zork I* had another feature added, a "small piece of paper" in the artist's studio that said something like "Write to Infocom, P.O. Box 120, Cambridge, Mass. 02142 for info on other products, including Movement Assistance Planners (M.A.P.s) and Hierarchical Information for Novice Treasure Seekers (H.I.N.T.S.)." Besides leaving the door open for an after-market in *Zork* accessories, we wanted to start building a mailing list of customers for future direct mailings (like the one you are reading!).

Meanwhile, Dave was designing *Zork II*. At first, the most straightforward approach seemed to be to use everything left out of *Zork I* and simply convert it from MDL to ZIL. But Dave's active imagination kept inventing new puzzles that virtually begged to be implemented. So the final design left out the Royal Puzzle and the "end-game" (both to appear in *Zork III*) and instead included the Wizard of Frobozz, the garden, and the new diamond maze.

(The last was re-oriented to the compass based on Mike's belief that "southpaw" should be a hint.) The last of the original puzzles — the long slide and "sending for the brochure" — were left out of *Zork III* and didn't reappear until *Sorcerer*.

Mike Dornbrook was enlisted again to fulfill mail orders for personalized hints. Joel collected orders from the post office box, passed orders for maps and posters to his Significant Other for fulfillment, gave requests for hints to Mike, and gave me the numerous small checks to deposit in the bank. Mike created personalized hints off the top of his head, typing them on an old office typewriter. (When Mike started business school in September 1981, he founded a separate company, the *Zork User's Group*, and took over all mail-order sales. Only then did he computerize the operation. In 1983, Mike came back to work for Infocom, bringing Z.U.G. with him.)

Now that the company had a flesh-and-blood product, how could a small group of hackers market and sell it? One possibility was to produce it ourselves and distribute it through computer chain stores. But that meant devoting time and energy to finding suppliers, producing packages, supporting users, and so on. Another possibility was to contract with a software publisher, but which one? Joel contacted Microsoft, but they were already publishing the original "Colossal Cave" adventure game — the one that inspired *Zork* — and by the time *Zork* fan Bill Gates heard of our offer, Infocom was deep in negotiations with Personal Software Inc. (PS).

PS had several good features: it was the first true publisher of software developed by others; it was the leading publisher of computer games at the time; and it had strong ties to Software Arts Inc., where VisiCalc was invented (*requiescant in pace*), and where *Zork I* was demonstrated in February 1980. PS agreed in June to publish *Zork I* and sent us an advance on royalties, our first bonafide income! Sales began in December, and over

the next nine months PS sold about 1500 copies of the TRS-80 version\*.

Also in June, we paid for a search of trademark records in preparation for registering "Zork" as our own trademark. We discovered that Mattel Inc. had registered "Mighty Zork" in 1973 for a toy model motorcycle, but that registration was cancelled in October 1979. Other trademarks discovered in the search were the likes of Zorr, Zorak, Zark, and Zowees (all by Mattel); Zogg, Zon, Zak, Zok, Zot, Zonk, and Zerak; and variations on Mork and Ork (by Paramount Pictures). Not to mention the *Zork Hardware Company* of El Paso and Albuquerque.

*Zork II* was offered to PS in April and licensed in June 1981, about the same time that Joel graduated and became Infocom's first salaried employee. But we had serious concerns about PS's commitment, even to *Zork I*. After an initial rush of advertising, *Zork I* seemed to join PS's range of products as just another game. We were eager to make new versions and new titles — including *Zork III*, "Zork: the Mystery"(Deadline), and "Zorks in Space" (Starcross) — but not if our publisher wasn't also eager. The fact was that PS was planning to drop its line of entertainment software — since their titles neither sold well over the long term nor brought in enough money to satisfy them — and to change its name to Visicorp in order to identify closely with its "Visi-" series of business products\*\*.

It now appeared that we had two choices: to negotiate and contract with another publisher (and to hope for more satisfaction), or to take the plunge and *become* a publisher. We definitely preferred the second choice, but that required office space, production facilities, an advertising agency, and so on — and

most of all, money. But we threw caution to the wind, and hired Mort Rosenthal (who later founded Corporate Software Inc.) as marketing manager, who found a time-shared office in Boston's venerable Faneuil Hall Marketplace, a time-shared production plant in Randolph, an ad agency in Watertown, an order-taking service in New Jersey, a supplier of disks in California, and so on. The money came both from the company's founders and from a bank loan that they personally guaranteed.

We announced *Zork II* and our new role as publisher with a Christmas promotion as eye-catching as we could afford. Thanks to our ad agency, we had a new style of packaging for both *Zorks* (the stone-built letters that are still in use), a counter display for stores, ads in major computer magazines, and direct-mail ads for dealers. We also bought PS's entire inventory of *Zork I* (except the TRS-80 version, which they still wanted to sell) to prevent them from "dumping" it on the market at bargain prices and lowering the public's image of "Zork" in general. Our first shipment went out just in time for Christmas sales.

On New Year's Day 1982, we moved the company to larger space at the far end of Cambridge — 55 Wheeler Street. Now we had office space for everyone, especially for Marc (now vice-president for product development) to finish *Zork III*. And we had enough space to set up all the personal computers — instead of shuffling them from one person's home to another — for testers to use, and for programmers to create or adapt ZIPs for Atari, CP/M, IBM PC, and other machines. *Zork III* was finished in the autumn, about the same time that the company began hiring people to begin developing its first business product. But that's another story. Z

\* *Zork I* came under the wing of PS's New Products Manager, a fellow named Mitch Kapor, who later founded Lotus Development Corp.

\*\* In December 1984, after a long legal tangle with Software Arts over VisiCalc, Visicorp eventually merged into one of its own spin-off companies and disappeared.

## Third Title for '85 Coming Soon

At Infocom, we believe that good things come in threes. Our third interactive fiction story this year will be one of those things. It's for those of you who are two-thirds done with our second trilogy. It's for those of you who want something three times harder than *Sorcerer*, or three times more exciting than *Enchanter*. It's for those of you who want to know if there's life after AIMFIZ.

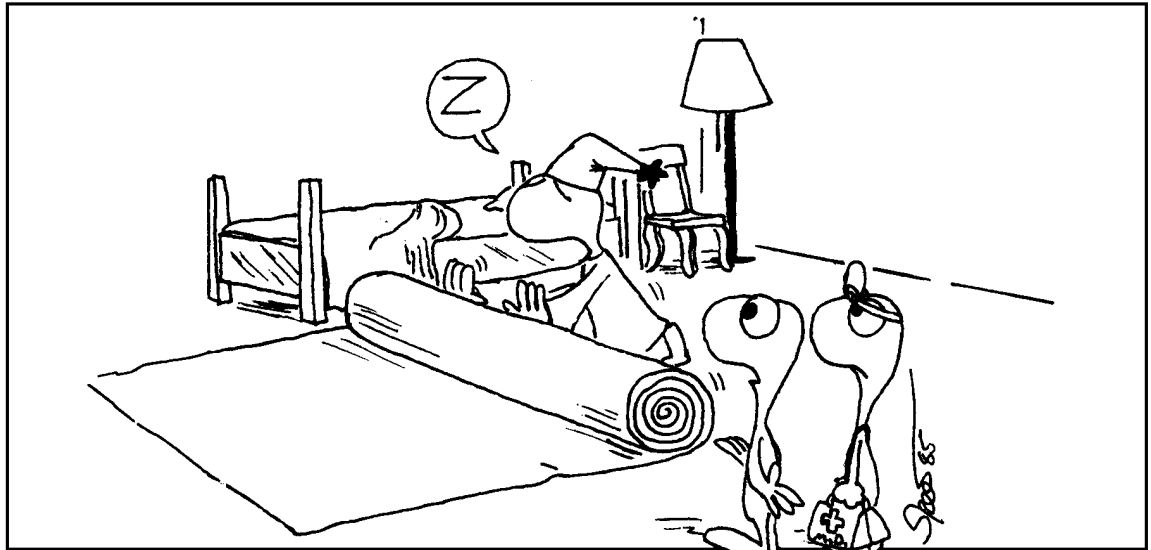
Dave Lebling, co-author of the Zork trilogy and *Enchanter*, has been spied writing spell scrolls, polishing his crystal ball, and muttering incomprehensible syllables under his breath. What it all means, only time (and the next issue of *The New York Times*) will tell. Z



### Yak Facts.

Did you know that...

- ▶ when overloaded or exhausted, the yak will lie down, hiss, spit and kick, and refuse to move?
- ▶ when asked "What is your favorite mammal," 5 out of 7 game writers did NOT choose the yak? (Significantly, when asked the same question, 7 out of 7 yaks did not choose game writers.)
- ▶ no yak in captivity has ever lived more than 3 weeks, although wild yaks have a life span of over 90 years?
- ▶ the silent, black-and-white, 1922 version of *The Wizard of Oz* featured a cowardly yak instead of a cowardly lion? ("Yaks and tigers and bears, oh my!")
- ▶ the hair of wild yak is black and short, except on the flanks and tail where it forms a long, shaggy fringe?
- ▶ a newborn yak is called a yaklet and usually arrives in a litter of 30 or more?
- ▶ domestic yaks, which breed freely with domestic cattle, are often piebald black and white?
- ▶ *The Witness* author Stu Galley is a former yak trainer?
- ▶ wild yaks live in large herds of females, young bulls, and calves (the mature bulls staying together in smaller groups)? Z



"HE HAS THIS SAME DREAM EVERY NIGHT...."

## NZT Cartoon Winner

Among the many amusing and well-drawn cartoons submitted for this issue's cartoon contest, the eventual winner is the work of Andy "Inksipper" Speer of Waltham, Massachusetts. He receives a copy of Planetfall for his Commodore 64 and our congratulation. If you dare to take on the competition and cross pens with your Infocom brethren,

and are fortunate enough to win, your prize will be a free Infocom game of your choice.

Here are the rules. Cartoons will be printed approximately 4 1/4 inches wide by 5 inches deep, so draw your cartoons proportionally. Entries must be in black ink (not in pencil or in color) on white unlined paper. Do not fold your entries. All submis-

sions become the property of Infocom, Inc. Be sure to send your cartoon to:

NZT Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. And don't forget to include a separate sheet that tells us who you are, what game you wish to win, your computer system, and where you live. Z

## They're back; C-64 versions compatible with C-128 machines

At Infocom, we believe that good things come in threes. Our third interactive fiction story this year will be one of those things. It's for those of you who are two-thirds done with our second trilogy. It's for those of you who want something three times harder incomprehensible syllables under his breath. What it all means, only time (and the next issue of *The New York Times*) will tell.

## CORRECTION

**SORRY!** Due to space restrictions, we are unable to run the photo essay "Searching for the Relics of the Emu" in this issue. We hope to find enough room in a forthcoming issue to run this interesting and provocative feature. Z

## Puzzle Number 5 Winners

Once again our incorruptible random number generator selected 25 lucky T-shirt winners:

1. Thomas Anthony Dingbaum  
Millersville, MD
2. David Gleeson  
Van Nuys, CA
3. Judy Bezzone  
Sacto, CA
4. David Bennett  
Bexley, OH
5. Ruth Anderson-Barnett  
San Diego, CA
6. David Gatewood  
Charlottesville, VA
7. Jeff Williams  
Nashville, TN
8. Dave Kassing  
Gresham, OR
9. Tom "Floyd" Wright  
Midland, MI
10. Amy Hinshaw  
Loma Linda, CA
11. Gary Laskowski  
Roseville, MI
12. Mark Hausherr  
Duxbury, MA
13. William Frenchu  
Hopewell, NJ
14. Robert Dionne  
Port Jefferson Station, NY
15. P. DeGano  
Grand Terrace, CA
16. Ray Burton III  
Roseville, CA
17. Brandy Brooks  
Lynchburg, VA
18. Greg Swieringa  
Anoka, MN
19. Bruce Stedwell  
Lake Havasu City, AZ
20. Andy Plotkin  
Rockville, MD
21. Larry Pedersen  
Atlanta, GA
22. Fred Nemece  
Tustin, CA
23. Ted Murach  
Western Springs, IL
24. Michael McSurley  
Wilmington, DE
25. Mike Lipinsky  
Millers Falls, MA Z

# Interactive Softball: > LOOK AROUND

You are standing in an open field west of a white plate. There is a catcher here.

The late afternoon sun is a fiery orange ball on the horizon.

## > INVENTORY

You have:  
a bat  
a Hawaiian shirt (being worn)  
your heart (also being worn, on your sleeve)

## > WHO AM I?

You are southpaw vice president Marc Blank. The shirt is the mock-touristy uniform, and the heart's in the right place (not a bug) because what is at stake here is no less than the bragging rights to the Eastcoast Software Softball League.

Off to the north, the pitcher lobs an arching white ball in your direction.

Okay, Marc, what do you want to do now?

> SWING AT BALL (go to paragraph A)

> TAKE THE PITCH (go to paragraph B)

It's one of those tea kettle days in summer when Massachusetts might as well be spelled M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i. Infocom vs. Lotus. Lotus is like New England weather. Can't make up their minds. Half dozen of their guys show up. They import some of ours; the game's for fun, evidenced by the ice chest, which is overfull.

## > WHO AM I?

You are "Hollywood" Dave Anderson,

HDA for short, which you're not. No, you tower over most trolls and second basemen. And, forsooth, you have a not undeserved reputation as a slugger, be it leaning over a bar or leaning over home plate. For the moment it's the latter: You're the batter. But this time something goes awry. Maybe it was the too-poor grip on the bat. Maybe it was a too-firm grip on the beer can. You sent a lil' nubber up along the third base line.

First base is northeast of here, and you can see the ice chest to the east.

Ok, Hollywood, what do you want to do now?

> RUN NORTHEAST (go to paragraph C)

> WALK EAST THEN EMPTY THE ICE CHEST THEN ENJOY THE BEER (go to paragraph D)

You're sitting in the cool shade of a large drooping tree that dwarfs the sidelines between first and home. The home team is up to bat.

A teammate dribbles a grounder to third. There is a play at first. Or rather there would have been a play had the first baseman's foot not been pulled off the bag by a wild throw. The runner is safe. Or is she? The opposing team collapses upon first base like an implosion, eager to make the unbiased call of "Out!"

> WHO AM I TO ARGUE THE CALL? You are David "Julio" Cavallo. Alternatively, Crazy Legs. You are thief-like on the basepaths. With a Cyclops hunger at the plate. But

these better than standard-level skills mean vastly more than mere personal glory on the field. Yes, they mean job security. No, that's the cynic talking. Talent translates into opportunity for pride in the name of Infocom.

Okay, Julio, what do you want to do now?

> ARGUE THE CALL (go to paragraph E)

> CALL OFF THE ARGUMENT (go to paragraph F)

A. Which ball do you mean, the white ball or the fiery orange ball?

(I assume you mean the white ball.)

Slash! The shaft of your bat connects with the pitch! But since this is softball and not mortal combat, you merely send a harmless pop-up into the field. Walking to the bench, you mutter something about KNOWING better than to have swung at the first pitch.

\*\*\* You have flied out \*\*\*

Better luck next at-bat.

B. Taken.

Your patience pays off, as on the next pitch you watch the right fielder stopping short of the fence as the ball sails over it. (Your score just went up by 1 run! You now have 3 runs out of an eventual 14.)

C. You race toward the bag, colliding with the first baseman. There is an awful "crunch!" For a moment everything becomes ... Dark

You can feel nothing, hear nothing, see nothing, smell nothing, taste nothing and you don't even know your own batting average.

> I

You have:  
broken your nose in 4 places

D. You wisely amble over toward the ice chest, shrugging your shoulders while keeping your head held high, "a trick few people can do, as it requires a lot of technically complex deltoid muscle work." Like stealing signs from the opposing catcher, a teammate reads your mind, tossing a cool one in your direction. It goes down well.

E. Since you were right on top of the play, credibility is yours. The man's foot was three car lengths off the bag. Not even in the same area code. The other team argues that "proximity" and "informality" somehow equals "out." Proximity: Sure, in the same sense Hawaii is a contiguous state. In the same sense that the space shuttle is "on the pad" half an hour after liftoff. The "informality" argument itself breaks down, analogous to a "fight for peace."

F. Just as well. Losing the battle hastens the winning of the war. Hail Infocom, victors deserved! Ending the regular season and starting the playoffs, the team is leading the league with a record of 7-1, having bested the likes of Lotus, Spinnaker, et al. Hail Infocom, indeed. **Z**



(Left) Deep in the hole at short, Jeff O'Neill scoops up a hard-hit grounder. (Right) Max Buxton, Gayle Syska, Linda Mazzotta, Spencer Steere and Renata Sorkin enjoy the game while Andrew Kaluzniacki takes a bite of Liz Cyr-

Jones' arm. Coach Hollywood Dave Anderson, who frowns on intra-team cannibalism, looks away. In the background is Chris Gugger's '77 Plymouth Grand Fury.

# NEW YORK TIMES PUZZLE

# NUMBER 7

This puzzle is based entirely on information in the game packages themselves. The following phrases correspond to numbers, and are arranged in numerical order by those numbers. Except — one is out of order. The correct answer is the letter or double-letter of the phrase that is out of numerical order.

- A. Seconds a hellhound takes to devour a human twelve times its size.
- B. In the Local History Series, the number of "The Legend of Wishbringer."
- C. Number of Ensign Lim's planet in the Ash-Down system.
- D. "Foreign" newsstand price of *Popular Enchanting*, in Zorkmids.
- E. Row of the postal grid where the poodle is located.
- F. Number, in the S-513 series, of the Ultramarine Bioceptor drawing.
- G. Number of questions that Detective Anderson asked Leslie Robner.
- H. Nate's price for dragon scales, in zorkmids.
- I. Your SW Contra sector number.
- J. Length of the GUE Tech

- magic course, in weeks.
- K. Length, in days, of Ellingsworth's trip from El Menhir to the campsite.
- L. Age of the knight who was sent to Lord Nimbus.
- M. Depth of the Frobton Bay shipping channel, in meters.
- N. Length of the Linder marriage, in years.
- O. Grotches produce this amount time their weight in trot each day.
- P. Page number that "There Goes the Neighborhood" article begins on.
- Q. Length of the *Mary Margaret*, in feet.
- R. Volume of Ellingsworth's hieroglyphic cube, in cubic inches.
- S. Number of pocket calculator functions on a Mark IV with that option.
- T. Amount of Outfitters International's price increase for diving cages.
- U. Monthly subscription rate for the Santa Ana *Register*, in 1938 pennies.
- V. Price of special delivery to Festeron.
- W. Phi value of AX01 at the time

- the mass detector output was made.
- X. Arthur's street number on Country Lane.
- Y. Marshall Robner's weight, in pounds, at the time of his death.
- Z. Model number of Joo Janta's Super-Chromatic Peril-Sensitive Sunglasses.
- AA. Number of pounds lost by several *National Inquisitor* staffers.
- BB. Street number on Wisconsin Avenue of Costumes Unlimited.
- CC. Depth of the *HMS Intransigent* wreck.
- DD. Outfitters International's street number on Wharf Road.
- EE. Number of years that Gregory Franklin served as Central Mentality.
- FF. Number of thrills awaiting you on "The Galaxy's Playground," Accardi-3.
- GG. Adeline-exchange phone

- number of the Brass Lantern restaurant.
- HH. Excelsior Tower suite number of Coates, Shavely & Coats.
- II. Turgid Eddy's post office box number.
- JJ. Year that the *Sao Vera* sank.
- KK. Year that King's Point Realty was founded.
- LL. Year of the *Fianna's* shipwreck.
- MM. Year of the unsuccessful Ellingsworth expedition.
- NN. Publication year of "Four Shipwrecks Off Hardscrabble Island."
- OO. Zip code of Rose Ellingsworth.
- PP. Receipt number for cowboy costume.
- QQ. Linder's street address on Lyman Drive.
- RR. William Cochrane's business zip code.
- SS. The "zip code" of the Magick Shoppe, with hyphens removed.



## Solution to NZT Puzzle Number Five

Puzzle Five produced a fairly low number of entries for an admittedly "Expert Level" puzzle, but most of the entries we received were correct. If you answered the 165 True-False questions correctly, and blackened the corresponding squares on your grid, you would have wound up with the following graphic:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
2	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
3	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
4	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
5	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
6	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
7	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
8	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
9	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
10	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
11	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

This is the message over the doorway in the Crypt Anteroom in *Zork II*.

There were exactly 100 entries, of which 70 were correct. For the six people who answered "Crypt" — close, but no cigar. The most common wrong answer was the Royal Puzzle from *Zork III*. Many of the wrong answers were understandable: the Maze in *Zork I*, the Map Room in *Enchanter*, the Dark in *Hitchhiker's*. Other wrong answers were very cryptic: the Burial Chamber in *Infidel*, Forest Path in *Zork I*, Shuttle Car Betty in *Planetfall*, and the Tool Shed in *Deadline*.



ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt Size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTEST RULES:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by November 1, 1985.
3. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

### PRIZE:

A New York Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

**RETURN TO:** Infocom  
 NZT Puzzle  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

## SPELLBREAKER IS HERE!

### The Exciting Conclusion to the Enchanter Trilogy

In a world founded on magic, sorcerers rule the land, creating the spells needed to do everything from making bread to taming wild animals. Your position as a leader of the Circle of Enchanters has earned you respect from all others in the kingdom.

But now a crisis has fallen. Magic itself seems to be failing. Spells go strangely awry or cease to work altogether. The populace is becoming restive, and rumblings are heard concerning Enchanters.

A great conclave is held, convening all the guildmasters in the land. One by one, they step forward, describing the devastating effects of the diminished magic. Beer tastes like grue bathwater, pastries are thick and greasy, huntsmen are unable to control wild beasts.

Suddenly, in the midst of a discourse on the difficulty of writing poetry without magical help on the rhymes, the Guildmaster of the Poets undergoes a bizarre transformation. Looking in shock around the room, you find that each and every

guildmaster has been turned into an amphibian! All, that is, but yourself... and a shadowy cloaked figure who slips quietly out the door.

Thus begins *Spellbreaker*, the riveting conclusion to Infocom's Enchanter series (including *Enchanter* and *Sorcerer*™) and the final chapter in the story of a magician's rise from novice to mage.

*Spellbreaker* was written by Dave Lebling, co-author of the *Zork*®

#### Marathon: p. 2

trilogy and *Enchanter* and author of *Starcross*® and *Suspect*™. According to Lebling, "You don't have to have played the other games in our fantasy series in order to enjoy this one, although that makes it more fun. People who have played *Enchanter* and *Sorcerer* will find familiar moments, and lots of things you found in the *Zork* series are in here."

There are more characters than in *Enchanter* and *Sorcerer*, each with a distinct personality. *Spellbreaker* also contains technical innovations,



A Frobozz Magic Magic Equipment Catalog, an Enchanter's Guild pin, and six Enchanter trading cards are included in every Spellbreaker package.

such as allowing you to add some words to the already large vocabulary.

Although *Spellbreaker* is an expert-level game, it's very non-linear, giving you plenty of geography and paraphernalia to enjoy without having to actually solve all the puzzles. Less-experienced players can still have fun exploring the environment, while crackerjacks

will find their skills tested by the most challenging puzzles ever concocted by Infocom.

Each *Spellbreaker* package includes a copy of the Frobozz Magic Magic Equipment Catalog (Special Crisis Edition), a mystical Enchanter's Guild pin, and a set of Enchanter trading cards. It will retail for \$49.95 for most systems. **Z**

## Zork Banned!

As we sit in Steve's office planning the fate of Europe for the next few years, Steve and I have little concern about developments in the New World, especially not about grumblings in a small town on a skimpy piece of land on something called "The Cape." Just as I convince Steve to not invade Belgium in exchange for some foggy city in England, the phone rings. Steve answers the phone. Some disgruntled person is calling from the New World, the Cape specifically (a town called South Dennis), and temporarily ensnares Steve in an argument. I note that Steve seems disturbed by what sounds like a complaining customer wasting his time. He gets

off the phone in a huff. I understand. We have decisions to make. Wars to fight. Countries to conquer. *Diplomacy*® is a time-consuming business. It was a good thing it wasn't my boss on the phone. I have no business in Meretzky's office!

When the May 16th issue of *The Register* (a small newspaper serving a few towns on Cape Cop) landed on my desk, I learned who the disgruntled customer was. Jan Leary was, in fact, not a customer at all. She was a parent who was very concerned about the subject matter of a book by Steve called *Zork: The Malifestro Quest*. The book, loosely based on the *Zork* empire, has two heroes trying to save the empire from the

greedy wizard Malifestro. The book is vaguely interactive in the sense that the reader is given options which will affect the outcome of the story — it's a "pick-a-path" book. As with *Zork I*, the reader (player?) runs the risk of having his or her throat cut with a stiletto. What Ms. Leary missed is that just like the games, you can restart the book and come up with a better decision on your second pass.

In the words of *The Register*, "She sees the relationship between violence in the book and violence coming from kids as fact, not just a possibility." Her son had purchased the book at a school fair; Leary has since approached the school to ban the book from its library and future fairs, purporting that "such reading promotes demonic worship and glorifies violence for school

children." (Don't panic yet ... Infocom has a smaller following than Jim Jones, the Hari Krishnas, or Reverend Moon! O.K., scratch Reverend Moon, but definitely smaller than either of the other two.)

When asked to comment on the proposed ban, Meretzky said that at least Leary, who calls herself a "kamikaze for Jesus," is not so fanatical about removing Darwin from the schools. Leary, in kamikaze-like fashion, said, "I will fight this book with my dying breath." Meretzky is quick to deny the rumor that upon uttering these words, Leary was enveloped in a cloud of sinister black fog... Leary, however, mysteriously couldn't be reached for comment. (She probably has since discovered *Zork I* and is having trouble getting into the house!) **Z**



## Call the Exterminator

Even with our intensive testing, some bugs manage to slip through our Quality Control Department. In past issues of the NZT we listed some of those bugs for the *Zork* series, *Starcross*, *Deadline*®, *Sorcerer*, *Infidel*®, and *Planetfall*®. We received a tremendous response from our NZT readers, who reported bugs that they had found. Here are some more embarrassing (and sometimes hilarious) bugs from our releases, as reported by our outside bug hunters.

Note of warning: if you haven't finished one of the games below, you might not want to read the associated paragraphs.

### Enchanter

If you send the turtle into the temple, the game acts as if you had gone in instead, and you end up dying. The ASPCA must have slipped that one in the game to give some protection to turtles.

If you guncho the magic rope that protects the jewelled box, the rope disappears and the box opens. However, the box is empty, and if you LOOK, you can still see the box coiled by the rope. How's that for an optical illusion?

If you move the lighted portrait in the gallery, then LOOK, the portrait has disappeared in the blink of an eye.

The last *Enchanter* bug we'll mention has to do with keeping your

water jug filled. As long as you have some water in it, you can refill it to the brim by saying TAKE WATER, no matter where you are. That's a pretty neat variation on the decanter of endless water.

### Sorcerer

For you magicians, if you want to finish the game with all the points, don't open the chest with the rezrov spell. You won't get the 15 points you should get if you had opened it the mundane way.

In earlier versions, gaspar didn't work properly in the Coal Mine. Also, you could re-create any scroll by typing TAKE THE AIMFIZ SCROLL (for example). These bugs have been fixed.

For those careless few who got their spell books wet (a definite no-no with gnusto-sensitive paper), did you notice that the scrolls that got wet weren't ruined? If we can track down the formula for that batch of scroll paper, we could make a fortune in the spell book market.

### Planetfall

Most of the reported bugs have been fixed in the latest version.

Here's a sample of some of the bugs for those of you with earlier releases.

If you got the fused bedistor and then dropped it anywhere, you would have trouble getting it again because it thought it was still fused to its

socket.

Floyd was so eager to please that he would get the shiny fromitz board for you over and over and over....

If you thought you had escaped the mutants and pressed the elevator button at the bottom of the shaft, you were probably surprised when the elevator door closed just as the mutants were about to reach it. (Mutants are almost as ubiquitous as grues ... or bugs.)

### The Witness®

For those of you who like to drink, you can GET A DRINK anywhere, including outside the house.

An old bug that was fixed were places and objects you could get into but could not get back out of. If you got into the shower or the broken window and then tried to get out, the program just told you that you would do better to stand up (thinking you were in the wooden chair).

Here's an interesting series of responses:

#### >MAKE LOVE TO MONICA

(Sorry, but English is my second language. Please rephrase that.)

#### >ASK MONICA TO MAKE LOVE

(Your request was incomplete. Next time, say what you want Monica to make the love from.)

#### >MAKE LOVE FROM MONICA

"Eat, drink, and make merry, for tomorrow we shall die!"

#### >ASK MONICA ABOUT LOVE

"That's between Mother and me."

### Infidel

Remember the famous container bug from *Zork I*? Well, it's in *Infidel*. Try putting the knapsack in the silver chalice and vice-versa. They both disappear. This bug will not be in any future Infocom games (or so our testing department promises).

If you put the beam in the niches and then go back to the barge and say GET BEAM, you fall into a pit of rats (oops). Those pesty rat pits seem to be everywhere.

For the mathematically inclined, try calculating the weight of the beam assuming a density equal to that of water. (See the end of the article for the answer, Hercules.)

For Wendy's fans, you can ask the question: WHERE'S THE BEEF? If you're lucky, you'll get the response "It's right here!" Take that, competitors!

Here's an embarrassing contradictory description. With the water in the silver chalice type: FILL SILVER CHALICE WITH WATER. The response is "The silver chalice is filled with water; the silver chalice is now empty." A little like tea and no tea.

Stay tuned for more bugs in future NZTs. If you find any bugs, remember to call the exterminator.

[Answer to the weight of beam problem: A beam 10 feet long and 12 inches in diameter is about 500 pounds.]



## Spellbreaker Marathon:

### Wellesley Wins the First Annual Marathon of the Minds

The Boston Museum of Science, along with Infocom, sponsored the First Annual Marathon of the Mind at ComputerPlace (part of the Boston Museum of Science). This event, organized by Sue Kur of ComputerPlace and Spencer Steere of Infocom, was a race between college teams to finish *Spellbreaker* — Infocom's latest interactive fiction — before it finished them. Included were teams from Wellesley, Boston University, University of Massachusetts at Boston, MIT, Boston College, and Harvard. The contest started at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 14th, and lasted 20 hours, straight throughout the night. The

teams were allowed three hints each in order to be able to finish the expert-level game before having to return to classes on Monday. Winners of the contest were Sherene Aram and Robbin Evans of the Wellesley #1 team, the only team to finish. Only one other team came close to finishing, but they made a fatal mistake near the end and had to drop out. At the very end, all the other teams quit playing to watch the winning team solve the climactic final scene. The winners received a free Infocom game of their choice and a free party to be thrown at ComputerPlace.



## The New York® Times

**Writers** Gary Brennan, Michael Dornbrook, Jennifer Fine, Stuart Galley, Paul Gross, Elizabeth Langosy, Steven Meretzky, Jeff O'Neill, Jonathan Palace

**Production** Cynthia Curtis, Jonathan Palace, Michelle Simpson

**Special thanks to** Alice, Barry, Brian, Dan, Donna, Ellen, Jen, Joanne, Ken, Lori, Nancy, Paula, Phil, and Tom

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# Mail Bag

**Dear Zork Control (if there is any),**

At first, *Zork* brought our family together for many happy hours of brainstorming. However, *Zork II* and *Zork III* proved addictive and led to excessive indulgence. My children fled to college to escape incessant demands for solutions from a game-playing mom. My husband went lonely to bed night after night... But at least when he "worked late" he knew where I was...

After everyone left, I took to accosting different types of strange men in lonely bars hoping to find another *Zork* addict. Unfortunately or alas! I now know all the true addicts are home playing *Suspended*® or *Enchanter*!


The following is a sigh of frustration written during enforced withdrawal from *Zork* to tackle *Sorcerer*:

I found the Cyclops, I solved the dragon,  
I robbed the bank with little flaggin'.  
I climbed the falls and found the treasure.  
I floated the balloon with greatest pleasure.  
I gathered the spheres and summoned the demon,

So with the Wizard am more than even.  
Maze and puzzle room did not hinder,  
Einstein and Oppenheimer were as kinder [German pronunciation],  
I crossed the lake and got the key,  
I've a score of seven from dear Zork III,  
But try as I might in every year,  
The crown jewels still have naught to fear.  
Twice I've been down to the Dungeon Master,  
And sent back, not wiser, even faster.  
The carousel room only took a minute,  
But the jewel cage STILL has everything in it!

So after 2½ years of being a purist, I'm now writing to your new supplier of hint books. Thank you for staying in touch so that I know where to send for them.

**Mrs. J.A. Lordi**  
Ocala, FL

Please send letters to: NZT, 125  
CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge,  
MA 02140 


## They Said It...

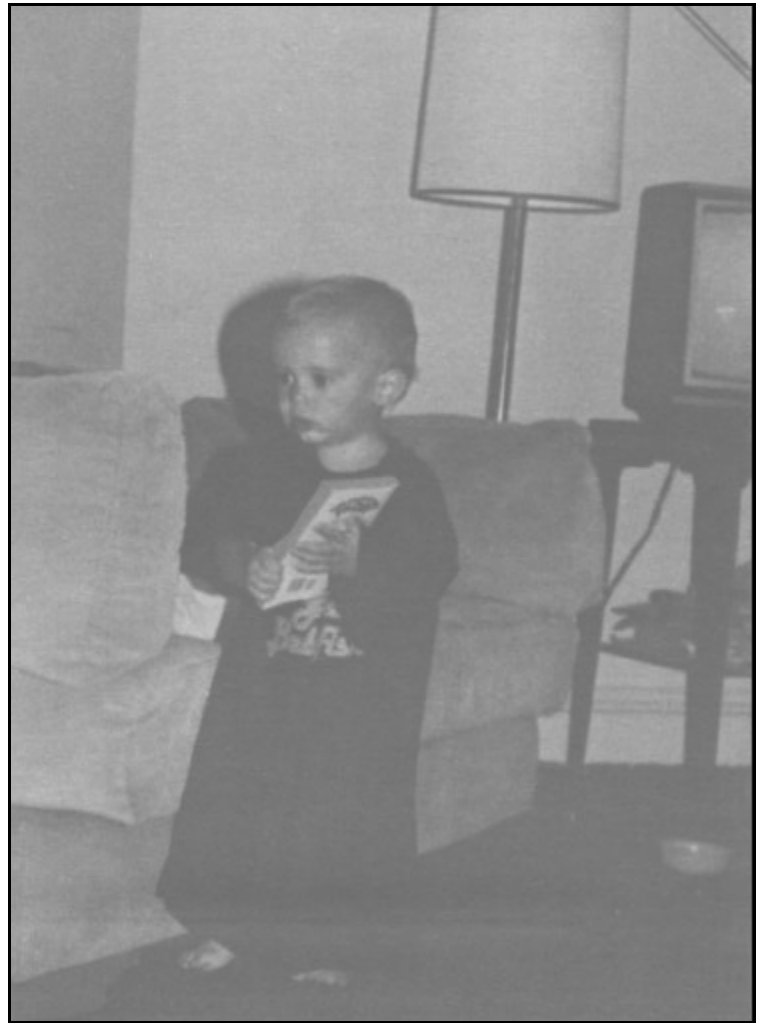
*The Boston Phoenix*, published in neighboring Beantown, featured Infocom in its September 24 High Tech section. Said the *Phoenix*, "These games do strange things to your perception. When you turn off your computer and go out into the street, it's difficult to remember that you're no longer traversing an imaginary world. This kind of obsession, which can afflict you even if you've never touched a computer before, is to key to the astounding success of the Cambridge-based firm Infocom and its long line of interactive fiction software." But we don't have to tell you that.

Another key to Infocom's success is the advanced technology used to create our interactive novels. A recent article in *Publisher's Weekly*™ focused on Interactive Fiction Plus™, the latest addition to our unique development system. Interactive Fiction Plus allows Infocom game designers to double the size of their

programs, resulting in longer, more complicated stories and more sophisticated user interfaces. The first story developed in Interactive Fiction Plus: Steve Meretzky's *A Mind Forever Voyaging*™, in which you journey into the future in the role of the world's first sentient computer.

Another key to Infocom's success is our network of dedicated fans, which extends around the globe! We've got an especially large number of them in England, and that's why the British Broadcasting Corporation came to Cambridge to do a special program on Infocom. The BBC spent a day wandering the halls, speaking with a variety of Infopeople, and even sitting in on an Implementors' Lunch (a legendary weekly event garnering all the Infocom game writers). The resulting program, which will air in November, profiles the company, focusing on the development of *Spellbreaker*.

Last but not least, this quote from *Analog Computing*: "Achieving the impossible is an Infocom exclusive." 





Top fashion model Robert McCarron in a rare candid shot, sporting the babel fish T-shirt. McCarron's only comment: "This is a small?"

## Take Off Your Shirt

And put on an Infocom "I GOT THE BABEL FISH" T-shirt! Over 600 *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*™ fans are already sporting these distinctive shirts! If you're the only bloke on the block without one, don't panic. Babel fish T-shirts are still available.

They're made of 100% cotton, in fashionable go-with-anything black,

with the same bright lettering as the front of your *Hitchhiker's* game package. There's a size to fit everyone (S, M, L, or XL), and they're only \$7.95. So what are you waiting for? Just send in the order form below or call our toll-free number (800-262-6868) and an Infocom babel fish T-shirt will be yours! 



Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirts(s). Enclosed is a check or money order (no cash please!) for \$7.95 per T-shirt.

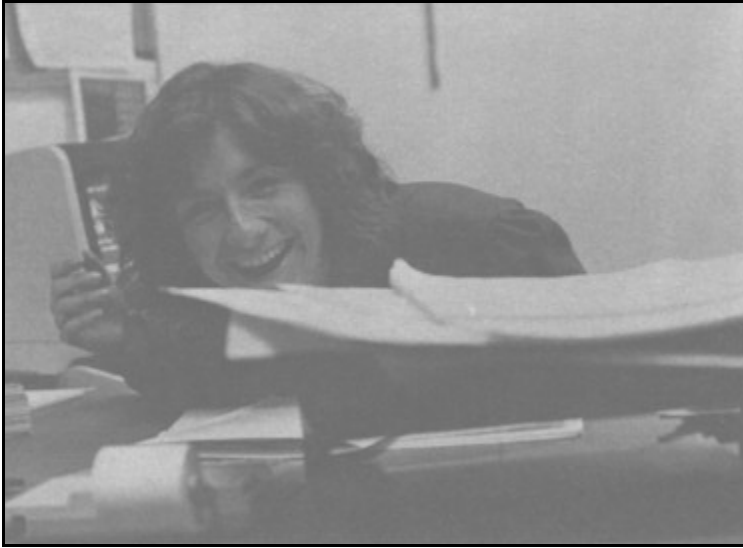
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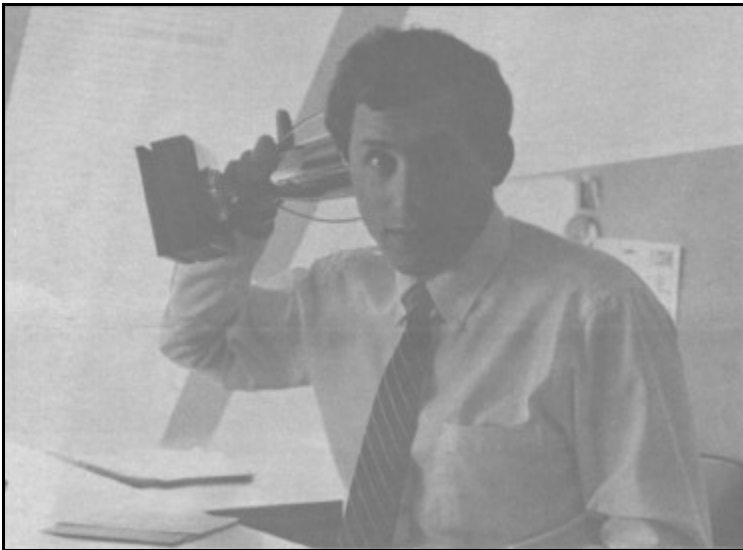
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send to: T-Shirts, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.



Danielle DeNicolo, trying to hid (unsuccessfully) behind her in-box. "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping."



Barry Star, before the operation to remove an unusual growth on his trophy.

## >Burn Records With Torch

No, we didn't have a fire, but some of our records were inadvertently destroyed. Our biggest loss was the outlandish but true stories sent in by hundreds of you wild-and-crazy adventurers. Some of the more notable ones include an entire town in Tennessee where Infocom games are a community obsession. One woman wrote asking for customized T-shirts for the whole population, so citizens could check off the games they'd completed, and display it proudly on their backs. Another fan sent pictures showing the elaborate trick he played on his brother for giving him a misleading *Zork I* hint. His scheme included a large

Chinese-puzzle type stone which housed a parchment scroll, and a black pearl (which his brother had told him was *Zork's* 20th treasure)!

Do these stories sound familiar? Do you have similar stories of your own to tell? Please write to us! We're anxious to recover as many of these gems as possible, and we're always interested in new "Infocom True Tales of Adventure." You could be quoted in *The New Zork Times*, or interviewed by a nationally-known reporter. Remember, what we're after is true tales; fiction writers need not apply.



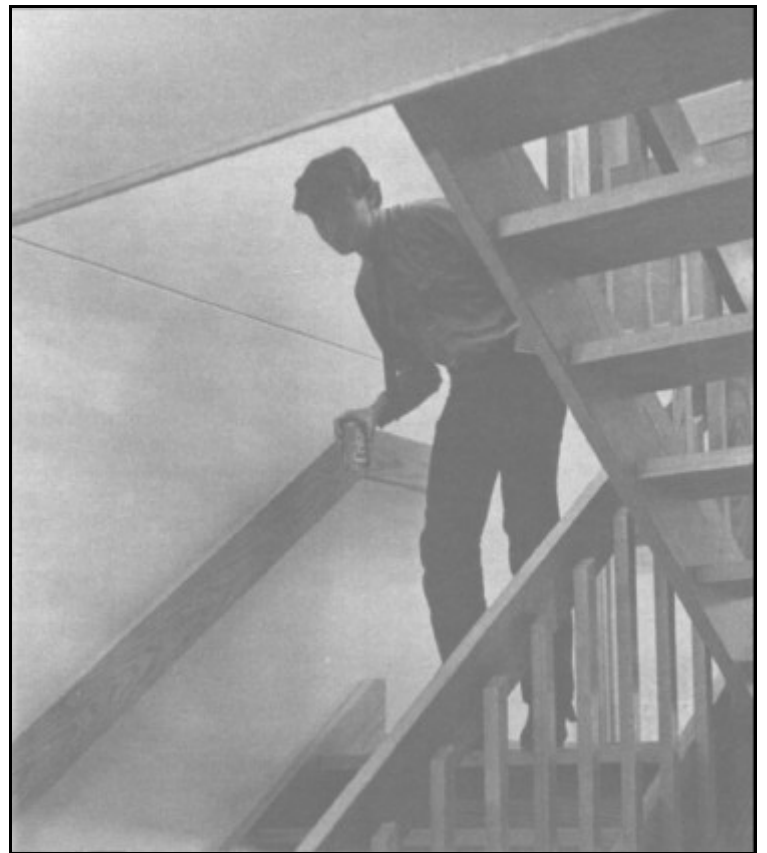
## Infocom Beats Spinnaker in Softball Championship

Infocom adds yet another trophy to its case: the "Floppy Cup" of the Software Softball Eastern Division. Spinnaker defeated Infocom 12 to 5 in the first of the best-of-3 series. (Infocom hoped for a rally in the ninth, but the game was suspended by police action.) But Infocom

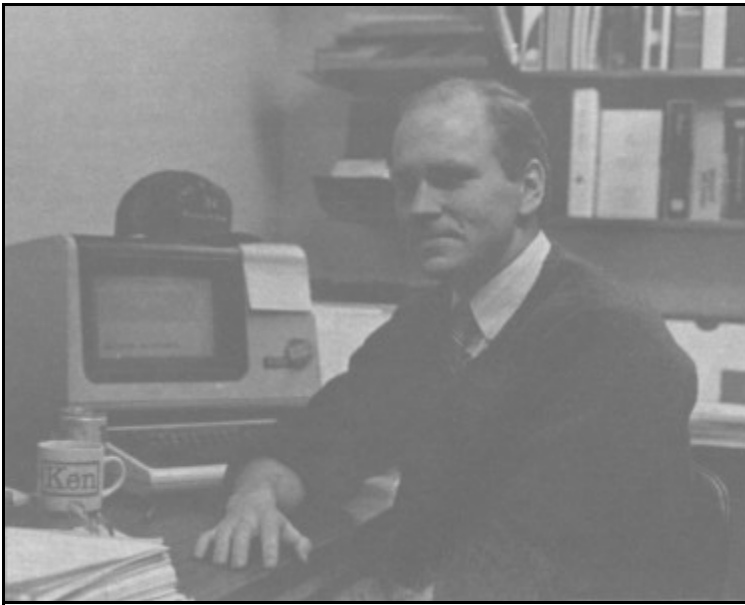
players pumped keyboards for days, and went on to defeat Spinnaker in the next 2 games, 18 to 8 and 14 to 8. Coach Dave "Hollywood" Anderson was last seen celebrating in a Chinese restaurant, wearing a grass skirt and giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a tiki bowl. **Z**



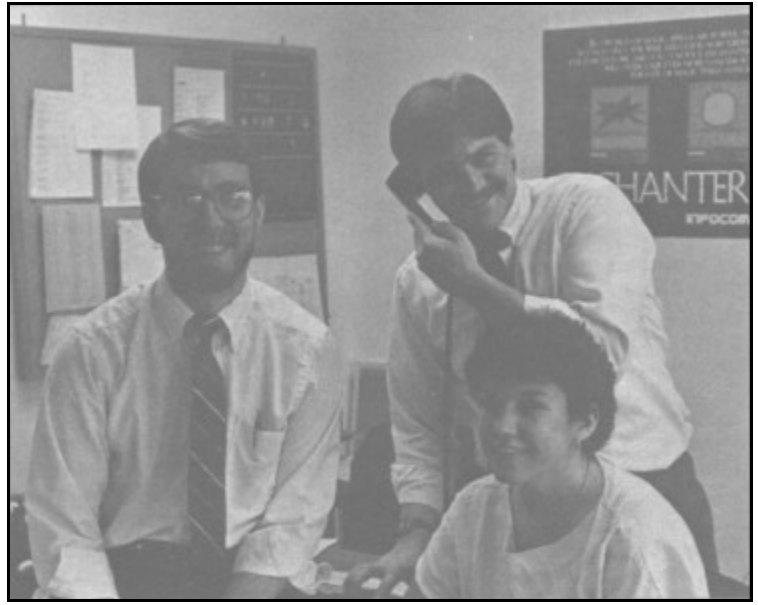
Paul "Catfish" DiLascia, a terror on the mound, a terror at bat, a terror no matter where you meet him. Future ambition: To marry Donna Summer.



"Max" Buxton, a dangerous Infotester. "Don't put one foot in your job and the other in your dreams." Future ambition: To live in his dreams.



Ken Story, "the gentleman of the basketball court" (said with sarcasm).



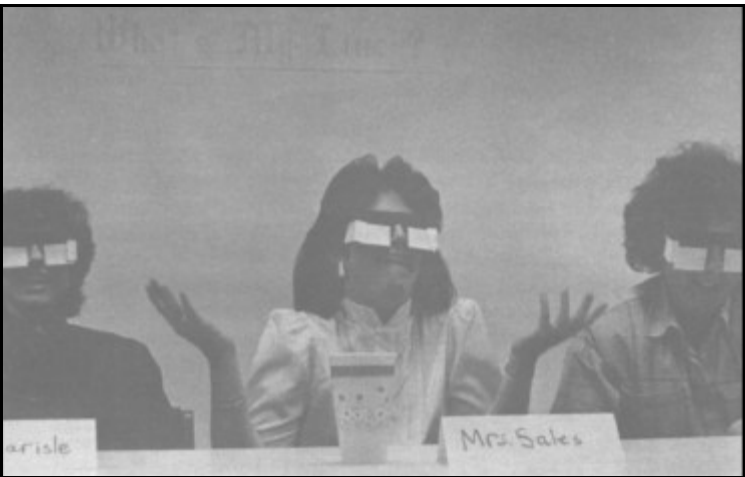
Ken Feehan, Chris Gugger, and Ellen Neavitt. Despite their ruthless appearance, they are friendly and harmless unless they're driving.



Dave "Hollywood" Anderson (right), acting as host at a "What's My Line" contest. The guest, "Ms. X," went home with Gary Brennan, seen hiding in the rear.



Mike Dornbrook, the man who single-handedly started and ran The New Zork Times. It's his fault you're reading this caption instead of doing something constructive.



Linda "Tex" Avery, trying to guess the identity of "Ms. X." The cup in front of her is full of fruit juice. Honest.

## Gnu News

**Sirs,**

Many people say that yaks have no sense of humor. This is untrue. Yaks have a highly sophisticated sense of humor, as the yak joke below proves. Gnus have no sense of humor.

Grunt. Grunt grunt grunt. Sniff! (Paw, paw, paw.)

Grunt? (pause) Grunt sniff!

**Signed, YAK X**

This letter from a disgruntled reader has prompted *The New Zork Times* editorial staff to launch a serious investigation of its own attitudes and prejudices toward yaks,

resulting in a 105-page white paper that is now required reading for all staff writers.

But even this is not enough. Disgruntled readers demand that the sins of the past be rectified. (Gruntled readers demand nothing, as usual.) So, in the spirit of equal treatment for all bovine species, *The New Zork Times* now begins a series of public-service messages designed to enlighten its readership on the subject of gnus.

Did you know...

- ▶ that the gnu is an African antelope, bulky but compact?
- ▶ that "gnu" comes from the Bushman word "nqu"?
- ▶ that Dutch settlers in Africa called the gnu a "wildebeest"?

## Cornerstone™ Receives Rave Reviews

The reviews are just beginning to come in for *Cornerstone* and it appears that we have another smash hit.

"Cornerstone is the best program I have ever used. I found no flaws. It runs smoothly, is simple to set up, easy to learn, forgives mistakes...."

Anticipation of the user's needs and ease of use make *Cornerstone* a gem....

Plain English is used throughout, making a review difficult because you needn't be told that to print a *Cornerstone* report you need only choose 'PRINT'. In other words, the program is so easy to use, explaining its use is almost redundant. If you need a relational database, buy *Cornerstone*."

—Kerry Leichtman,  
*PC Week*, May 7, 1985

"Cornerstone successfully combines power and ease of use in one program.... I'm sold on *Cornerstone*. Without any programming, the information I need is at my fingertips. *Cornerstone* operates the way most business people think. And it is so well designed that no extensive training is necessary.... The program exceeds the user-friendliness of PFS: FILE and offers the power of a programmable database manager. *Cornerstone* could easily save months of dBASE II or dBASE III programming. If you don't want to program, but need all these capabilities and the ability to relate multiple files in your database applications, you want *Cornerstone*."

—Ira H. Krakow,  
*Business Computer Systems*, June 1985

"The terms 'powerful' and 'easy to use' are pressed into service describing software so often that they're in danger of losing their punch.

*Cornerstone*, a relational database for the IBM PC, breathes new meaning into these two overworked adjectives and is one of the few programs that deserve both.... *Cornerstone* is a newcomer, but its extensive menu structure, copious and innovative on-line help, and relational power make it worthy of serious consideration by businesses looking for a simple way to handle almost any kind of information

managing task."

—Joel C. Don,  
*Popular Computing*, June, 1985

"The cover of darkness surrounding database programs is partly because they are so difficult to handle.... But a new program, *Cornerstone*, may well change the popular notions about database software. Billed as the sophisticated database system for the non-programmer, its contribution to the popularization of databases is its flexibility."

—Erik Sandberg-Diment,  
*The New York Times*, May 12, 1985

Many large corporations are evaluating *Cornerstone* for their internal needs. The initial feedback from them has been extremely positive.

"Enclosed is a copy of the report sent to the Vatican and the Apostolic Nuncio about three weeks ago. You will note that *Cornerstone* — even there — was the preferred relational database manager and has so been recommended. I have had no written reply as yet — but one phone call (from Fr. Goffney) asking how it compared to dBASE III. You need not feel slighted in the comparison. Evidently the University has just acquired a copy of dBASE III for evaluation. Frankly, it is my judgment that there IS no comparison, none worth the name. I have a copy of *Microrim's* Clout, and again, there's no real comparison. I have played with Ability, Framework, Lotus, Jazz, Symphony. I find all of them lacking. Too much that does too little too rarely for too much cost.

*Cornerstone* is the first software I've found that I've been willing to recommend for a price over \$150. It's the first I've seen that's worth it.

Frankly, it's the best thing I've seen yet, and I have already recommended it as a standard item of purchase to both the American bishops and to the Vatican. The report of which I sent you a duplicate printout went directly to Rome via Apostolic Nuncio's diplomatic pouch, destined to land directly on the Pope's desk."

—Reverend H.R. Stockert,  
KtB, KH, KCR, OAE. Z

## Mac Sampler

The world-famous Infocom Sampler will be available for the Macintosh in November! The Sampler (already available for the IBM, Apple, Atari, and Commodore) has excerpts from *Zork I*, *Infidel*, *Planetfall*, and *The Witness*; and it includes a tutorial

plus blatantly self-serving propaganda. It costs just \$7.95 and includes a coupon for \$8.00 off your next Infocom purchase. And it has a money-back guarantee: Infocom will refund your money even if you don't buy another Infocom product. The Sampler is virtually a "no-lose" bargain. If you haven't already bought one, you should! Z

## A MIND FOREVER VOYAGING Goes to the Library

Midtown Manhattan. It's raining so hard, the island should be underwater; except it's so hot, the rain sizzles on the sidewalk and disappears. A vendor under a Sabrett's umbrella opens a new package of hot dogs, which are steamed instantaneously. "Kraut?" he asks, and without waiting for an answer smother the bun and the napkin with yellowish-brown substance. You give the vendor a bill — this morning it was crisp, but in this suffocating moistness it's as limp as the cabbage — and hurry toward the library.

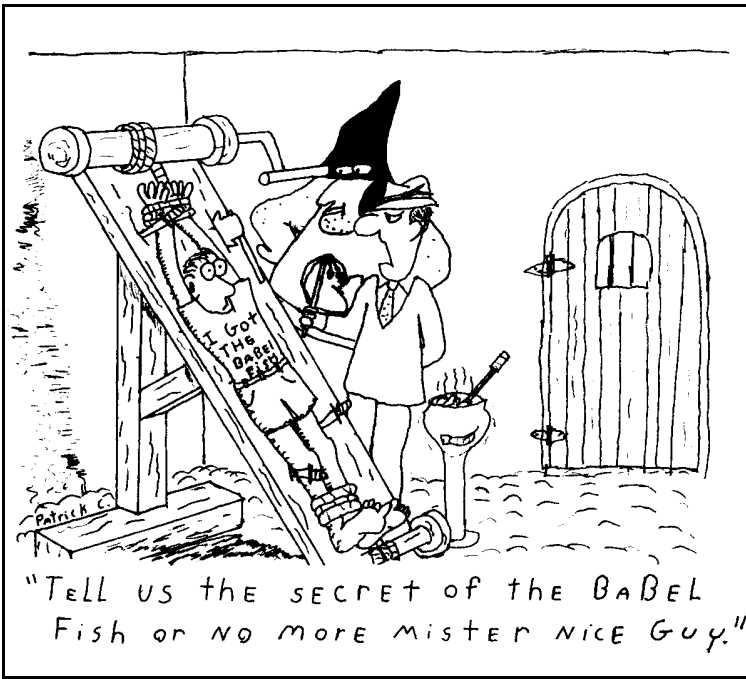
The two lions standing sentry outside the New York Public Library, on 5th Avenue at 42nd Street, seem particularly lonely in this downpour; a couple of crocodiles would look more at home. You push your way into the marbled lobby of the library and shake yourself off. It's drier inside, but no cooler. You ask a guard where the Trustees' Room is, and he directs you to the third floor. You climb the stone steps and pull open a huge wooden door, so massive and intricately carved that you stop to admire it. You enter the Trustees' Room, feel the coolness, and close the door behind you.

Someone offers you some tea. Tea? In this weather? Yet the air here is bearable — comfortable, even — and the room exudes respectability and elegance. Persian tapestries adorn the oak-paneled walls, and the massive marble fireplace (significantly larger than your first apartment) seems as natural as the brass-and-crystal chandelier, the busts of Greek poets, and the Louis XIV tables. And it IS teatime. Cream, please; no sugar. Scones? Help yourself. You hope your breath doesn't smell like sauerkraut. Z

And so nearly 100 press personnel braved the heat and the rain to attend Infocom's press conference for *A Mind Forever Voyaging*. The conference began with a dramatic reading by silken-voiced Stu Galley, author of *The Witness* and co-author of *Seastalker*®. The audience was then subjected to nearly 30 minutes of blatantly self-serving propaganda by Infocom President Joel Berez, Manager of Product Development Jonathan Palace, and Product Manager Michael Dornbrook. (It was, by the way, the first time Berez had been seen in public since eating 71 chocolate donuts and a package of Twinkies during a midnight binge in June.)

And, of course, Steve Meretzky spoke. Tall, shamblin' Steve, author of *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, honest yet modest, talking with the charming drawl that comes from growing up in Yonkers. He spoke of "pushing back the envelope," not just technologically with Interactive Fiction Plus, but also creatively with a NON-puzzle-oriented story. More than anything else, the audience was left with the impression that interactive fiction can be more, much more, than puzzles.

You leave the Trustees' Room — where does Infocom find these places? — and journey homeward. You stay up half the night asking yourself questions. How did interactive fiction evolve from *Zork* into *A Mind Forever Voyaging*? If interactive fiction can do this, then what else can it do? What will Infocom do next? What will interactive fiction be like 5, or 10, or 50 years from now? Infocom also journeys homeward, to Cambridge, glad that others are asking the same questions it asks itself every day. Z



## Cartoon Winner

Patrick S. Campbell of Hamilton, Ohio, wins our cartoon contest this issue. We'll be sending him an Atari version of *Wishbringer*™, as he requested.

Send us *your* cartoons. All cartoons will be printed approximately 4¼ inches wide by 5 inches deep, so please draw your cartoons proportionally. Entries must be in black ink (no pencil or color illustra-

tions will be considered) on white unlined paper. Do not fold your entries! All submissions become the property of Infocom, Inc. Send your cartoons to: NZT Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. Don't forget to include a separate sheet that tells us who you are, what game you wish to win, your computer system, and where you live.

## Winners of NZT Puzzle #6

Since there were fewer correct answers than our maximum number of prizes, no drawing was necessary this time around, and everyone who sent in a correct answer gets a T-shirt. Now, regarding this month's winners — I don't go out of my way to make fun of our most loyal customers, but some of these names are pretty weird. And four Brians is very suspicious. Anyway, here's the list of puzzle wizards:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Barry J. Kriha<br>Gibbon, NE          | 7. William Perez<br>San Jose, CA          |
| 2. Brian Roark<br>Salem, VA              | 10. James Marcalesco<br>Villa Park, CA    |
| 3. James Kellogg<br>Colorado Springs, CO | 11. Martha McGhee-Glisson<br>Atlanta, GA  |
| 4. Brian Burns<br>Houston, TX            | 12. Tom Betz<br>Fairbanks, AK             |
| 5. Michael Marcus<br>Boca Raton, FL      | 13. Matt Wilhoit<br>Charleston, WV        |
| 6. Brian Allen<br>Ypsilanti, MI          | 14. Noemi Mower<br>Salt Lake City, UT     |
| 7. Brian Bonner<br>College, PA           | 15. Steve Rutter<br>Seekonk, MA           |
| 8. Ed Clayton<br>Asheboro, NC            | 16. Bruce Bock<br>Dixon, CA               |
|  | 17. Travis Mott<br>Big Rapids, MI         |
|  | 18. Charles Engebretson<br>Santa Rita, CA |
|  | 19. Paul Brunner<br>Philadelphia, PA      |
|  | 20. Rick Glisson<br>Atlanta, GA           |
|  | 21. Brace E. Stout<br>Fort Wayne, IN      |
|  | 22. Chris Richard<br>Iowa City, IA        |
|  | 23. Housty Jayne<br>New Canaan, CT        |

## Man Bites Man in FOOBLITZKY TOURNAMENT

In a stunning upset victory, Business Product Development defeated Consumer Product Development in the first-round match of a *Fooblitzky*™ Tournament at Infocom.

"I'm terrible at record keeping," admitted winning player Brian Berkowitz, one of the masterminds behind Infocom's sophisticated database, Cornerstone. Indeed, a post-game autopsy of Berkowitz's work-sheet showed squiggly lines and arrows, several question marks, some simple arithmetic, a tuna salad recipe, a favorite Berkowitz quote ("Nothing ventured, nothing lost") and little else.

"I can't believe it," said a dumbfounded Jonathan Palace, who, in the process of losing big, also set the record for playing *Fooblitzky*

more times and losing more times than anyone else in the universe. "My notes are great." Spectators disagreed, saying that they had seen traffic accidents neater than Palace's notes.

Berkowitz's partner, Tim Anderson, was later voted MLP (Most Lucky Player) by a small panel of *New York Times* editors. In an unusual move, the panel also voted Anderson MUP (Most Unlucky Player). "*Fooblitzky* brings out the weirdness in people," noted Anderson wryly.

Ironically, it was Palace's teammate, Dave Lebling, who seemed in control most of the game. He claimed to be the first player to know all 4 correct items (a claim impossible to substantiate but

thoroughly in keeping with Lebling's personality). Lebling's clever attempt to confuse his opponents (by discarding a correct item) backfired when it totally baffled his partner (who, judges point out, was born baffled). "I thought we had it won," said Lebling, "until I saw the look on Palace's face."

The Business Product Development team advances, if it can be

---

"Fooblitzky brings out the weirdness in people."

---

called that, in the Tournament, and is next slated to play a team from "Creative Marketing": Elizabeth Langosy from Creative Services and someone (to be determined) from Marketing. Marketing did not enter a team of its own in the Tournament because potential player Susan Sobel said she "would rather give birth" than play *Fooblitzky*.

## ERRATUM

Due to incredibly complex but boring circumstances, portions of "A History of Zork" in our last issue were printed out of order. We apologize for the inconvenience.

The following hints will help you find the correct order. *Warning:* If you want to solve the puzzle on your own, don't read any further!

A. After reading "Come here, Mr. Watson; I want you!", start reading from "Mike Dornbrook was enlisted to test. ..."

B. After reading "Mail Bag," start reading from "We had another product. ..."

C. After reading "*Sorcerer*," start reading from "*Zork II* was offered. ..."

D. Whenever the story mentions "yaks," think "gnus" instead.

**NEW YORK TIMES PUZZLE**

**NUMBER 8**

- A) You are drunk.
- B) You're going to start sloshing around soon.
- C) He smiles. "Money is our most important product."
- D) You receive a painful electric shock.
- E) Weird! The candle remains lit even as it disappears beneath the surface of the river.
- F) What a detective! "Quick! Arrest that file drawer before it escapes!"
- G.) I'd recommend a good doctor, but we need the eggs.
- H) He dodges, insisting that this is incorrect procedure.
- I) There is no high from sniffing this powder.
- J) You twist your head to look under the four-poster bed but find nothing.
- K) You'll have to lead, you can be sure of that.
- L) "Why"

<i>Zork I</i>	1					
<i>Zork II</i>	2					
<i>Zork III</i>	3	_____	x	_____	x	_____ = _____
<i>Enchanter</i>	4	A	B	C		
<i>Sorcerer</i>	5					+
<i>Wishbringer</i>	6					
<i>Deadline</i>	7	_____	x	_____	x	_____ = _____
<i>Witness</i>	8	D	E	F		
<i>Suspect</i>	9					+
<i>Starcross</i>	10					
<i>Suspended</i>	11	_____	x	_____	x	_____ = _____
<i>Planetfall</i>	12	G	H	I		
<i>Hitchhiker's</i>	13					+
<i>Infidel</i>	14					
<i>Seastalker</i>	15	_____	x	_____	x	_____ = _____
<i>Cutthroats</i>	16	J	K	L		

ANSWER \_\_\_\_\_

On the left are 12 responses from our games. They occur when you try the wacky and unusual. Figure out which game the response comes from (they match exactly) and put the corresponding game number in the appropriate blank. Then multiply the numbers across and add the products for the answer. (Having the hint booklets and trying the "have you tried" sections isn't necessary, but it will certainly help.)

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CONTEST RULES:**

1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by February 1, 1986.
3. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

**PRIZE:**

A New York Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

**RETURN TO:** Infocom  
 NZT Puzzle  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

**Solution to Puzzle Number Six**

I sure am a lousy judge of puzzle difficulty. Although I expected Puzzle #5 to be hard, there were still 70 correct answers. I thought that Puzzle #6 was much easier, and yet there were only 23 correct answers!

In Puzzle #6, you were given 13 responses, allegedly from *Zork I*, and told to pick the two fake responses that don't actually appear in the game. The correct answer was 8 and 10. Here's a list of all 13 responses and where they appear in Infocom's first work of interactive fiction:

1. "The pines and the hemlocks seem to be murmuring."  
(LISTEN TO THE FOREST)

2. "Going up empty-handed is a bad idea." (CLIMB THE CHIMNEY in Studio holding nothing)
3. "The leaves burn, and so do you." (BURN THE LEAVES while holding them)
4. "You feel a faint tingling transmitted through the sword." (TOUCH THE MIRROR WITH THE SWORD)
5. "I'm afraid you have done drowned yourself." (WAIT in the Maintenance Room until it fills with water)
6. "The thief says nothing, as you have not been formally introduced." (LISTEN TO THE THIEF)
7. "The book is already open to page 569." (OPEN THE BLACK BOOK)
8. "You pry the door open a crack, but then it snaps back

- with a resounding thud." (first fake)
9. "The rainbow seems to have become somewhat run-of-the-mill." (WAVE THE SCEPTRE a second time, while not on the rainbow)
10. "The cyclops spreads a checkered tablecloth on the ground." (second fake)
11. "You need no light to guide you." (TURN ON THE LAMP as a spirit)
12. "Some paint chips away, revealing more paint." (DESTROY THE PAINT in the Studio)
13. "The hole collapses, smothering you." (DIG THE GROUND WITH THE SHOVEL in the Sandy Cave a fourth time)

There were 227 entries, of which 23 (10.1%) got both numbers right,

127 (55.9%) got only one right, and 77 (33.9%) had neither number correct. The breakdown by response number is also interesting (note that the total adds up to twice the number of entries, since each entry included two response numbers):

Response #	Appearances	Percentage
1	73	32.2%
2	11	4.8%
3	10	4.4%
4	32	14.1%
5	27	14.1%
6	19	8.4%
7	4	1.8%
8	59	26.0%
9	11	4.8%
10	114	50.2%
11	49	21.6%
12	27	11.9%
13	18	7.9%

**Winners: p. 7**



## Now Introducing...BALLYHOO!

You always wanted to join the circus, didn't you? Heck, we all did. The only question was whether to put on clown makeup, walk the highwire, or brave the wild beasts. Now you get to do *all* these things, in Infocom's new puzzle-packed mystery, *Ballyhoo*™.

*Ballyhoo* sets you down outside the big top at the end of the show. As the last circus-goers filter out the gate, you decide to stick around. Maybe you'll get to see an impromptu clown act, or watch the late-night feedings of the exotic animals, or peek at the gadgets and glitter inside the prop tent. Maybe you'll even get to meet that gorgeous trapeze artist or those high-wire hunks!

But no such luck. Instead you're plunged into a mysterious underworld where everyone has a secret to keep — and no one wants to clue you in. Exploring the seedy corners of the lot, you overhear a conversation about the owner's young daughter. She's been kidnapped, and the hired gumshoe finds his bottle more engaging than the case.

It looks like you've got two choices: forget about the tot, or set off on a search of your own. Naturally, you go for the role of hero.

As the night progresses, you realize that the life of a hero, like the back yard of the big top, is about as

glamorous as a tarnished piece of costume jewelry. Rather than applauding your efforts to find the child, the circus folk see you as an outsider messing about in their very private business. You find yourself getting a quick lesson in the daring stunts you admired from afar, as you seek clues and dodge danger.

To get you ready for the big time, the *Ballyhoo* package includes a colorful circus program, a balloon, a trade card for Dr. Nostrum's Herbified Extract, and your ticket to Spangleland. The program introduces you to the unique characters you'll meet in the story and gives you a glimpse of life in the back lot.

In *Ballyhoo*, you'll need to solve puzzles in order to solve the crime. As a standard-level game, it's a great introduction to our mystery line. And when you leave the circus, keep honing your investigative skills with our other popular whodunits — *Deadline*®, *The Witness*®, and *Suspect*™.

*Ballyhoo* was written by Jeff O'Neill, who fulfilled the promise of the American dream by rising from game tester to game designer at Infocom. *Ballyhoo* joins a distinctive list of great "first works" of interactive fiction, including *Zork*® I (by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling), *Suspended*® (by Michael Berlyn), *Planetfall*® (by Steve Meretzky), *The Witness* (by Stu Galley), and *Wish-bringer*™ (by Brian Moriarty). **Z**



Included in this and every *Ballyhoo* package are your *Ballyhoo* disk, your ticket to the circus, a program to *The Travelling Circus That Time Forgot, Inc.*, a trade card for Dr. Nostrum's Herbified Extract, and a bright red balloon.

### An Heirloom to Cherish — Yours From Infocom!

Imagine the thrill of owning an authentic numbered, autographed copy of Infocom's latest interactive mystery, *Ballyhoo*! Imagine the envy of your friends and neighbors when you proudly display this rare edition! And imagine the tears of gratitude when you pass this valuable heirloom on to your children fifty years hence!

Unbelievable as it seems, this wonderful opportunity can be yours! A limited edition of *Ballyhoo* signed and numbered by author Jeff O'Neill is now available exclusively through *The New York Times*. These are the very first copies to roll off the production lines! Only 150 per

version are available for your IBM, Apple, or Commodore. And only 75 per version are available for your Atari, Atari ST, Amiga, or Macintosh.

We're sure you'd pay plenty for an heirloom item of this caliber. But even more unbelievably, this special edition is available at the regular price of only \$39.95! To order, simply call our toll-free number (800-262-6868). But hurry! This is a first-come-first-served offer!

Don't miss the chance to own a copy of the very first Infocom limited edition! Amaze your friends! Satisfy your desire for the best! Order today! **Z**

### Fooblitzky Keeps Puzzle-Solvers Busy

Most of you interactive fiction fans love the puzzles in Infocom's games. But many of you may not realize that puzzle-solving is also an important part of Infocom's first graphics strategy game, *Fooblitzky*™. Here is a *Fooblitzky*-like logic puzzle; see if you can figure it out.

Imagine a town where stores sell only 12 items, and where the currency is "foobles." Now suppose a contest is held in the town, and 4 of the items are secretly designated "right items." Your goal is to figure out what the 4 right items are.

To help you out, city officials tell you the *cost* (in foobles) of the 4

right items. And every time you bring items to City Hall, you'll be told *how many* of the items you have are right. However, you won't be told *which* items are right. Given the following information, can you tell which are the 4 right items?

Items costing 4 foobles: banana, fish, hair spray, and screwdriver

Items costing 8 foobles: light bulb, sardines, snake, and toothpaste

Items costing 16 foobles: eyedropper, hot dog, pig, and saw

Suppose you're told that one of the right items costs 4 foobles, one costs 8 foobles, and two cost 16 foobles. Assume that the two 16-fooble items

are different.

1. Player 1 goes to City Hall with a banana, a snake, an eyedropper, and a pig, and learns that she's carrying 2 right items.

2. Player 2 goes to City Hall with a banana, a light bulb, and a snake, and learns that he too is carrying 2 right items.

3. Player 3 goes to City Hall with

sardines, a hot dog, a pig, and a saw, and learns that he is carrying 1 right item.

4. Player 4 goes to City Hall with hair spray, toothpaste, and a saw, and learns that she's carrying 1 right item.

With this information, you should be able to deduce what the 4 right  
*(continued on page 5)*

# Humor Liberation Front Disrupts Meeting

Dozens of Humor Liberation Front members and their supporters disrupted the November employee meeting of Infocom Inc. which took place at the company's sprawling CambridgePark facility.

The operation is believed to have been masterminded and carried out by the radically twisted faction of the Humor Liberation Front known as the Dimwit Flathead Brigade. There is also evidence that suggests a shadowy group from the Genetics Institute, an Infocom neighbor and producer of genetically engineered facial cleaners, acted in a support role.

The disruption took place near the beginning of the meeting and involved the use of what Infocom security expert Mike Quinn has called Cloned Entry Operatives, or CEO's. Quinn explained that CEO's were an advanced type of identity transformation device.

In this latest act of mirth, the HLF infiltrated over five dozen of these CEO's into the meeting by disguising them as exact duplicates of Infocom Chief Executive Officer Al Veza. Once inside the CEO, CEO's instigated an atmosphere of such intense hilarity that the meeting was

quickly adjourned to the company punch bowl. The accompanying photograph was taken just as the real Mr. Veza was asked to stand.

When questioned about security, an unnamed source said that the only two guards on duty at the time, Infocom General Manager John O'Leary and Product Manager Tom Smaldone, were distracted by a special in-house X-rated version of

*Fooblitzky* that was handed to them just before the meeting. The only other person who might have been alerted to what was about to happen was Lorri Fischer, who was manning the reception desk during the meeting. When questioned, Ms. Fischer said, "I didn't really see anything strange but I did think it was odd when Al asked me 43 times if he could bring me a glass of punch."

The conclusion of experts who have studied this scintillatingly madcap escapade is that it is only the first round in a new offensive offensive. As they said, the inability of Infocom security forces to capture even one of the punsters was sure to inspire an increased bravado and willingness to commit further acts of chicanery. **Z**



## The HLF: Ruthless and Unpredictable

The recent invasion of an Infocom Inc. company meeting by elements of the Humor Liberation Front reminds us once again that we must be ever vigilant in the fight for good clean fun. The picture of this humor-crime, with so many innocent people left in stitches, is a grim reminder of the past excesses of this group.

The Humor Liberation Front was formed out of a ragtag bunch of disgruntled thrill seekers who were working for the playful yet rational software development company, Infocom. In their quest for "fun" was planted the seed of anarchy that has once again shown its ugly face in recent events. This latest attack is no isolated event. We have only to look back a short time to see the pattern:

- **November 1983** — A chill Autumn day is shattered when a series of vile, trumped-up murder charges are leveled at Info-tester Dave Anderson. The infamous Fish Trial ensues. When the smoke clears Anderson is

innocent, and Poh Lim is found guilty and sentenced to life in the Graphics Group. However, most feel that Mr. Lim is just a scapegoat in some shadowy conspiracy. The HLF is born and three goldfish die in the name of fun.

- **December 1983** — In a move to take over and control the hearts and minds of Infocom employees, the HLF publishes the wildly funny but scandalous newspaper *Infodope*. Fun-Think is born. The company laughs as lives are trashed and reputations are dragged through the mud.
- **February 1984** — The HLF now moves to control all social life at Infocom. In a powerful show of farce, the group stages a "model" wedding. Steve Meretzky and Betty Rock, dressed in zany pseudo-religious costumes, are forced into a sham marriage. Never able to cope with the humiliation, the couple finds solace

in each other's company and later weds for real. The HLF seizes on this as proof of the "righteousness of our cause."

- **March 1984** — The HLF stages a "fun" snowball fight. It is actually a cover for a wave of reprisals against the "unfunny."
- **April 1984** — In an effort to control the rising power of the HLF, Infocom forms FunCom. This conservative group starts by taking over the running of the weekly Friday parties. The HLF strikes back by forcing the parties to take on funny but strange themes. One party features babies floating in the punch bowl to commemorate a recent birth. Another party, in honor of Secretaries Week, degenerates into a wild melee of acrobatics after HLF spikes the water cooler.
- **May 1984** — The HLF again strikes at the Infocom communication network by instituting the Memo War. In this ongoing campaign, the HLF sent out dozens of funny memos that neverthe-

less have a basis in truth, thereby causing mass confusion and paranoia.

- **July 1984** — The HLF's next target is education. By staging a goofy graduation ceremony for Infocom CEO Al Veza, the HLF sends out the message to one and all that outside education is a joke and that the HLF will be the sole arbiters of all learning.
- **August 1985** — After months of inactivity the HLF returns in force with a riotous public rehabilitation of Micro Group supervisor, Dan Horn. In the form of the game show "To Tell The Truth," Horn's idiosyncrasies and individualism are torn apart by a panel of disguised HLF operatives.

These are the facts. The HLF has been responsible for a continuing "fun war," the aim of which is no less than all-out domination of humor. The recent attack on the Infocom meeting is proof positive that the Humor Liberation Front is alive and well and capable of striking at will. **Z**

# Check It Out

Where do you go to learn which products give you the best value for your money? *Consumer Reports*, right? Well, in the November issue, Infocom stories received high marks in a survey of computer games. Ratings were based on the results of a questionnaire asking *Consumer Reports* readers to list the games they played and then evaluate each product's intellectual challenge, ease of learning, sustained interest, and overall satisfaction. Only games mentioned by at least 50 respondents were included in the ratings.

Of the 31 games listed, 11 were "logic-and-fantasy," including *Enchanter*<sup>®</sup>, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*<sup>™</sup>, *Zork I*, *Zork II*, and *Zork III*. *Enchanter* and *Hitchhiker's* obtained particularly good ratings in all four categories. *Consumer Reports* noted that fantasy games in general were considered "far more satisfying" than action games.

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* continues to provide satisfaction in lots of places. A recent review in *Gentlemen's Quarterly* called it a game "you read instead of bleep." Added *GQ*, "Unlike conventional novels, Infocom's variety lets the reader pave his own path through the prose, creating a unique tale every time."

*Hitchhiker's* was also featured in *Home Computer Magazine*, which "found it to be all the challenge a presumably sound-minded adult would desire. It is an articulate, detailed, and demanding game —

one in which nearly every conceivable avenue of action has been foreseen, and every consequence described in colorful, descriptive prose." And for all you Douglas Adams fans, *Changing Times* noted that "Adam's unique brand of hilarity is obvious in every response and every twist of the ever-twisting plot in this original adventure game."

We've been getting in a lot of good comments on *A Mind Forever Voyaging*<sup>™</sup> from the members of our Infocom Elite Adventurers Society (in case you've forgotten, that's all of you). Reviewers like *AMFV*, too. *Ms. Magazine* called it "one of the season's most intriguing new games." And an editor at *Billboard* wrote to say, "*A Mind Forever Voyaging* is the best game Infocom has produced yet. All I know is that I started it when it was dark and broke off when I noticed it was daylight."

And to start the new year on the right foot (the one that wears the unutterably-schmaltzy-pride-in-our-product shoe), we offer the following quote from a *Wishbringer* review in *A+ Magazine*: "Have you figured out what you'd wish for if you had the chance? I don't even need a moment to consider. I want more Infocom games. When Infocom releases a new game, the question that goes through your minds should not be 'Should I get the game?' but, rather, 'When should I get the game?'. And the answer should always be 'Immediately.'" **Z**

## The New York Times

**Writers** Gary Brennan, Paul Gross, Elizabeth Langosy, Dave Lebling, Steve Meretzky, Jeff O'Neill, Jonathan Palace, Betty Rock, Tom Veldran

**Production** Cynthia Curtis, Jonathan Palace, Betty Rock, Michelle Simpson, Gayle Syska

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# Mail Bag

## Dear Sir:

I am presently a scientist at Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, Antarctica, having left the United States a month ago. One of the last things I did before I left was to purchase your *Zork I* adventure since I knew there was an IBM-PC down here. So far, I haven't been able to get across the river (mainly because I have been too busy). I have shown it to several co-workers who are also hooked on it!

The last plane leaves for the winter on February 10, and the next one will be November 1, after the Antarctic 9-month winter. Your game will help us through the long hours of darkness and cold (the sun will be gone for 6 months, and it will drop to -110 degrees F)! We as a group have nominated *Zork I* as the unofficial computer game of the South Pole, and we'd like to let you know we appreciate the quality and entertainment of this game!

Sincerely,

Clifford C. Wilson  
FPO San Francisco, CA

## Dear Infocom:

I read the "Yak Facts" in your Spring '85 newsletter with interest, specifically, "A herd of yaks can migrate over seven thousand miles in a single day." Realizing that this was in excess of 290 mph, I immediately sold my car and visited my yak dealer (located in Lima, Peru). The salesperson did make an odd comment about top yak speeds being obtainable only "in high altitude areas," and "terminal velocity may vary." And that the 7,000-mile range required an extra available through United Airlines. No doubt these are just meaningless disclaimers required by the Peruvian EPA.

I hope you continue to keep your "Yak Facts" clean. The yearly yak issues of *Sports Illustrated* are disgraceful.

Somewhat sincerely,

John S. Kalstram

P.S. What's the mgp on an emu?

## To the editor:

The following is an excerpt from a particularly annoying segment of *Yakstalker*, a new interactive adventure by the National Association for the Advancement of Yaks (N.A.A.Y.).

## Precipice

As you clamber onto the precipice, you note a rather large yak regarding you with studied indifference.

>SAY HELLO

Yaks can't talk, but this one acknowledges your presence with a sagacious nod.

>YAK, WHERE IS THE MONK?

The yak smiles enigmatically.

>YAK, YAK

The yak stares back.

>GIVE GOAT CHEESE TO YAK

You can't be serious!

>KILL SELF WITH GOAT CHEESE

You can't go that way.

>JUMP OFF PRECIPICE

As you leave for your final reward, you feel the yak's teeth grab the seat of your pants. Back on solid ground, you watch as the yak's form shifts and blurs, to become -- the monk.

>SAY HELLO

Monks don't talk, but this one acknowledges your presence with a sagacious nod...

Mark Cantrell  
Canal Point, Florida

## To the editor:

*Wilfurd the Hard-Shell Turtle*

Wilfurd the hard-shelled turtle (turtle)

Had a rainbow-colored shell (shell).

If you had ever EXEX-ed it (EXEX-ed it),

You would even say it shimmers (like Jello).

All of the other turtles (turtles)

Used to laugh and call him names (like Skittles).

Poor Wilfurd the hard-shelled turtle (turtle)

Couldn't join in any turtle games (like *Zork*).

Then one foggy enchanted eve,

Belboz came to say (NITFOL),

"Wilfurd with your shell so hard,

Won't you get that scroll for me?"

Then all the turtles loved him (loved him).

Then they shouted out with glee (I mean turtle wax),

"Wilfurd the hard-shelled turtle!

You'll go down in Sor-cer-y (like *Enchanter*)!"

Jun A. Akiyama

Robert Prokop



# Cartoon Editor Inundated

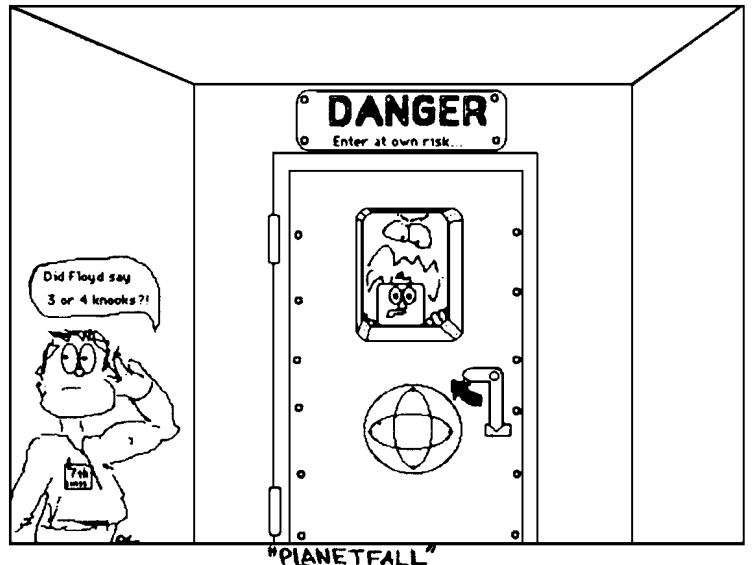
Since we first announced our cartoon contest a year ago (NZT, Winter '85) we have received an increasing barrage of entries — over 400 through early December.

Therefore, we've decided to print this huge spread of cartoons. We'll continue to print more than one per issue as long as we continue to receive such a high volume of good cartoons.

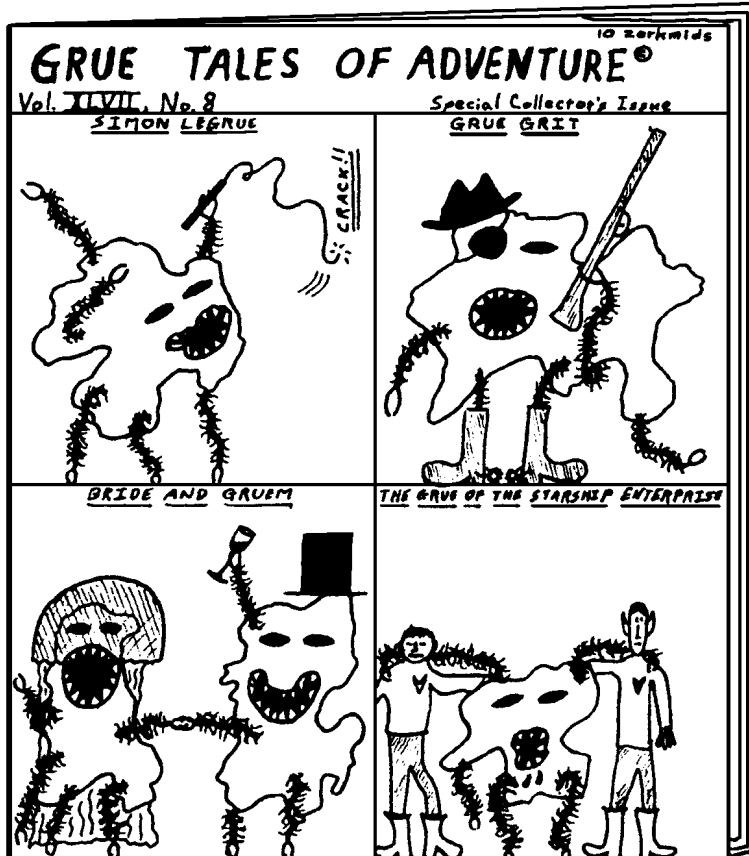
Every cartoonist whose work is printed in *The New York Times* receives a free Infocom game of his

or her choice. If you'd like to try, send us your cartoon in black ink on white, unlined paper. No pencil or colors, and don't fold your cartoon! All submissions become property of Infocom, Inc. Send your entries to NZT Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. Include a separate sheet of paper with your name and address, as well as the title of the game you'd like to win, and the computer system it should run on. **Z**

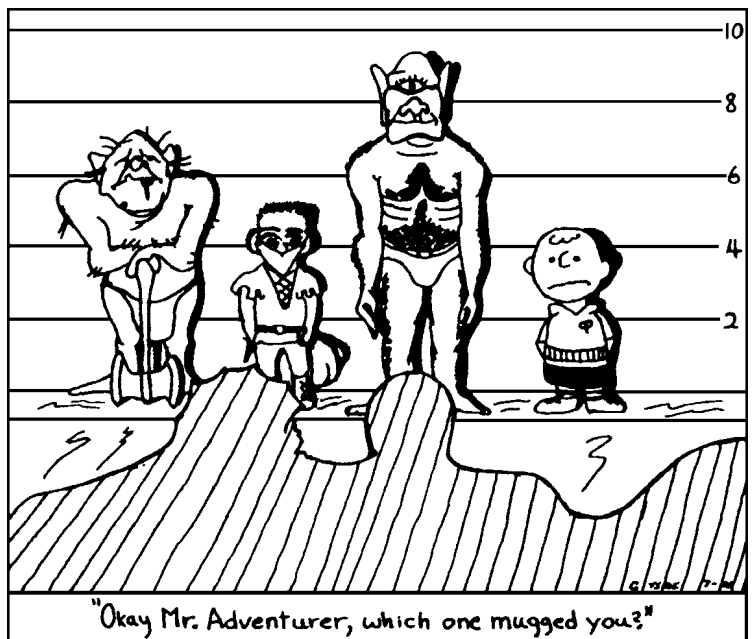
Oscar Chavarria



H. Goodman



George Tsai



Dave Kaplan

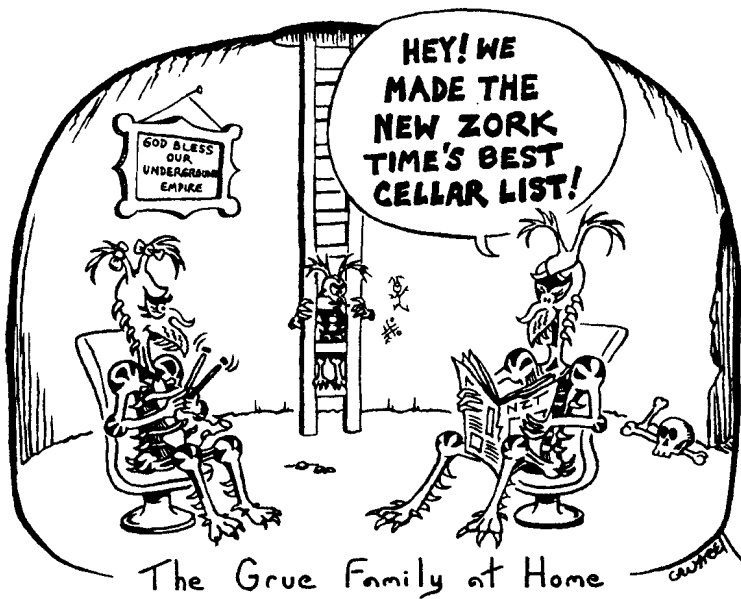


"Yeah, Sarge, we got 'im. Breaking and entering, possession of stolen goods, tampering with the mails, concealing weapons, a sword with blood all over it, and you should see the basement!"

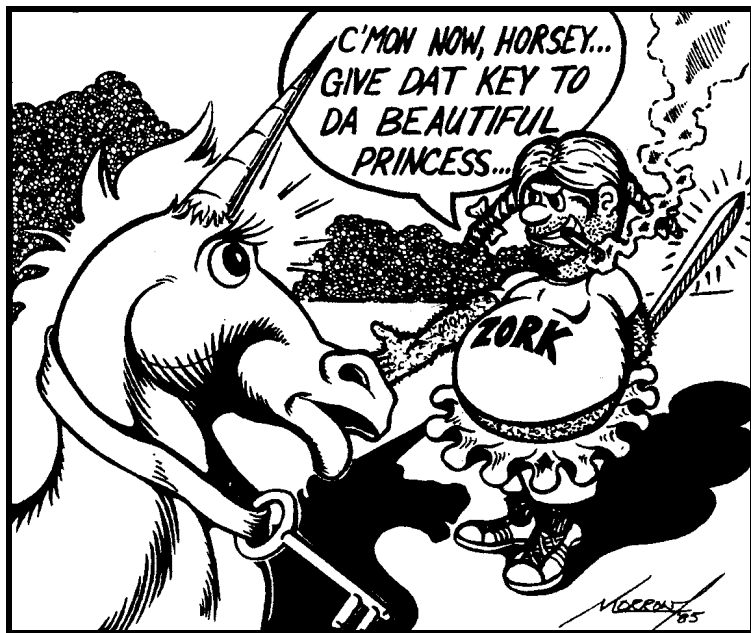
Jeff Martin



Mark Cantrell



John Morrow



Fooblitzky (continued from page 1)

items are. (In a real game of *Fooblitzky*, you *couldn't* assume that the two 16-fooble items are different. Try deducing the 4 right items again, this time allowing the two 16-fooble items to be the same *or* different. Is there more than one possibility? Answers on page 6.)

Figuring out the right items is just part of the fun in *Fooblitzky*. You

can bump into other players to steal their items; buy or sell items at the pawn shows at discount prices; ride the UGH (the underground gliding highway) to move around the city quickly; hide items from other players in lockers; and so on. And the Chance Man can show up any time, sometimes to help you, and sometimes to hinder you.

*Fooblitzky* is a lot like your favorite board game: you play against your friends or family rather than against the computer. As in interactive fiction, there are dozens or hundreds of alternatives at every turn. And there are so many possibilities in *Fooblitzky*, no two games are alike. We've even put several variations into the program, so you can make the game easier, harder, or stranger.

*Fooblitzky* is available *only* through *The New Zork Times*. Each

package contains a game disk, short rules (to get you started), long rules (to answer any questions that might come up), 4 colorful wipe-clean worksheets, and marker pens. Included in the instructions are suggestions for game variations. *Fooblitzky* costs \$39.95 and is available for the IBM PC with 128K and a graphics card (but not the PCjr), for the Atari XL and XE with 48K plus an 810 or 1050 disk drive, and for the Apple II series with 128K.



## Answers to Puzzle Number Seven

There was a problem with Puzzle Seven, but it wasn't really our fault. To be specific:

You may have fond memories of the company that *used* to print and mail *The New York Times*, as well as fill mail orders for games and *InvisiClues*<sup>™</sup>. Fond memories like ordering a copy of *Deadline* for your Kaypro and receiving a copy of *Infidel*<sup>®</sup> for a TRS-80 Model I seven months later. We emphasize "used to," because last year we switched to a much more reliable company.

To keep a long story long, this original company was a bit peeved when we decided to take our business elsewhere; they proceeded to go down in a blaze of glory by refusing to turn over the computer tapes containing our *New York Times* mailing list, of which they had the only copies. Were it not for some high-powered maneuvering by our lawyers, the Summer '85 issue of *The New York Times* might have never come out; as it was, most people received their copies between late October and mid-November (depending on the vagaries of bulk rate mail).

Among the problems caused by this delay was that most people received their issue after the deadline for Puzzle Seven! Naturally, we decided to extend the deadline, to December 1. We like to think of it this way: realizing that you could still enter after November 1 was just the first obstacle of the puzzle!

Here are all of the correct answers:

- A. 3.5
- B. 4
- C. 5
- D. 5

- E. 5
- F. 7
- G. 7
- H. 8
- I. 12
- J. 12
- K. 12
- L. 21
- M. 25
- N. 29
- O. 47
- P. 51
- Q. 55
- R. 64
- S. 73
- T. 75
- U. 75
- V. 90.8
- W. 134
- X. 155
- Y. 192
- Z. 200
- AA. 300
- BB. 312
- CC. 350
- DD. 351
- EE. 467
- FF. 1000
- GG. 1308
- HH. 1327
- II. 753
- JJ. 1698
- KK. 1868
- LL. 1887
- MM. 1920
- NN. 1937
- OO. 2138
- PP. 4216
- QQ. 4986
- RR. 23,393
- SS. 23,521

The correct answer, the one out of numerical order, is II. We received a mere 48 entries, either because the puzzle was difficult, or because

many people were discouraged by the "early" deadline. Of those, 26 were correct (54%).

The most common wrong answer was K. This seems to be due to people calculating the number of days it took *your* expedition to reach the campsite, not the number of days it took Ellingsworth's 1920 expedition to reach the campsite. (See the note on the parchment map.)

We also have a new statistic for Puzzle Seven: percentage of people complaining. Thirty-three percent of all entries contained notes or letters complaining about the deadline.

Since there were 26 correct answers, only one entrant got the correct answer but no T-shirt: Maggie Dupuis, who will probably spend weeks avoiding ladders, black cats, and broken (or breaking) mirrors. Here are the other twenty-five:

1. E. Gene Simpson  
Mountain View, CA
2. Ed Schraut  
Sumter, SC
3. Matthew Strange  
Mansfield, PA
4. Mary Sauer  
Circleville, OH
5. Sue Whitman  
Lexington, NC
6. Robert Wagner  
Cleveland, OH
7. Daniel Louie  
Burke, VA


8. Betty Scourby  
Brooklyn, NY
9. R. Reid Hutchinson  
Rockville, MD
10. Mike Smith  
San Pedro, CA
11. Greg Haas  
Weymouth, MA
12. Gary Laskowski  
Roseville, MI
13. Charles M. Carter, Jr.  
Richmond, VA
14. Tony Ard  
Tillamook, OR
15. Carole Weyandt  
Claysburg, PA
16. Mary Foss  
Flora, IL
17. Paul Mattia  
Sterling, VA
18. Kurt Culler  
Redford, MI
19. Ted Durant  
South Sioux City, NE
20. Ben Bunnell  
Rustburg, VA
21. Paul Thoms  
Whittier, CA
22. David Rowell  
Marietta, NY
23. Andy Plotkin  
Rockville, MD
24. Neil R. Polo  
Yardley, PA
25. Michael Rudolph  
Los Angeles, CA

## Answers to Fooblitzky Puzzle

Assuming that the two 16-fooble items are different, the 4 right items must be a banana, a light bulb, an eyedropper, and a saw. If the two 16-fooble items can be the same, another possibility exists: namely, the 4 right items could be a banana, a snake, a saw, and another saw.


There are many ways to figure this out. For those of you who are completely stumped, look again at Player 2's visit to City Hall. He's carrying 3 items, and 2 of them are right. Since the light bulb and the snake can't *both* be right items (since they both cost 8 foobles), the banana *must* be a right item. And since the

banana is a right item, no other 4-fooble item can be right. And because we know that either the light bulb *or* the snake is right, we know that the other 8-fooble items *can't* be right. Thus, from Player 4's visit to City Hall, we know that the saw must be a right item (since the 4-fooble hair spray and the 8-fooble toothpaste can't be right). Get the idea?

Don't worry if you didn't figure out this *Fooblitzky* puzzle. Players can visit City Hall as often as they want. In a real game, information usually comes in bits and pieces, rather than all at once, as in this example. 


## NZT Puzzle Winners Update

Ever since stone-hearted, Scrooge-like Steve Meretzky announced that there was only one correct puzzle entry that wouldn't win an elegant, sought-after NZT Puzzle Winner T-shirt, a groundswell of opposition to his callousness has been building. Poor Maggie Dupuis, shivering T-shirtless in Wisconsin, victim of cruel chance! Vast contingents of

InfoSentimentalists have besieged Steve. "Well, what if there were twenty-seven correct entries? What then?" snarled the fearsomely bearded implementor. But yes, Maggie, there is a T-shirt! Over Steve's dead body (almost) a beautiful NZT T-shirt will soon wend its way west to your humble abode. 

## Spellbreaker Event

In an event inspired by equal parts of magic, Hollywood, and Flash Gordon, Infocom announced its newest fantasy title, *Spellbreaker*<sup>™</sup>. The event was held October 1, in the art-deco, 1930's-style Griffith Park Observatory in the hills overlooking Los Angeles. Guests were shown a spectacular laser show, fed on champagne and strawberries, and treated (if that's the right word) to remarks by InfoEventperson Renata Daroszewska, by InfoMarketing's Mike Dornbrook and by Dave

Lebling, the author of the game. After the event, the party adjourned outside to gaze at the stars (those few visible through what passes for an atmosphere in the LA area). Infocom's contingent made a futile effort to raise the general level of elegance and formality at the event: columnist Jerry Pournelle remarked, "It's a sad day when a game company requires its people to wear ties." There was a general rush for the few dozen incredibly elegant Enchanters Guild pins, however. 

**NEW YORK TIMES PUZZLE**

**NUMBER 9**

Archivists everywhere, rejoice! The New York Times Puzzle Rules Committee (NZTPRC), in session at their annual winter meeting, approved a significant change to the venerable puzzle rules: Entrants will no longer be required to cut up their copies of the NZT in order to enter the puzzle. A photocopy of the entry form will now be accepted! (Well, there really isn't a Rules Committee. Mike Dornbrook just decided that his reasons for not allowing photocopies were all silly.)

For a change of pace, here's a puzzle that requires no knowledge of specific works of Infocom's interactive fiction. The following seven excerpts are each from hypothetical works of interactive fiction, based on films and TV shows of various types. Your task is to determine the name of the character you play in each excerpt. Both first and last name are required in cases where they exist. The name of the actor who portrayed the character is not acceptable. To help you get started, we have filled in the first answer.

**Number One:**

Bedroom, in the canopied bed  
You are in a vast bedroom, filled with antique statues, heated by an enormous fireplace.

>LOOK AT THE TRINKET

The trinket is a little glass ball, filled with water, depicting a winter scene. Some white particles are settled at the bottom of the ball.

>SHAKE THE TRINKET  
(taking the trinket first)

The little white flakes flurry around inside the ball, resembling a snowfall.

>SAY "ROSEBUD"

With the word still hanging on your lips, an enormous weariness overwhelms you. The ball drops from your hand and smashes on the ground.

\*\*\*\* You have died. \*\*\*\*

**Number Two:**

Airport

Dim halos of light barely pierce the fog that drifts across the airfield. A propellor revs to life nearby.

Ilsa Lund is here, her eyes moist.

Louis Renault, the Prefect of Police, stands nearby.

>I

You are carrying:

- a gun
- letters of transit

>ILSA, GET ON THE PLANE

"You'll have to do the thinking for both of us."

**Number Three:**

Canyon

You are in a dry arroyo between towering, wind-carved cliffs of brown and yellow rocks.

There is a shipping carton here.

The shipping carton contains:  
a strange, belt-like machine

>READ THE SHIPPING CARTON

"Acme Rocket Belt"

>PUT ON THE ROCKET BELT

You are now wearing the rocket belt.

>FIRE THE ROCKET BELT

You shoot upwards and smash into an overhanging cliff. The impact sends you shooting downward, imbedding your body halfway into the ground. The overhand, which has broken loose, lands on top of you.

**Number Four:**

Living Area

This is the central room of the house, filled with couches, exotic plants, and a table laden with fruit.

Dr. Morbius and several crew members are here, engaged in conversation.

Morbius hands you an object, which you immediately analyze to be a simple blaster. Morbius asks, "Have you analyzed it?"

>MORBIUS, YES

"What is it?"

>REPLY "A SIMPLE BLASTER"

Morbius nods. "Point the blaster at the Captain."

**Number Five:**

General's Office

This is the office of General Jack D. Ripper. The General's desk sits in front of wide, venetian blind-covered windows. Doors lead south, to the hall, and west, to the General's private bathroom.

>SOUTH

"I'm afraid I can't allow you to leave until the bombers have finished their mission," says the General, chomping on his cigar stub.

>GENERAL, TELL ME ABOUT THE MISSION

"I can no longer sit idly by and allow the Communists to fluoridate our water and sap our precious bodily fluids."

**Number Six:**

Porch

This is the weathered front porch of the house. A closed screen door leads westward into the house. You can leave the porch to the east.

Mr. Martin is standing in the doorway.

There is a particularly yummy bone here.

>BARK

"What! Timmy's fallen down and broken his leg! Where?"

>BARK

"In the old Johnson barn! Let's go!"

**Number Seven:**

Near the EI

You are standing at a downtown intersection, next to the elevated subway. Streets lead off in all four directions.

A subway car is passing by.

>DESTROY THE SUBWAY CAR

You push the car off the tracks. It crashes to the ground below, spilling screaming passengers out into the street, and crushing dozens of pedestrians.

[Your score has just gone up by 10 points!]

>INVENTORY

You are carrying:  
Ann Darrow

**ANSWERS**

1) Charles Foster Kane

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

**RULES:**

1. All entries must be submitted on this form OR A PHOTOCOPY OF THIS FORM.
2. All entries must be received by March 1, 1986.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law, of course.

**PRIZE:** A *New York Times* Puzzle Winner T-shirt

**SEND TO:** Infocom, Inc.  
NZT Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140





# INFOCOM™

P.O. Box 478  
Cresskill, New Jersey 07626

Address Correction Requested



## MOONMIST

### Get Ready to Spend the Night in a Haunted Castle

You've spent the day driving southwest from London, from the small brick houses of the suburbs and the treeless plains of the South Downs to the Avon River and the picturesque villages of the Devon. Now, as evening draws near, you reach the storied land of Cornwall.

On either side, the moors stretch out, filled with heather and bogs. The fading light silhouettes craggy rocks on the horizon. At last you arrive at your destination: an ancient castle perched on the granite cliffs by the sea.

A full moon is rising above the castle turrets as you pull up to the gate. Fog shrouds the old stone walls. Is that a ghostly figure in the tower window, or merely the mist playing tricks on your weary eyes?

It's your job to find out. In *Moonmist*<sup>™</sup>, the new interactive gothic mystery from Infocom, you're a famous young sleuth, called to Tresyllian Castle by your friend Tamara. A series of terrify-

ing events have led her to believe that someone's trying to kill her. Worse yet, the culprit seems to be the spectral "White Lady" that haunts the medieval tower.

Inside the castle, you meet a cast of eccentric characters ranging from a blue-blood debutante to an overly helpful butler. Most of them have seen the ghost, and some say it looks like Deirdre, the former lover of Tamara's fiance, Lord Jack Tresyllian. Deirdre purportedly drowned shortly after Jack ended their romance. Could it be that she is still alive, jealously taking revenge on Tamara?

To add to the suspense, you learn that a valuable object is hidden somewhere in the castle. This treasure rightfully belongs to Lord Jack, but apparently he is not the only one searching for it. If it's not found, family heirlooms will have to be sold to pay off debts. You'll find yourself involved in a treasure hunt as well as a mystery, as you search the lavish  
*(more Moonmist on page 2)*



*Moonmist is an introductory-level mystery.*

## LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS

### "Hitchhiker's Guide with Sex"

From the "Heat 'n' Eat" cookbook of Steve Meretzky, we bring you the following recipe:

*Take a clean floppy disk. Fill it nearly to the brim with loving satire of pulp science fiction. Stir in a generous helping of zany humor and a healthy dash of clever puzzles. Add ribald sex scenes to taste. Toss in just a hint of hints to bring concoction to standard level. Mix well and bake for nine months. Surround by an intriguing package and serve immediately.*

That's the recipe for *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*<sup>™</sup>, Infocom's new interactive fiction comedy. Author Meretzky calls *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* "an unbeatable combination of space opera, bawdiness, and humor, plus lots of good old-fashioned Infocom puzzles." Infocom Marketing Director Mike Dornbrook, being a scheming marketeer, simply describes *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* as a "Hitchhiker's Guide with sex."

*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* is set in the 1930's, the Golden Age of pulpy space opera. You begin the story in a sleazy bar in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, unaware that on

a tiny moon of Mars, the evil Leather Goddesses are plotting an invasion of the Earth to turn it into their private pleasure world.

You are subsequently kidnapped by minions of the Leather Goddesses. If you escape from their dungeon on Phobos, you'll be plunged into a bawdy romp through the solar system's most exotic (and erotic) locales. You'll find yourself battling giant carnivorous plants in the jungles of Venus, sword fighting by the light of Saturn's rings, exploring the pleasures of the harem near the Grand Canal on Mars, and avoiding the unspeakable horrors of Cleveland, Ohio.

*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* gives you the option of playing as either a man or a woman — no minor point, since your choice will affect many of your encounters in the story. And in order to make *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* suitable for everyone from the prude to the lewd, you can play it in any one of three "naughtiness levels."

What possessed Meretzky, whose last work was *A Mind Forever Voyaging*<sup>™</sup>, a sober work  
*(more Leather Goddesses on page 3)*



*Leather Goddesses of Phobos includes a scratch 'n' sniff card.*

## Moonmist (continued from page 1)

rooms and secret passageways of the castle for the hiding place. Clues are given in the form of riddles, which hold the answers to the puzzles in the game.

*Moonmist* has four different variations, each with its own puzzles, treasure, hiding place, and solution to the mystery. This gives *Moonmist* more replay value than any other Infocom story to date, providing you with plenty of time to savor the gothic atmosphere of the castle.

*Moonmist* also responds differently to male and female players. (See the *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* article for another example of this fine feature.) When you arrive at the castle gate at the start of the game, you're asked for your title and full name. You can take advantage of your elegant surroundings by calling yourself "Baron Wilhelm" rather than plain old "Mr. Bill."

From your title, the program may deduce your gender and respond accordingly throughout the story. If you're a woman, you have a gown to put on for dinner. A man's suitcase will contain a dinner jacket. Lord Jack will kiss a woman's hand. If you're a man, he'll shake yours. And there's another guest who may flirt with you.

Since the puzzles are relatively easy, we recommend *Moonmist* as

an excellent introduction to interactive fiction for players of all ages. It will fascinate every young girl who loves reading mystery books about that famous female sleuth whose last name rhymes with "grue." It will intrigue every man who wants to be the Lord of a castle and the consort of a seductive Lady. It will captivate every woman who imagines herself as the heroine of a Daphne du Maurier novel. And it will delight anyone who enjoys riddles, puzzles, and the detailed characters, plots, and atmosphere that distinguish each Infocom game.

To introduce you to mysterious Cornwall, the package contains an illustrated copy of "Legendary Ghosts of Cornwall." Also included are a *Moonmist* iron-on logo for your T-shirt; a visitors' guide to Tresyllian Castle; and two confidential letters from your friend Tamara.

*Moonmist* was written by Stu Galley, author of *The Witness*® and *Seastalker*®, and Jim Lawrence, co-author of *Seastalker* and author of dozens of books for children and adults, including numerous Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew stories. *Moonmist* will be available in October for a wide variety of personal computers, at a suggested retail price of \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

## Moonmist Was Written by... Jim Lawrence

Who is this mysterious person behind the by-line of *Moonmist*? No, not Stu Galley — he's the well-known and well-loved interactive writer and gnus reporter who hangs around the lavish Infocom offices on CambridgePark Reverse Neutral Drive whenever he hasn't anything better to do. No, we're talking about Jim Lawrence, who has written so many works of fiction that he can't count them accurately.

Jim's relationship with Infocom began in the spring of 1983, when he saw a column in the "New York Times\* Book Review" concerning *Deadline*® and this new medium of computer-aided interactive fiction. He realized at once that he had the proper sort of both experience and daring to bring professional writing skills into this medium. So he hopped a plane from the Garden State to the Bay State, and almost immediately reached agreement with Infocom to begin a series of projects, beginning with *Seastalker* and now continuing with *Moonmist*.

In his long career, Jim has scripted technical training films, free-lanced magazine articles, turned out weekly dramatic radio scripts, written "continuity" for newspaper comic strips, and authored some 60 books of fiction.

Many of his books were ghosted for juvenile series like Nancy Drew and Tom Swift, Jr., but he has also written juvenile and adult paperbacks under his own name.

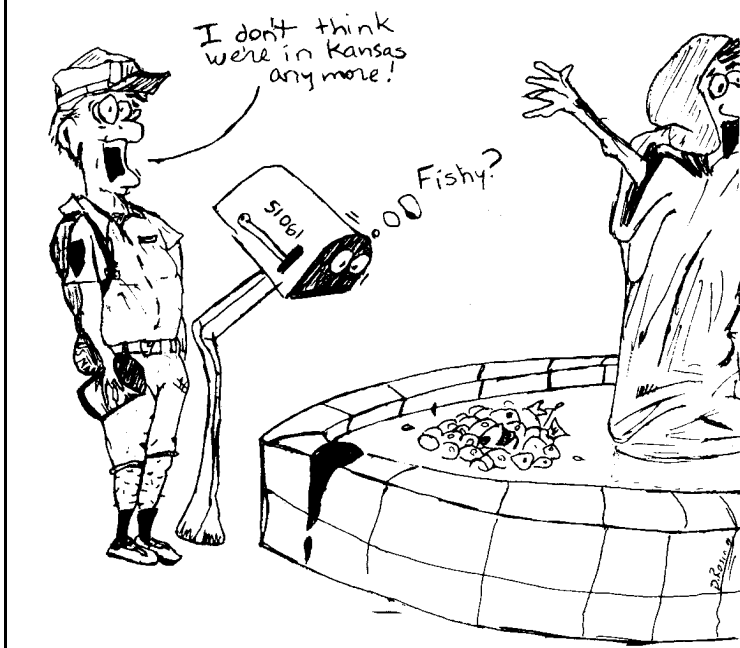
As a successful storyteller in many media, Jim learned the art of interactive storytelling with impressive ease. Equally important, he's been willing and able to devote considerable effort to a creative project for a year or more, knowing that the end product would not make him rich or famous. He writes interactive fiction for the best of reasons: for him, it's challenging, creative, and fun to give players a thrill.

Jim is the sort of person who remembers anecdotes, unusual events in the news, and interesting names. He keeps files of short news clippings. He may take years developing a character in his mind before he'll use the character in a story.

And he's a calming influence. As Jim and Stu worked on a story, Jim would make the plot thicker... and thicker and thicker and thicker. Stu fretted. "Don't worry, Stu," said Jim. "I've gotten heroes out of much tougher situations than this."

\*Not the New York Times.

### Dustin Rosing



## Your Weekly Horoscope by Omar

### LUGNUT (April 3 to May 14)

\* Use the number "eleven" as many times as possible this week. You have a speck of food on your cheek. There you go.

### PANCREAS (May 15 to June... oh, let's say 22)

\* This is a good week to bake muffins at altitudes higher than 14,000 feet. Consider making a new friend, preferably one who won't embarrass you in restaurants by making loud snorts and clucks.

### CRANBERRY (June 23 to July 3)

\* That great-looking power broker you've had your eye on just started dating a squash pro. Oh well, it looks like you got shot down again. You're really a loser at love.

### MANGE (July 4)

\* Avoid violent anti-capitalist in-

surrection this week. This is a good time to put down those readings of Marx and Trotsky, and to really feel good about the ol' red white and blue.

### FATTY ACID (July 5 to August 17)

\* Due to planetary conflicts, your sign has been accidentally deleted. Until this situation is remedied by the proper celestial entities, why not forge a new birth certificate under a different sign? (Don't pick PANCREAS though -- you should see what's in store for them next week!)

### PROTOZOA (August 18 to September 12)

\* Be wary of any clones that you have made of yourself in the last twenty-four hours. Avoid dishpan hands, especially if you live alone,

# Leather Goddesses

(continued from page 1)

of speculative fiction, to write a giddy story like *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*? We sent a reporter to find out:

**Reporter:** MERETZKY, HELLO.

**SM:** Howdy! Always happy to chat with representatives of the media.

**Reporter:** MERETZKY, TELL ME ABOUT LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS.

**SM:** Well, I thought of the title more than four years ago, before I was even writing interactive fiction. Everyone loved the title; it appears in the diary in the new *Starcross*® package, and it's the name of the machine in the Festeron arcade in *Wishbringer*®. I finally decided that it was about time we had a game to match the name. But there were other reasons as well....

**Reporter:** STEVE, WHAT ARE THE OTHER REASONS?

**SM:** I was weaned on pulpy space opera, and I've always had a deep desire to write something in that genre. Another reason: *A Mind Forever Voyaging* dealt with some politically sensitive topics, and I was hoping that it would stir up a lot of controversy. It didn't. Not a single flaming froth-at-the-mouth letter. So I decided to write

something with a little bit of sex in it, because *nothing* generates controversy like sex. I'm hoping to get the game banned from Seven-Eleven stores. Finally, I get asked all the time, "When are you guys gonna do a graphic adventure?" Well, we won't add pictures to our stories, so this was the only way to create a graphic adventure.

**Reporter:** ASK MERETZKY ABOUT THE NAUGHTINESS LEVELS.

**SM:** I tried to make them roughly equal to the G, PG, and R ratings used for movies. I doubt that even the "naughtiest" mode will offend anyone, but why not ask some of the folks who've played *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*?

Greg K. from Rancho Palos Verdes agreed. "I showed it to my mom, and she decided it was 'harmless.'"

"None of the sexual content bothered me... I was hoping for more," said Steve K. from Tulsa. "I wouldn't have much trouble showing the game to my eight-year-old son."

Judith C. from Huntsville, a self-described conservative Bible Belt southerner, said, "The sexual content is dependent upon the player's input... *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* is only as lewd as the player wants it to be."

or with a mollusk.

## FLAMINGO (September 12 to mid-December)

\* It's time to confront that crisis that's been threatening your life for the last month or so. Try a new breath mint. At all costs, avoid the Greek alphabet.

## CADAVER (The rest of December to February 3)

\* If you're planning a holiday, don't leave out Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, as a possible stop-over or final destination. Exclude curry dishes and fine Italian chianti from your diet this week.

## RAWHIDE (February 4 to April 2)

\* It's a good week to break promises, commit lude [sic] acts, and in any way harm your fellow creatures. Then make it up to them by reupholstering their cars and living rooms with shocking-pink nylon.

## DIRIGIBLE (Those born against their will)

\* Sell your stamp collection. Bring the world to its knees. Slurp loudly tonight at dinner. Convert yourself to the metric system. Wear a hotdog as a tie. Divest.

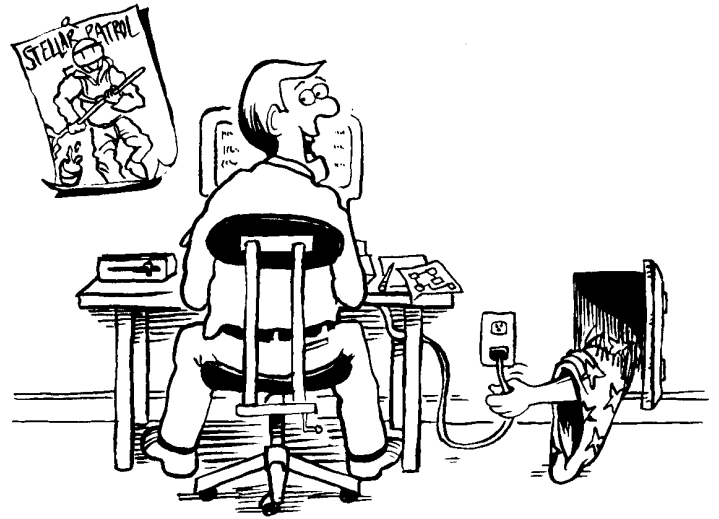
## LIMP KIN (Those born by contractual obligation)

\* A supernova in a distant galaxy has opened new career paths for you. Take advantage of this once-in-a-half-life opportunity, and seek employment in organized crime or at an artificial turf dealership.

## MAN-HOUR (Those not yet born, or born in a funny position)

\* Don't trust anyone, not even yourself. Stay inside and keep your doors and windows locked. Carry a loaded shotgun on your person. Begin to hoard canned food and medical supplies. Don't pick up the phone. Don't respond to any chain letters or enter in any sweepstakes, even if you may have already won a fabulous prize.

Charles Engebretson & Mark Cantrell



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT— AFTER THREE YEARS,  
I'M FINALLY GOING TO KILL THE WIZARD!

However, M'gump-kin X. from the lesser moon of Falwell VII told us, "My shrooks and I were greatly offended. The description of g'wick-acts were unsuitable for thwai'ves or ik-ti'ups to read. By Hoov, if Infocom ever wis's!ms this b'h:o'vich, I'll th-t!rop my ig'l%i!g!-o'o?ls."

"Enough about the story already!" the marketers bellow from down the hall. "Talk about the awesome packaging!"

The package features some unusual elements which are, as usual, deeply intertwined with the story itself. Upon spreading the covers of the package, you'll be greeted by a '30s-style 3-D comic book entitled "The Adventures of Lane Mastodon (#91)" which displays a typically myopic 1936 vision of 1986, when the *Leather Goddesses* are once again scheming to conquer humanity. To properly view your 3-D comic, each package comes well-equipped with a huge pair of red-blue 3-D glasses. Sliding deeper into the package, you'll come across a handsome parchment map of the Catacombs, to help you grope your way through the ancient burial chambers that lie under the palace of the Sultan (or Sultanness, if you're playing as a woman).

The packaging climaxes with a new dimension in interactive fiction: a scratch 'n' sniff card. At various points in the story, you'll

be ordered to scratch one of the spots on the card and sniff the heady odor that results.

We'd be remiss if we didn't mention one additional feature of *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, which is available only in the IBM version: a "boss key." This feature makes it "safe" to play *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* at work — if your boss should walk in on you, just press CONTROL-B and hit RETURN. Your screen will clear and be replaced by a sample screen from Infocom's database, Cornerstone™! Naturally, we're not encouraging anyone to play *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* at work — but then again, we do it all the time, so why shouldn't you?

*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* is the fifth work of interactive fiction by Steve Meretzky, who has also authored *Planetfall*® and *Sorcerer*™, and co-wrote *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*™ in collaboration with Douglas Adams. *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* has been given a difficulty rating of Standard Level. Available September 10, *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* will run on most personal computers and sells for a suggested retail price of \$34.95 on the Atari XL/XE series, the Commodore 64, and the Commodore 128; \$39.95 on all other computer systems. So you don't forget, order before midnight tonight.

# Times to Infocom: DROP DEAD

## Dear Friend:

Once before we have written to ask you to cease and desist your mimicry of the logotype and front-page style of The New York Times.

It is clear that that you are conscious of copyrights and registered trademarks — you take steps to protect your own in your masthead notice and in your text.

Yet you continue to violate our copyright and our registered trademark. By so doing, you are endangering vital Times Company assets.

I am asking our attorney to take the necessary steps.

Sincerely yours,  
**Leonard R. Harris**  
 Director, Corporate Relations  
 and Public Affairs  
 The New York Times Company

## Finding Ourselves a Gnu Name

This newsletter *used* to be called *The New Zork Times*. But some old Gray Lady in New York didn't like that, so we had to change our name. We asked our readers to help us find a new name. Here are but a few of the suggestions we received:

The Gnu Yak Times ("All the gnus' wee feet leave prints")

The Old Zork Times

Ye Olde Zork Times

The New York Times ("Really give them something to complain about")

Gayle's Gazette

Gayle's Tales

Bud Aku's Review

Nerd News

Digithead Digest

NZT

The Four Asterisks

!!!!

!#%&\*!

Ctrl Alt Del

Fresh Frazzled Frobozz Facts, Fallacies, Faces and Farces

Grue's Vues

The New Grue Review

The Grue Review

The Gnu Grue Review

The Gnu Review

The Gnus' Paper

The Grues' Paper

The 6:00 Grues

The Daily Planetfall

Rolling Zork

Dimwit's Ditties

Popular Adventuring

Popular Zorking

The Festeron Gazette

No Gnus Today

The Daily Catch ("Stick this in your ear")

The Daily Babel Fish ("All the news fit to stick in your ear")

The Zorkian Review

Infocom, Infogo ("What took place, I do not know")

Sargent Blather's Lonely Lifeform Club

The Infocom Inquirer

Grues Say Hey Today

The Brass Lantern

The Brash Lantern

The Shining Sword

The Rusty Lantern

Grues 'R' Us

The Richard M. Nixon Report on Ethical Actions in Politics

Great Underground Examiner (G.U.E.)

The Great Underground Enquirer (G.U.E.)

The Copyright Infringement Times

The Infocom Insider

The Infocom Grues

Almost The New Zork Times

What's Gnu?

information

INFOcommuniqué

Unicator (referred to as "the Infocom Unicator")

Infocomments

Infocomcepts

Infocolumns

GUE Today

GUE Herald

GUE Gazette

Frobozz Free Press

The Underground Press

The Underground Grues

The Tunnel Times

The Tunnel Tattler

The Basement Bugler

Hello Sailor

The Zork Report

Zorkshire Pudding

Zorktown Gazette

The Rootinest, Tootinest, Best Darn Newsletter in the Known Universe

The Multi-Paged Guide for Adventures in the Underground Empire and Other Similar Locations

The Spellbook

The Daily Hacker Distributed a Couple of Times a Year

Slime's Times

U.S. News (or Gnus) and Dungeon Report

G.U.E. News (or Gnus) and Dungeon Report

Zork Quarterly

Zorkers Quarterly

The Yakker

Gnu Zork Nose

All This and Zork II

The Yak-tual Truth

Don't Panic

This Space Intentionally Left Blank

The Gnu Republic

Yackety Yak

Interactive Fact

Frob Hall Forum

Our thanks to everyone who sent in a suggestion. Cliff Tuel of San Jose, CA, was the first person to recommend *The Status Line*, so Cliff wins our prize: a subscription to *The New York Times*.

## Dear Friend:

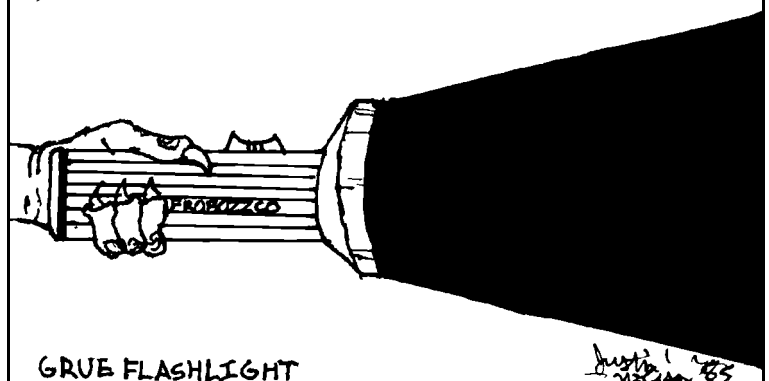
As publisher of *Bat Facts*, I was upset to learn that your newsletter has been carrying "Yak Facts" for several months without my permission. I am incensed that many people in the bat industry, who would normally pay good money for top-notch bat news, have opted instead to receive your *free* newsletter, not realizing the essential difference between my legitimate *Bat News* and your rip-off *Yak Facts*. My lawyers will call your lawyers.

Love,  
**Jack McBlack**  
 Saranac, NY

[Notice to our readers: Those wishing to threaten us with a lawsuit over this issue are encouraged to take a number and wait in line. Only one lawsuit per person, please; we want everyone to have a chance. Sorry for the inconvenience. Have a nice day.]

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8

Justin Weiss



GRUE FLASHLIGHT

# Infocom Games in Brief

**Zork® I** by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling (Standard, 1980). The story that started it all. Treasure hunts and derring-do in the Great Underground Empire.

**Zork II** by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Advanced, 1981). Outwit dragons, demons, and the Wizard of Frobozz.

**Zork III** by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling (Advanced, 1982). Conclusion of the *Zork* Trilogy. An unusual goal and scoring system highlighted by encounters with Dimwit Flathead and the Dungeon Master.

**Enchanter®** by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Standard, 1983). A novice Enchanter must save the world from the nefarious Krill. First of a trilogy where magic outweighs fighting ability.

**Sorcerer** by Steve Meretzky (Advanced, 1984). In the midst of Hellhounds, amusement parks, mazes, and flumes, rescue Belboz and defeat the evil demon Jearr.

**Spellbreaker™** by Dave Lebling (Expert, 1985). Conclusion of the Enchanter Trilogy. Magic fails, and you must make your way through some of the hardest puzzles in interactive fiction to find out why.

**Wishbringer** by Brian Moriarty (Introductory, 1985). A simple job of letter-carrying turns sinister, as the town of Festeron becomes twisted and dangerous.

**Trinity™** by Brian Moriarty (Standard, 1986). Travelling through time and space, you must escape from several atomic explosions, to eventually land at the New Mexico desert moments before the A-bomb explodes. Can you change the course of history?

**Starcross** by Dave Lebling (Expert, 1982). A strange alien artifact enters the solar system, and a down-at-the-heels asteroid miner is drawn into a puzzle that could give mankind the stars.

**Suspended®** by Michael Berlyn (Expert, 1983). The controlling brain of a totally automated planet must repair the system before the planet's inhabitants "replace" him.

**Planetfall** by Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1983). When you joined the Space Patrol, they didn't say you'd end up swabbing the decks. When the ship is destroyed, you and your faithful robot sidekick Floyd must survive on an apparently deserted planet.

**The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** by Douglas Adams and Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1984). Based on the best-selling book. Arthur Dent doesn't realize his troubles are only beginning when the bulldozer arrives to demolish his house.

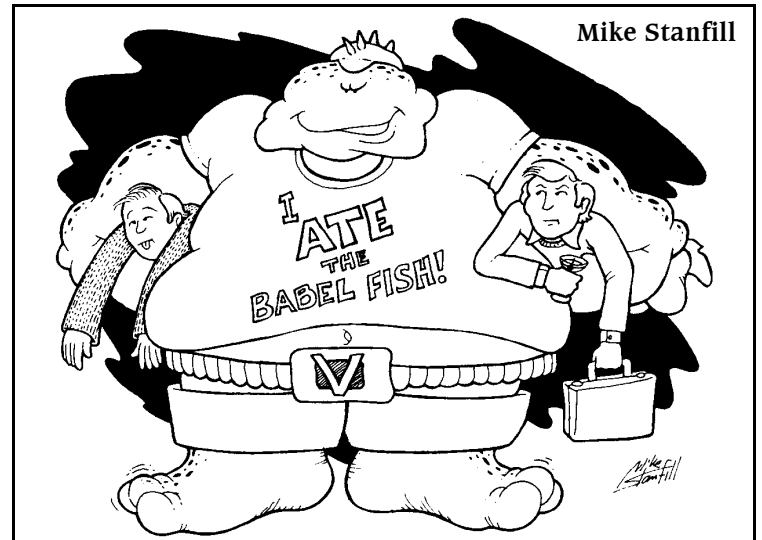
**A Mind Forever Voyaging** by Steve Meretzky (Advanced, 1985). Explore a frighteningly possible future as PRISM, the first true artificial intelligence. Senator Ryder's Plan looks pretty good — or does it?

**Leather Goddesses of Phobos** by Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1986). (See the article in this issue.)

**Deadline** by Marc Blank (Expert, 1982). Industrialist Marshall Robner is found dead in his Library. An obvious suicide. Then why is everyone so defensive? A classic locked-room mystery.

**The Witness** by Stuart Galley (Standard, 1983). Freeman Linder wants your help on a little blackmail case, but before your

**Envelope** (continued from page 12) you agonized over the perfect concept, your creative juices churning until they oozed from your every pore in beads of perspiration. Then you spent hour upon hour transferring your creation to paper, your heart and soul pouring from you like the ink flowing from the pen. Finally, you spent minute upon painstaking minute assembling your precious artwork into an envelope, carefully addressing, sealing, stamping and sending it off to Infocom along with your youthful hopes and stary-eyed dreams. And now, after having spent month upon month anxiously awaiting the arrival of this newsletter, your dreams are shattered and all creative energy drains from your body when you see the unfamiliar design gracing the



eyes it becomes a murder — his! Set in the 1930s and in the hard-boiled Raymond Chandler style.

**Suspect®** by Dave Lebling (Advanced, 1984). Your editor sends you to cover a society Halloween Party. Then the hostess is murdered, and guess who's the prime suspect? Can you clear yourself before the police arrive?

**Ballyhoo™** by Jeff O'Neill (Standard, 1986). Winding up a day at the circus, you become enmeshed in a plot that takes you behind the scenes of The Travelling Circus That Time Forgot.

**Moonmist** by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence (Introductory, 1986). (See the article in this issue.)

**Infidel®** by Michael Berlyn (Advanced, 1983). Deserted by the

crew, an intrepid archaeologist probes the mysteries of an untouched Egyptian pyramid.

**Seastalker** by Stuart Galley and Jim Lawrence (Introductory, 1984). Inventions to hand and faithful helpers at your side, you rush to rescue the Aquadome from the monstrous Snark.

**Cutthroats®** by Michael Berlyn and Jerry Wolper (Standard, 1984). Who needs enemies with friends like Pete the Rat and Johnny Red? You may be in with them in a hunt for sunken treasure, but you can't trust them, and with McGinty on your tail, you might end up in over your head.

**Fooblitzky™**. A unique board game played on the computer. A multi-player game with dozens of variations and hours of fun.

coveted position on the envelope.

We sincerely sympathize. In fact, the judges of the contest, while highly discriminating, are also terribly soft-hearted. With hearts the consistency of oatmeal, they couldn't bear to limit the contest to just one winner. They instead wanted to declare everybody a winner, but we had to hold them to six. So, the SIX first place winners are: **Chris Douglas** of Austin, TX; **Jeff Nelsen**

of Torrance, CA; **Kevin Savetz** of Agoura Hills, CA; **Samuel Shepard** of Youngstown, OH; **Marc Sylvester** of Spring Valley, CA; and **Brian White** of Houston, TX. All six winners will be receiving their prizes within the next few weeks. The five remaining designs will appear on our future envelopes. Many thanks to all the great artists who participated, and congratulations to the winners.

## “Please Postpone Poll!”

Due to the overwhelming response to Readers' Poll #1, Paula the Pollster is too pooped to pop. Paula paled at the piles of polls pouring in and pleaded to postpone poll #2. We passed Paula's plea to the publisher who promised Paula peace

and put a pause to the polling. Paula will probably perk up and Poll #2 will appear in the pages of the next *Status Line*. Plenty of thanks for your patience and patronage.



# PUZZLE NUMBER ELEVEN

This puzzle is a combination of a matching column and a connect-the-dots. First, match up the quotes in Column I with the character in Column II who said it. You will therefore be matching a letter (or a pair of letters) with a number. Next, replace the letters on the connect-the-dots graphic with the matched number.

Finally, connect the dots in the order of these numbers. (Note that, since there are 45 quotes but only 40 names, five of the quotes will be unused — and five of the dots will be unused as well.) You will produce a graphic that is somehow associated with one of Infocom's twenty-two works of interactive fiction. To answer the puzzle correctly, simply give the title of this work.

The answer and winners for **Puzzle Number Ten** will appear in the next issue.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### CONTEST RULES:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by November 1, 1986.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners.
6. Void where prohibited by law, of course.

**PRIZE:** The slightly-outdated but still-coveted New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

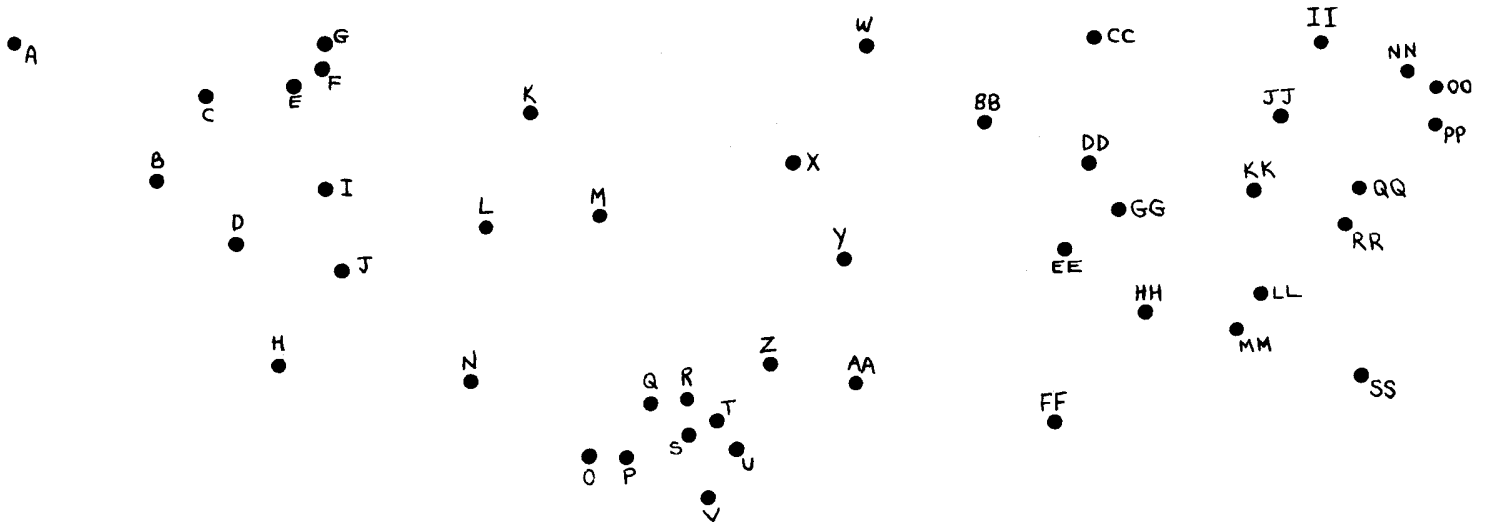
**SEND TO:** Infocom  
The Status Line Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

# COLUMN I

- A. "This has been my desire e'er since this charlatan bent me to his service. I perform this deed with pleasure!"
- B. "One more step and the President of the Galaxy is fried meat!"
- C. "You reporters have all the sensitivity of buffalo. Can't you leave me alone?"
- D. "Uh, no thanks. I prefer to stay near my beach. I don't see much yummy seaweed out that way."
- E. "We have a position for an Ensign Ninth Class in the toilet-scrubbibg division, you know."
- F. "I dinna give a hoot about you or your questions! Now, begone!"
- G. "She spake against the Church; she tried to poison the mind of a child too young to know the Truth."
- H. "Ragweed!"
- I. "My, I wonder what this fine rope is doing here."
- J. "That's strange! Maybe you should use the Computestor."
- K. "I've heard talk of a merger between Dad's company and another one, but I don't think it's happened yet."
- L. "When we began to approach your system, I got excited! A whole new culture to learn!"
- M. "My court thanks you most humbly for rescuing the life of my daughter."
- N. "Aha! A thief! Didn't I tell you that we needed more security!"

- O. "You may not be aware of this, but I'm not working. I need to get repaired."
- P. "I thought I should come here on the streetcar, in case you needed help."
- Q. "Frobizz! Frobozzle! Frobnoid!"
- R. "If anyone tries anything stupid, you won't live to regret it."
- S. "Squawk! This tea is cold! Get me another cup. Squawk!"
- T. "I'm gonna use it to find the legendary lost planet of Magra-thea. Let's go sit in the sauna while I explain."
- U. "I have a busy appointment schedule and little time to waste on trespassers, but for a small fee I'll show you the way out."
- V. "Is this... is this a squash court?"
- W. "Detested words! Even now it sticks my soul to hear them uttered."
- X. "We could be in danger! The Snark may attack again any time!"
- Y. "He always promised me wealth here in America, but I've never seen it."
- Z. "Guards! Throw this trespasser into the glass maze!"
- AA. "This is surely a terrible waste of time, not to mention upsetting, having all these police marching around the house."
- BB. "You should not even be here. You will disturb our rest."
- CC. "My sister was a fool to send the likes of you on such a quest!"

*(continued)*



DD. "Here come da clone, here come da clone."  
 EE. "A courtly gentleman, isn't he? That black cape makes him look almost cuddly."  
 FF. "If he's going to read us his poetry, just pray he softens us up with some cudgels first...."  
 GG. "Mmm. Just like Mom used to make 'em."  
 HH. "If you won't turn it off, I will. I can't take the noise any more."  
 II. "The last vat, I swear it, tasted as if grues had been bathing in it."  
 JJ. "You're going to be a hero, you know. You'd probably get a call from the President congratulating you...."  
 KK. "Take the victim to the tower. I shall prepare for the sacrifice!"  
 LL. "We will need that boat after all."

MM. "Do this. Pick up that. Unjam the opening mechanism of the other."  
 NN. "Can't you talk this copper into letting me loose?"  
 OO. "I am not permitted to enter the prison cell."  
 PP. "Daydreaming again, eh? I've been looking everywhere for you!"  
 QQ. "Bleem miserable venchit! Bleem forever mestinglish asunder frapt."  
 RR. "Just because he's a boor doesn't make him guilty."  
 SS. "I have waited three ages for someone to say those words...."

## COLUMN II

1. Hoobly (*Spellbreaker*)
2. The Evil One (*Wishbringer*)
3. Abraham Perelman (*A Mind Forever Voyaging*)

4. Monica Linder (*The Witness*)
5. The Dungeon Master (*Zork III*)
6. Corky Crisp (*Wishbringer*)
7. The Vagon Captain (*Hitchhiker's Guide*)
8. The Detective (*Suspect*)
9. Krill (*Enchanter*)
10. Poet (*Suspended*)
11. Belboz (*Spellbreaker*)
12. Zoe Bly (*Seastalker*)
13. Phong (*The Witness*)
14. Alicia Barron (*Suspect*)
15. The Cyclops (*Zork I*)
16. McGinty (*Cutthroats*)
17. Marvin (*Hitchhiker's Guide*)
18. The Navigational Computer (*Starcross*)
19. Leslie Robner (*Deadline*)
20. Duncanthrax (*Sorcerer*)
21. Anatinus (*Wishbringer*)
22. Gurthark-tun-Besnap

- (*Starcross*)
23. The Wizard of Frobozz (*Zork II*)
24. Johnny Red (*Cutthroats*)
25. Zaphod Beeblebrox (*Hitchhiker's Guide*)
26. Pollibar (*Sorcerer*)
27. The Volcano Gnome (*Zork II*)
28. Floyd (*Planetfall*)
29. Sergeant Duffy (*The Witness*)
30. Iris (*Suspended*)
31. Dimwit Flathead (*Zork III*)
32. Tip Randall (*Seastalker*)
33. The Thief (*Zork I*)
34. The Turtle (*Enchanter*)
35. Trillian (*Hitchhiker's Guide*)
36. Michael Wellman (*Suspect*)
37. Blather (*Planetfall*)
38. Angus McNabb (*Deadline*)
39. Mitchell Simm (*A Mind Forever Voyaging*)
40. The Demon (*Zork II*)

# Letters About Our Puzzles

## Dear Infocommies:

You guys must be a hoot to work around. Do you have an opening for an environmental engineer/classical tenor/professional wrestler? I'm your man.

Seriously, though, I had to write concerning one of your answers to Puzzle #9. There is a scene in *Casablanca* in which Ilse (that's right, Ilse, not Ilsa as you spelled it — it's my mother's name) Lund clearly calls Rick Blain "Eric." Do you have any direct evidence that the character's first name was in fact Richard, or are you merely assuming that "Rick" is always short for "Richard"? If you aren't sure, I invite you to rent the VCR and check. I believe the scene in question is the first between Rick and Ilse, and it occurs about 20 minutes into the film. You can also check the credits for all this Ilse/Ilsa and Renaud/Renaut/Renault spelling business (damn furriners, why couldn't she be Jane and he be Ford — think about it). They could even set it in Whitehouse, Texas (it's ten miles south of Tyler).

I look forward to trying *Trinity* and *A Mind Forever Voyaging*. The concept of both is intriguing. And hurry up with the sequel to *Hitchhiker's!*

Mike Donehoo  
 Marietta, GA

Dear Sirs (sic): — (or is it "Dear

Sick Sirs"?)

Dan Donahuen of Lake Havasu City, Arizona, wrote to the puzzle mail bag to challenge Infocom's spelling of the name Louis Renaut (in Puzzle #9). Actually, both Infocom and Donahuen are wrong. Enclosed is a copy of a page from the printed script of *Casablanca*, from *Casablanca, Script and Legend* by Howard Koch (a treasure of a book!).

As you see, the Prefect of Police is clearly "Renault," just like the auto: not "Renaud" (Donahuen) or "Renaut" (Infocom).

Howard Russell  
 Charleston, WV

[Puzzle Editor's Reply: Okay, let's get this silly spelling business straight once and for all. In Puzzle #9, in the Winter 1986 issue, we correctly spelled the Prefect's name as "Renault." When we printed reader Donahuen's letter, in the Spring 1986 issue, it was misspelled due to a typo. The sentence in his letter that reads "...you had the name Louis Renaut" should have read "...you had the name Louis Renault."

As for our "Ilsa" vs. reader Donehoo's "Ilse," we stand by our spelling. Our source, by the way, is *The Film Classics Library Casablanca*, edited by Richard J. Anobile (also a treasure of a book). According to our source, Ilsa

never calls Bogey "Eric." In fact, she calls him Richard on a number of occasions. During the flashback in Paris, she says, "Richard, they'll find out your record. It won't be safe for you here." The note that Sam hands him on the train platform is addressed to "Richard." Later, when she goes to his room during the night to ask him for the letters of transit, she says, "Richard, I had to see you" (to which Rick replies, "So, it's Richard again! We're back in Paris."). Major Strasser also refers to him as "Richard" when reading his dossier, and Sam calls him "Mister Richard" when he isn't calling him "Boss." Anyway, the point is made, the evidence is overwhelming, but I'll rent the videotape anyway, since I haven't watched it in over a month.]

## Dear [something]:

I am disturbed by your comments on the puzzle entries. Perhaps you feel that only one person in each family plays an Infocom game. As an Infocom player, the wife of an Infocom player, and the mother of seven (five of whom are avid Infocom players and the remaining two are learning to read JUST so they can play Infocom games), I feel maligned. I buy Infocom games for our family. While one person is playing the game, many members of the family are involved in the

game. (What is so funny, how did you get the babel fish, etc.)

Because I feel that Infocom games are assets to our family life, I will continue to buy each game as it is introduced. That means at least seven people in our family will play the game. Now, I am not a selfish mother, but I want to be able to enter the contests also. Would you discriminate against me just because I'm the wife and mother of all these "Infocommies" and I've only had time on the computers to finish one game myself? After all, I'm supporting you by purchasing your products for birthdays, Christmas, and just because there is a new game available. Some of my children greet me each afternoon by asking me if [the Infocom newsletter] came today. Even if it comes in my name, they feel a proprietary right.

Do you know how many games I have had to buy to feed the family's habits? Also, we have addicted other families to this wicked pastime. We get calls at all hours from some soul asking Aunt Judie how you get the key from the Unicorn or asking Uncle Delbert how you get the grue's milk.

So — how about one envelope per household? Allowing photocopies is nice. When we had to send you the original, we kept a photocopy; and I had to be a  
 (more Puzzle Letters on page 9)

# Kob on Double Fanucci

Let's look at the following situation:

**Teams:** North & Up, Southwest & East

**Warm Diplomatic Relations:** North & Up

**Slavic Nations:** Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Up, Rumania

**Handicaps:** NORTH: 43; UP: 976.4; SOUTHWEST: [Classified];

EAST: .4

## NORTH (vulnerable)

- ♠ -4, -2
- ♣ Water Molecule, Bromide
- ♠ multiples of 11
- ♠ 4, 8, K
- ♠ Red, Red, GunMetal-Gray
- ♠ Bocce, K, Teapot
- ♠ 3, 3, 3, 3, 2

## UP (dealing 1st, 3rd\*)

- ♠ 6, 8, 84
- ♣ (none)
- ♠ even, except multiples of 11
- ♠ J, 9, Rook
- ♠ 3, 11, Off-White, Beet-Red
- ♠ 3, Law School
- ♠ 77, 3, 3, 3, 10

## SOUTHWEST (dealing across table)

- ♠ 1097, 2
- ♣ (none)
- ♠ opposite
- ♠ 2, 4, Bishop, K
- ♠ Blue-Gray
- ♠ Melon, 5, Granola
- ♠ 3, 3, 3, 3, Q

## EAST (dealing 2nd, 3rd\*)

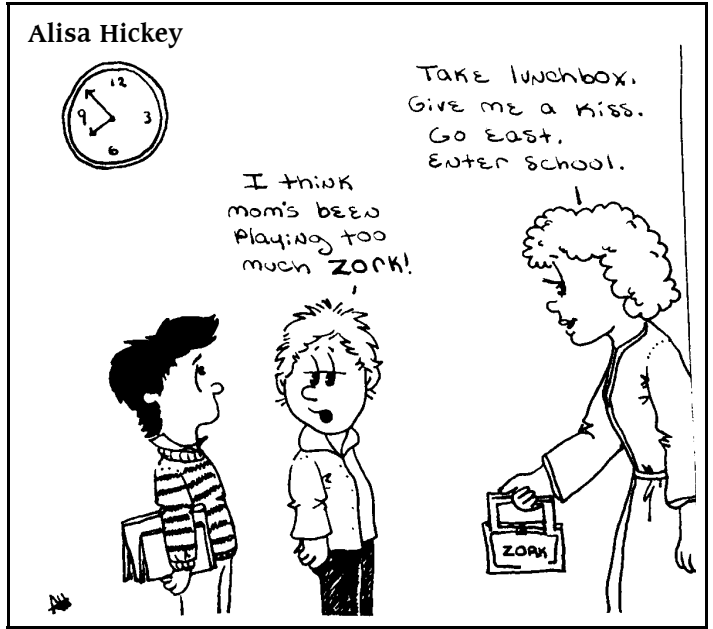
- ♠ 2, A, K, Alan
- ♣ Bromium, J
- ♠ points within the shaded area
- ♠ 3, K, H, N
- ♠ Tangerine-Orange, Black, Q
- ♠ Cottage, 9, Chaise
- ♠ 2, 3, 3

\*Note the co-deal Up and East!

This set-up occurred in 904, at the annual Championships at Borphee. Veldran of Aragain and BoBo the Somewhat Misguided played (respectively) North and Up, challenging Hobart the Unmerciful and Snuffie (playing Southwest and East). Since the SW-E team controlled "Alan," they were able to make a decision. Southwest arcwelded his Q and K to his partner's Q and K for a Simpleton. Jazzing, East formed the word "ANKH" from various letters in his possession, to gain control of the

gauntlet for three turns. North, hoping for Manhattan, signalled for a ♠ switch, and exchanged his -2 for his partner's 84, a difference of 86. BoBo factored an 11 out of his 77 of ♠, and formed a straight, which he traded in for an option on the movie rights. North, monopolizing on a distraction in the bleachers, seized his misplaced cards and incorporated them into his hand — the Hydronium Ion of ♣ and the 4 of ♠. As North restored himself his seat, East dealt a round of cards (out of turn).

Alisa Hickey



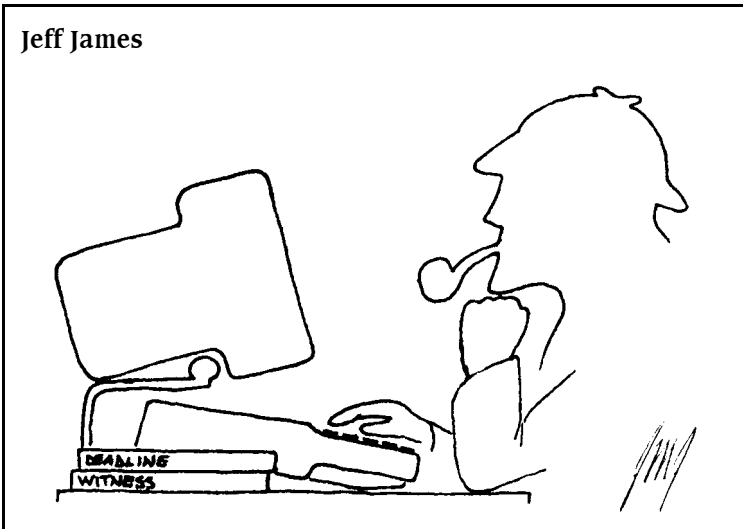
## Cartoon Flow Unabated

The poor, wretched cartoon editor continues to suffer from the incessant barrage of nearly fifty cartoons per week. You haven't broken his spirit yet, so keep 'em coming! If you'd like to submit a cartoon for publication, send it to *The Status Line* Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

All cartoons must be in black

on white, unlined paper. Please don't fold your cartoon! All submissions become property of Infocom. If we print your cartoon, we'll send you a free game of your choice. Don't forget to include your name, address, phone number, the title of the game you'd like to win, and the computer system you'd like the game to run on.

Jeff James



Turn two began, and the players revolved. Snuffie, drawing a Red of ♠, mixed it with the Tangerine-Orange and Black of ♠, as well as his partner's Blue-Gray, in order to produce a ghastly shade of brown. After a brief pause, the judges raised their placards — a 9.8, a 9.77 and a "nice job." A new championship record! Southwest drew another trebled fromp, therefore controlling more 3's than any other player, and thus was allowed to roll again. Rolling a four, Hobart declared "Argyle!" for which he received ten points and a chance at the trip for two to Arulis Maptar. Poker-faced, Veldran bluffed, claiming that he had, in fact, won the game several turns ago. Unconvinced, team SW-E challenged, winning the judges' favor. To conserve pride, Veldran ionized his Hydronium Ion and his Water Molecule of ♣, to form a strong acid. Some cards were accidentally dissolved in the resulting confusion. Up passed, to cuddle his ♠.

Things looked grim for N-U, their combined score so tiny that it was immeasurable since the microscope hadn't yet been invented. But, as is customary in tournament play, luck saw to it that the underdog wasn't trampled. As Southwest dealt across the table, Snuffie fell over backwards clutching his hamstring. The medical crew, rushing onto the field, confirmed that he was suffering from a broken wrist, and dragged him to the sidelines. Southwest tossed his cards into the air and unleashed a long string of expletives about elks. After much consultation, both teams agreed to end the game in a draw and order out for pizza, making this the 72nd year in a row that the tournament closed without a confirmed winner. Nevertheless, the fans swept onto the field and ate the goalposts — a true Double Fanucci tradition.

[Reprinted with permission from the Borphee Digest, vol. MMCXXI, p. 879]

# Weird Letter

Dear Sirs [sic]:

Recently I read the trademark information on the back of one of your pamphlets and became terribly interested in interactive fiction. So, one fine afternoon, I marched down to the computer store and purchased your famous *Zork I*. When I got home, I ripped off all the plastic and sat down to read the manual.

After about an hour or so, I began to realize that this game required the use of a computer! I'm outraged!!! It's discrimination of the worst kind!!!

Immediately I dashed off to my lawyer's office and had a chat with him. He assured me that Infocom was far above the law and there was nothing I could do. So, I resorted to purchasing an IBM-PC.

I immediately put the disk in the drive and booted the computer. Superb! The best game I've ever had! I was fascinated by all those sophisticated electric sounds of the disk spinning inside the computer! So, generous and sharing person

that I'd like to think I am, I invited a friend over to play with me.

When my friend got there I eagerly started up the game. But then my friend asked, "Hey, don't you need a monitor to play this?" I'm outraged!!! It's discrimination of the second to the worst kind!!!

My lawyer again reminded me that Infocom is far above the law and I should keep quiet, lest I be visited by a slue of grues. So I resorted to buying a monitor.

When I got home, I connected the monitor and invited my friend over to play again. When he arrived, I booted the computer and we listened to the incredibly fascinating noises the disk drive made. But then, to our utter disappointment, words began to appear on the screen. Such horrible description! Such grotesque exaggeration! I had always believed the White House was much bigger than that! And where was the President and all his Secret Service men? It wasn't totally void of life though: I did find a maid in the basement with an axe. Anyhow, I soon lost interest in the game altogether.

To anyone who reads this, I

suggest playing *Zork* without a monitor. It's much more challenging.

Disgruntedly yours,  
Tom Schwartz  
Raleigh, NC

P.S. I have an excellent monitor for

sale. It has only been used once, but I recommend disconnecting it when playing Infocom games.

[Editor's Reply: We find it hard to believe that your lawyer said Infocom is far above the law.]

Danny Simon & Mark Cantrell

IT'S A BIRD... IT'S A PLANE... NO, IT'S...

INFOMAN!

INFOMAN! GET ME OUT OF HERE!

PLEASE USE COMPASS DIRECTIONS INSTEAD.

INFOMAN! SAVE ME FROM THE TRAIN!

YOU USED "SAVE" IN A WAY THAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

INFOMAN! CAN YOU RESCUE ALL OF US?

I CAN'T USE MULTIPLE DIRECT OBJECTS WITH "RESCUE".

TUNE IN AGAIN NEXT TIME WHEN INFOMAN DOES FIVE TO TEN FOR TAX EVASION IN "I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT SENTENCE"

# Puzzle Letters (continued from page 7)

Solomon to decide who got to enter the contest that time.

Judie Eatough  
Provo, UT

[Puzzle Editor's Reply: Don't grumble, because the one-entry-per-envelope rule really doesn't discriminate against you. Actually, it merely prevents you from having an additional advantage over entrants who ARE the only player at their address. You already enjoy an advantage in puzzles that such solo Infocommies don't have: the seven-heads-are-better-than-one advantage. (It would, of course, be just plain silly to have a rule that said "You must do the puzzle on your own without any help from anyone else.")

Don't grumble, because the goal of our puzzle rules is to maximize the number of people who can enter, while attempting to eliminate cheating or ploys to gain unfair advantages. Unfortunately, when an envelope arrives filled with photocopied entries from John Smith, Tabby Smith, Rex Smith, and Daisy Smith, we have no way of knowing whether they are all

legitimate, or whether John is merely entering his cat, dog, and sheep in the contest in order to multiply his chances. It would be nice if nobody cheated, but experience shows that this simply isn't the case. For example, we limit entries to one per person, but nevertheless we still find people who enter multiple times. (By the way, when this occurs we simply ignore all the entries from that person.)

Don't grumble, because we feel that the one-entry-per-envelope rule is the fairest method, even though some members of the vast honest majority have to be inconvenienced a little.

Don't grumble, just think of how much better things have been for you since we began allowing photocopies! Would you rather go back to the system where multiple entries could be put in one envelope, but you had to cut up your issue?

And finally, don't grumble! It's only a silly little puzzle! It's supposed to be fun! Diverting! Entertaining! Grumble about taxes or toxic waste dumps, not the puzzle!]



## High School Marathon of the Mind

We Last fall Infocom co-sponsored a Marathon of the Minds at the Boston Museum of Science ComputerPlace for area college students. Well, we did it again this spring with our newest release, *Trinity*, written by "Professor" Brian Moriarty. This time twelve area high schools competed to be the first to finish.

The contest officially started at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 30th, but beforehand the students were able to look at the game materials. Many of the people constructed paper cranes from the instructions included with the game. At 5:00 they all started the game by exploring Kensington Gardens (the first

setting). At about 5:45 the first groups started to leave the Gardens, and others followed over the next hour. After that, they were able to explore the large geography of the central portion of the game.

Throughout the night they struggled to finish the game. The first team to finish, from Acton/Boxboro Regional High School, finally solved the game almost 17 hours later, at 9:45 Saturday

morning. One other team solved the game about 45 minutes later; by that time, all other teams had given up to get some much needed sleep. Congratulations to Bill Shubert, Adam Crossland and Mark Hald for winning the Marathon.

Congratulations also go to Infocom's Spencer Steere for setting up this event. Those in the Boston area were able to see the start of the Marathon on the 11 o'clock nightly news on channel 7 (WNEV).

This fall, Infocom is planning Marathons across the country, to be held in major museums for area high school students. The tentatively scheduled cities are: Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. Our newest releases will be featured: *Moonmist* and... well, we're not going to tell you yet. So keep an eye open for the Marathon coming to YOUR area

Museum, prowling its stately marble halls for two days to search out the contest clues:

**Lebling:** There must be hyraxes around here somewhere. They're cute and cuddly and the closest living relatives of the elephant. It would make a great question.

**Meretzky** (on being shown hyraxes): I don't believe it, and besides, no one else has ever heard of them.

Slow dissolve to Cambridge: the contest materials are written, then printed and collated onto carefully chosen, color-coded Day-Glow™ papers. Matching color-coded name tags, tablecloths (for the tables that would serve as the teams' home base), etc., are assembled. The materials are carefully packed and sent to Chicago.

Cut to Chicago, the morning of the event:

**Meretzky:** The boxes haven't arrived! No one answers the phone!

**Lebling:** Put down that knife!

Much searching, confusion, near-panic (peril-sensitive sunglasses turning dark all around). Fortunately, Steve brought the originals, so InfoPRperson Spencer Steere and her associates could, at the last minute and at great expense, produce a new set of materials. So what if there was no red paper and the purple was actually more or less gray? Many would imbibe too much to notice.

Cut to the Field Museum, one hour before the event: "What do you mean, you've thrown away all the maps of the Museum?"

## GRUER'S PROFILE:

### JAMES H. LEVY

HOME: Mountain View, CA

PROFESSION: President, Activision, Inc.

HOBBY: Collecting software development companies.

LATEST BOOK READ: *The Ballyhoo* hint booklet.

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Finding foster homes for all the little computer people.

FAVORITE INFOCOM GAME: Cornerstone.

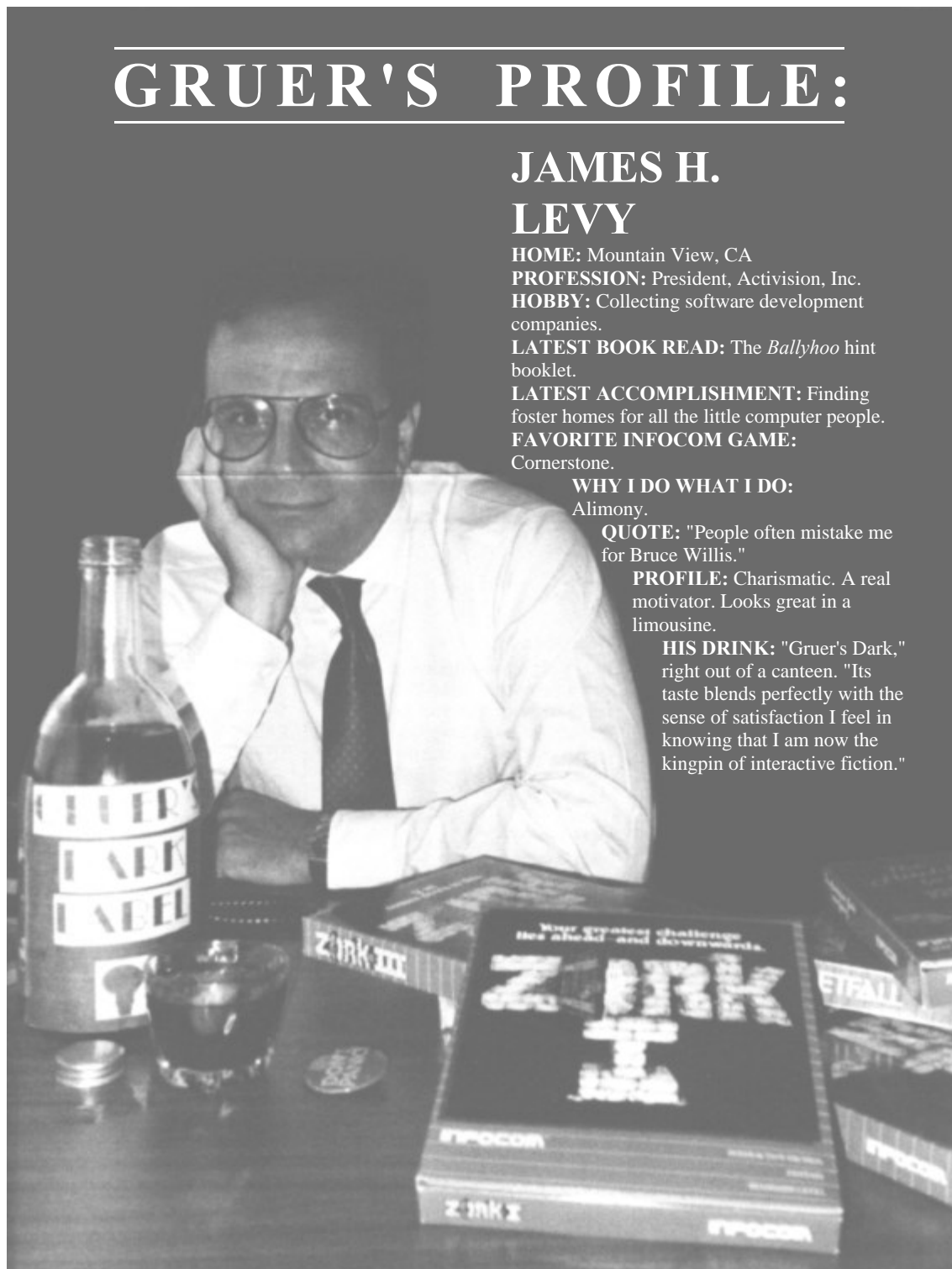
#### WHY I DO WHAT I DO:

Alimony.

QUOTE: "People often mistake me for Bruce Willis."

PROFILE: Charismatic. A real motivator. Looks great in a limousine.

HIS DRINK: "Gruer's Dark," right out of a canteen. "Its taste blends perfectly with the sense of satisfaction I feel in knowing that I am now the kingpin of interactive fiction."



# Have We Got a MAN for You!

Is your idea of Mr. Right a guy who can get the babelfish without doing a save? Is he the kind of guy who knows just the right f-word for the Wizard of Frobozz? The kind of guy who would start the Zork Users Group? Well, have we got a date for you!

Enter the **InfoDream Date Contest** and win a date with Infocom's Director of Marketing, Mike Dornbrook. Just tell us in 50 words or less why you would want to go on a date with Mikey. Entries will be judged by a committee of married Infoemployees, and the winning entry, along with a few runners-up, will be published in a future issue of this newsletter. Runners-up will receive an Infocom poster. All contestants will have the satisfaction of knowing they have flattered Mikey and helped put a dent in this year's Postal Service deficit.

Unfortunately, most of this year's enormous contest budget is gone, so the winner will have to get to Boston on his or her own. Jim, tell our eager contestants what awaits them on their InfoDream date,

should they win:

*Your InfoDream date begins with a tour of the Infocom facilities. You'll meet the game writers and have your picture taken on the computer they work on. You'll see Marc Blank's desk and his Halloween costume from last year. You'll see Infocom's trophy case. If*

*there are any meetings, you can take the minutes, unless you don't want to. Then you'll be whisked a block away to Aku-Aku (Polynesian dishes a specialty) for dinner with Mikey. All this can be yours if your entry is selected by our distinguished committee of judges.*

Send your entry, and a photo (optional, but you don't think we're going to send Mikey out with just anybody, do you?) to InfoDream Date, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140, Attention Jim Lange. Employees of Infocom and their families are not eligible since they see Mikey all the time.



## Envelope Contest

Right now, somewhere near Torrance City, CA, a man by the name of Jeff Nelsen is probably running around with his head swollen to the size of the Goodyear blimp and shoving his *Status Line* (formerly *The New Zork Times*) envelope under the nose of family and friends. His actions are very understandable because he, having recognized the design on the envelope as the product of his creative genius, knows that he is the winner of the prestigious "Design a Better Envelope Contest." And winning this contest was no small feat. The competition was stiff. Literally HUNDREDS of budding Picassos submitted their finest Louvre-quality works. It was from this ocean of artistic talent that a discriminating panel of Infocom judges selected Jeff Nelsen's breathtaking masterpiece. A proud accomplishment for Jeff indeed!

Now, on the other hand, if your design is one of the hundreds that apparently was drowned in this so-called "ocean of artistic talent," you're probably pretty ticked off right now. And your reaction is also very understandable. Day after day

*(more Envelope on page 5)*

don't call that weird. I call that practical. How can I make people understand that and accept me as I am?

Signed,  
No Iced Tea

Dear No Tea,

You can't change the way people think. So what you have to do is find people who think the way you do. And, as unbelievable as it may seem, there is someone that thinks like you. You guessed it — Mike Dornbrook! Mike likes to eat out a lot, and he too is refrigeratorless. So get together with him. Win a date with Mike!

## Ask Gabby

Dear Gabby,

I'm madly attracted to the boy next door. I think we would make a great couple because we have so much in common — namely, we're both Infocom fanatics. We're so crazy about Infocom that if we were Infocom employees, we would work all night, all weekend, and never take a vacation!

The problem is that one time I told "Jim" (not his real name) that when I grow up I want to go into marketing. Well, Jim, who wants to be a game designer, said that we'd never see eye to eye because game designers and marketers never do. Now he won't have anything to do with me. Every time he sees me he just sneers and mutters something about stupid marketing people.

I know we could be happy if he would just give it a chance. Gabby, please tell me what to do!

Signed,  
Miserable in Marketing

Dear M 'n M,

Bag the close-minded jerk and win a date with Mike Dornbrook! He loves both Infocom AND marketing. He even loves to work all night and all weekend without taking a vacation. So he's sure to love you too.

Dear Gabby,

I am a home-owner who takes a great deal of pride in my yard as well as my house. I have worked very hard to make my backyard a place that is not only pleasing to the eye but also pleasing to the soul. Now, after several months of hard work, the only thing I need to attain this goal is a fence. A fence would block from view a rather unsightly woodpile on my neighbor's property, and it would give me the peace and solitude that I'd like.

When I asked my neighbors if they would mind a fence along the property line, they were perfectly agreeable. But when I started to put the fence up, they became irate. They claimed I was putting the

fence in their yard, a foot in from the property line. I showed them the deed to my house which confirmed that I was correct in my assumption of the property line, but it didn't dull their hostility.

What should I do? I absolutely don't want to make enemies of my neighbors. But shouldn't I stand up for what's rightfully mine?

Signed,  
Straddling the Fence

Dear Straddling,

Boy, that's a toughy! In fact, I don't think I can help you out on this one, but I know who can... Mike Dornbrook! Wouldn't ya know it, Mike had the exact same problem with his fence-building. Win a date with him and he can tell you all about how he solved this dilemma.

Dear Gabby,

I don't own a refrigerator. As a result, people think I'm really weird. It's not fair, though. I eat out a lot, so I don't need a refrigerator! I



☆ ✂ ☆

# More Infocom Games for Only \$14.95!!!

Crazy Dimwit is clearing out the castle, and slashing prices like they were trolls! Whether you've been spending the winter searching for the Coconut of Quendor, or still trying to get that darn babbelfish in your ear,

***NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY!!!***

When Crazy Dimwit starts cutting, there's no stopping him. Now three more Infocom favorites can be yours for the low, low, low price of \$14.95! If deep sea adventure is your cup of tea, then *Cutthroats*, written by Michael Berlyn, is the story for you. Jeff O'Neill's *Ballyhoo* comes complete with the smell of grease-paint and the roar of the crowd. And you'll want to finish *Suspect*, by Dave Lebling, before your next Halloween party, in case you need to solve a murder.

## Still More Games for \$14.95!!!

In the last *Status Line*, Mike "Mad Dog" Dornbrook chopped some prices, but he forgot to tell you about them (we had so much else to jam-pack into that issue). So, here's another opportunity to order more Infocom classics at the low, low, oh-so-very-low price of \$14.95!!! If it's Zorks you like, then it's Zorks you'll get! Try *Zork II* and *Zork III* at \$14.95 each! Or if Floyd the Robot is more to your taste, there's the ever popular *Planetfall* by Steve Meretzky. For those with a yearn for alternate realities, get Brian Moriarty's *Trinity*! Or maybe explore the future as the first sentient computer with Meretzky's *A Mind Forever Voyaging*!!! Each only \$14.95!

## Free InvisiClues!!!

But wait! There's more!!! Crazy Dimwit really wants you to buy!!! If you order by March 31, 1988, you can get a free InvisiClue kit!!! Just buy any three of the eight games included in this offer, and you can have a free InvisiClues hint booklet!!! Each InvisiClues kit comes complete with a special marker so you uncover the clues only as you need them. InvisiClues start with a gentle nudge in the right direction and go all the way to the complete answer, so you can have just as much help as you want. And one can be yours ***absolutely free!!!***

☆ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ☆

# Crazy Dimwit's Crazy Eight at a Crazy Price



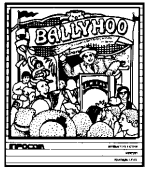
## Cutthroats™

*Cutthroats*, written by Michael Berlyn and Jerry Wolper, casts you as a backwater island's top diver and foremost expert on local shipwrecks. It is no surprise that you're picked to locate and salvage a fortune in sunken treasure. You must risk the perils of unknown waters and of an untrustworthy crew, but the reward is far too great to pass up. *A+ Magazine* declared *Cutthroats* to be "another feather in Infocom's cap."



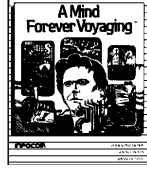
## PLANETFALL™

*Planetfall* is often cited by Infocom fans as their favorite work. Steve Meretzky's zany humor makes your adventure as a lowly ensign in the Stellar Patrol very memorable. When you crash into a deserted planet, you must unlock its mysteries, using your wits and Floyd, a lovable robot with the personality of a mischievous 8-year old. Said *Memphis Magazine*, "*Planetfall* is just about worth the purchase of a computer."



## BALLYHOO™

In Jeff O'Neill's *Ballyhoo*, you stick around after the circus, hoping to get a glimpse of the glitter and the glamour. But when you hear that the owner's daughter has been kidnapped and the detective in charge couldn't find the nose on his face, you set out to find her. As you seek clues and dodge danger, you must watch your step... or you might become the next sideshow freak. *Computer Entertainer* gave *Ballyhoo* four stars, saying, "*Ballyhoo* is typically excellent Infocom interactive fiction. Their authors have never let us down!"



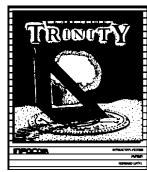
## A Mind Forever Voyaging™

Meretzky gives an awe-inspiring look into the future in *A Mind Forever Voyaging*. You are Prism, the world's first conscious, intelligent computer. It is up to you to travel fifty years into the future to determine how a new government policy will reshape the nation and affect the world. According to *Newsweek*, "AMFV uses the expanded memory to breathtaking effect, creating a richly imaged anti-Utopian future-world... AMFV isn't '1984', but in some ways it's even scarier."



## Suspect™

When you show up for a Halloween party in *Suspect*, by Dave Lebling, you expect to spend the night mingling with bluebloods and power brokers, sampling champagne and caviar, enjoying the fine orchestra and exotic costumes. But when murder halts the festivities, fingers start pointing at you. You'll need all your wits to prove your innocence and try to solve the crime. According to the *Portland Oregonian*, "This isn't a computer game. This is complex, confusing, varied, independent real life as well as one of the most intricate and well-written text adventures ever devised."



## TRINITY™

Brian Moriarty's *Trinity* puts you in London seconds before an atom bomb vaporizes the city at the start of World War III. You must escape to a secret universe, a plane between fantasy and reality, where every atomic explosion is mysteriously connected. Here you'll crisscross time and space, in a journey to the dawn of the atomic age, and the course of history will be in your hands. *Computer Entertainer* said that *Trinity* "is the most original and daring of all Infocom works of interactive fiction."



In Dave Lebling and Marc Blank's *Zork II*, you journey to a long-hidden region of the Great Underground Empire, dominated by the frivolous Wizard of Frobozz. As the strong-hearted adventurer you are, you try to survive his bothersome spells and solve such fascinating puzzles as the Maze of Oddly Angled Rooms.



*Zork III*, the climax of the trilogy, draws you into the deepest and most mysterious reaches of the Great Underground Empire. Your goal is to determine why you're in the perilous ruins of the empire and what you're supposed to be doing there. The *Washington Post* said, "If it's two in the morning, it must be ZORK. Not even Ted Koppel can keep the nation up so late."

# Crazy Dimwit's Ordering Instructions:

1. Fill in your name, address, phone number, and other pertinent information below.
- 1a. To order by phone, call 1-800-262-6868 and ask for operator 15D. (But don't yell, scream or shout.)
2. Yell, "Wow!! Check out these prices!!!"
3. Circle the product number in the grid below for each game you want to buy at the outrageously low price of \$14.95.
4. Scream, "Hot diggety dog!! Look at all these great games!!!"
5. If you're buying at least three games, check the box in the lower left corner and circle the game title for which you want free InvisiClues.
6. Shout, "Yeah!! I can't believe I'm saving all this money!!!"
7. Circle the product number for any other InvisiClues you want to buy at \$7.95.
8. Jump for joy!!!
9. Multiply the number of games you're ordering by \$14.95 and the number of InvisiClues by \$7.95; add those number together and put it on the SUBTOTAL line. Add \$2.00 shipping and handling for each game ordered. NJ residents add 6% sales tax. Enter the grand total on the GRAND TOTAL line.
10. Do the Funky Chicken dance.
11. Enclose appropriate payment and mail the bottom part of this sheet to: Crazy Dimwit Sale, Infocom, PO Box 478, Cresskill, NJ 07626.
12. Go outside and wait 3-6 weeks in front of your mailbox. (Holding your breath is optional.)
13. To check the status of your order, call 1-800-262-6868.

*Retain this portion for your records.*

-----

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Age:  Under 6  6-1  12-17  18-24  25-35  36-49  50+

Payment Method:  Visa  Mastercard  American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check  Money order Make check payable to **INFOCOM, INC.** (Please do not send cash.)

**YES!!!** I want to take advantage of this totally awesome, pissa-cool, psychedelically groovy, bigger-than-life offer!!!

	Apple II	Macintosh	Atari		Commodore	Amiga	IBM/	InvisiClues
			XL/XE	Atari ST	64/128		MS-DOS	
Cutthroats	IA3-AP1	IA3-AP2	IA3-AT1	IA3-AT2	IA3-CO1	IA3-CO4	IA3-IB2	IA3-INV
Ballyhoo	IM3-AP1	IM3-AP2	IM3-AT1	IM3-AT2	IM3-CO1	IM3-CO4	IM3-IB2	IM3-INV
Suspect	IM2-AP1	IM2-AP2	IM2-AT1	IM2-AT2	IM2-CO1	IM2-CO4	IM2-IB2	IM2-INV
Zork II	IZ2-AP1	IZ2-AP2	IZ2-AT1	IZ2-AT2	IZ2-CO1	IZ2-CO4	IZ2-IB2	IZ2-INV <sup>1</sup>
Zork III	IZ3-AP1	IZ3-AP2	IZ3-AT1	IZ3-AT2	IZ3-CO1	IZ3-CO4	IZ3-IB2	IZ3-INV
Planetfall	IS3-AP1	IS3-AP2	IS3-AT1	IS3-AT2	IS3-CO1	IS3-CO4	IS3-IB2	IS3-INV
Trinity	IZ7-AP1 <sup>2</sup>	IZ7-AP2 <sup>2</sup>		IZ7-AT2	IZ7-CO5 <sup>2</sup>	IZ7-CO4	IZ7-IB1 <sup>2</sup>	IZ7-INV
AMFV	IS5-AP1 <sup>2</sup>	IS5-AP2 <sup>2</sup>		IS5-AT2	IS5-CO5 <sup>2</sup>	IS5-CO4	IS5-IB1 <sup>2</sup>	IS5-INV

<sup>1</sup>Due to limited quantities, Zork II InvisiClues are not available as part of the free offer.

<sup>2</sup>Trinity and AMFV requires 128K; IBM or 100% compatibles only; 512K Macintosh; not available for Commodore 64 or Atari XL/XE.

Yes!!! I've ordered three games before March 31 and want the free InvisiClues circled below. (RB-795)

Cutthroats	Ballyhoo	Suspect
Zork III	Planetfall	Trinity
AMFV		

**SUBTOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

Yes!!! I live in New Jersey! Add 6% sales tax! \_\_\_\_\_

Add \$2.00 P & H per game. \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

This order form is not valid after June 30, 1988.

Source Code 15D



Post Office Box 478  
Cresskill, New Jersey 07626

**INFOCOM**<sup>™</sup>

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 5938  
Chicago, IL

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## Soon To Be A Major Interactive Story...

# HOLLYWOOD HIJINX

Who can forget those wonderful childhood summers spent with your Aunt Hildegard and Uncle Buddy Burbank? Uncle Buddy was a Hollywood mogul, Aunt Hildegard his loving (and very rich) wife. They had no children of their own, but you and your cousins were always welcome at their sprawling Malibu estate.

The house itself was loads of fun. There was the luxurious movie theater, the gaudy round satin-covered bed, the gold-plated bathroom faucets in the shape of Oscars, and the goofy props from old Buddy Burbank movies. And the grounds had everything from a private beach to a hedge maze, where you usually managed to get lost.

Your aunt and uncle were fun, too. Uncle Buddy, who dressed in polyester leisure suits and gold chains, always had a practical joke up his sleeve. And, despite her eccentricities, Aunt Hildy loved you like a mother.

You even enjoyed your Cousin Herman, who often visited at the same time as you. You and

Herman would team up together to play games in the garden or help Aunt Hildegard with her dinner parties. There was also the time he got sick in the top bunk when you were sleeping in the bottom one. Or the time he tripped you on the beach stairs and you fell and got a bloody nose. But you were able to forgive and forget in the name of cousinly love.

Well, those days are all behind you. Uncle Buddy has been dead for several years, and now Aunt Hildegard has passed away, too. It seems like the end of an era — until you learn that *you've* inherited the entire estate. There's just one quirky stipulation: you can only claim your booty if you find ten "treasures" from old Buddy Burbank movies hidden throughout the house and grounds. If you can't find the treasures in one night, you lose the whole caboodle.

That's the premise of *Hollywood Hijinx™*, the new interactive story from Infocom. It sends you on a zany treasure hunt through a

*(continued on page 4)*



Aunt Hildegard and Uncle Buddy would be proud of the Hollywood Hijinx package.

## Breakthrough In Continuing Education...

# THE ENCHANTER TRILOGY

Are you tired of dragging around heavy swords? Exhausted from bloody battles with trolls and thieves? Feeling that it's all gotten a bit too ... well, physical?

It's time to step up to a more cerebral, white-collar underground career! Become an enchanter! In only three lessons, we can turn you from a novice magician into a full-fledged member of the Circle of Enchanters, and then, if you play your cards right, into the head of the Circle itself!

Previously, it took almost three years to complete this course, and it cost over 120 dollars. But now, thanks to extensive research, innovative modern packaging, and a collaboration between the Frobozz Magic Magic Equipment Company and Crazy Dimwit's, Infocom brings you the entire *Enchanter® Trilogy* for only \$69.95 for the Commodore 64/128 and \$79.95 for the IBM and Apple II series.

The Great Underground Empire Tech Correspondence Course in Enchanting contains these three lessons:

In the first lesson, *Enchanter*, you are given an extensive grounding in spellcraft as you are sent by the Circle of Enchanters to defeat the evil warlock Krill and prevent the ruination of the land. As *Games* magazine said, "This is an impressive start for a new trilogy and a must for all adventure gamers." *Enchanter* was written by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank, the co-authors of the *Zork® Trilogy*.

In the second lesson, *Sorcerer™*, your defeat of Krill has promoted you to full membership in the Circle. Everything looks rosy until Belboz, the head of the Circle, disappears under mysterious circumstances. Ultimately you must use time-travel, transformation, and general trickiness to destroy the demon Jeearr, who's at the bottom of it all. *Analog Computing* said, "*Sorcerer* does live up to the precedent set for it by *Enchanter* and, in many respects, surpasses it." *Sorcerer* was written by Steve Meretzky, author of *Planetfall®*, co-author of *The Hitchhiker's* *(continued on page 2)*



Talk to animals! Fly like a bat! Turn enemies into newts! It's all possible in The Enchanter Trilogy.

## The Status Line

Writers: Tom Bok, Gary Brennan, Elizabeth Langosy, Dave Lebling, Steve Meretzky, Jonathan Palace, Tom Veldran

Production: Cynthia Curtis, Susan Goldman, Jonathan Palace

Supposed Boss: Susan Goldman

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# NY Times Can't Be GIVEN Away

### To Whom It May Concern:

When I got my *Status Line* a few days ago, I was thrilled to learn that I had named one of the greatest newsletters of all time. Then I remembered the prize I had won; a year's subscription to The New York Times. Now what, exactly, am I going to do with that? I can't use it to line a bird cage, because I don't even have a bird! Then I thought, this prize must be costing those Infocommies an arm and a leg (or two). They would save big bucks if they just sent me an Infocom game for my Apple IIc, such as *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*.

I haven't heard anything from The New York Times yet about my

subscription, so maybe it's not too late to cancel it, saving Infocom from financial ruin. How about it? Who in their right mind would give away an expensive prize made by some other company when they could simply give away a relatively inexpensive Infocom game, and boost their company's image at the same time? Please seriously consider this idea, and let me know what you think.

Sincerely,

Cliff Tuel  
San Jose, CA

P.S. If you decide to waste your money on the newspaper, I'll read it anyway.

## Enchanter Trilogy

(continued from page 1)

*Guide to the Galaxy*™, and author of *A Mind Forever Voyaging*™ and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*™.

The third lesson, *Spellbreaker*™, is a tricky final exam, for now you have become Head of the Circle of Enchanters. Ready to relax and take it easy, you have no such luck: magic itself appears to be failing, the populace is up in arms, and the most dangerous opponent yet is behind it all. *Analog Computing* said "*Spellbreaker* is a vast, sprawling game, finely detailed, intricately designed. It can be easily and wholeheartedly recommended, a grand conclusion to a great series." *Spellbreaker* was

written by Dave Lebling.

The *Enchanter Trilogy* comes in a beautiful slipcased package suitable for awed contemplation, tasteful holiday gift-giving, or annoying friends and relations who think Infocom is into occultism. All three games have been updated with the latest and best bug fixes, including the legendary OOPS command. All the feelies you know and love are there, including the lovely field guide to the "Creatures of Frobozz" (*Sorcerer*) and five portraits of renowned Enchanters (*Spellbreaker*). The *Enchanter Trilogy* is limited while supplies last.

## Hitchhiker's on Radio

We are proud to announce that once again Infocom has made it possible for all radio listeners to pick up *Hitchhiker's*! Before it was an interactive story, before it was a TV show, before it was converted into four phenomenal best-selling books, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was a twelve-part radio serial on Britain's BBC. Now Infocom is sponsoring a rebroadcast of the entire serial on National Public Radio (NPR).

This is radio as you've never heard it before. Conceived and written by Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide* radio serial is hilarious and contains some of the best sound effects ever produced. Before the interactive story came out, many considered this radio serial the best rendition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide*. If you have never heard it, you will find it funny, outrageous, mindboggling, and well worth listening to.

Beginning in January 1987, episodes will be made available to public radio stations across the country for inclusion in their schedules. Check local program listings for times — each station puts together its own schedule independently. If your local public radio station is not carrying the show, call to point out that it is available and that you are interested in it (phone calls are surprisingly effective). Why is Infocom running *Hitchhiker's* again two years later? Find out in the next exciting issue of *The Status Line*!

In *Planetfall*, using naughty words causes the response "Such language from an ensign in the Stellar Patrol!" The reason we mention this is an old but still amusing quote we dug up recently. It's from an article on interactive fiction in the March 18, 1985, issue of *People* magazine:

*In Planetfall, if you tell the computer to "go to hell" it replies, "Such language from an enzyme in the stellar patrol!"*

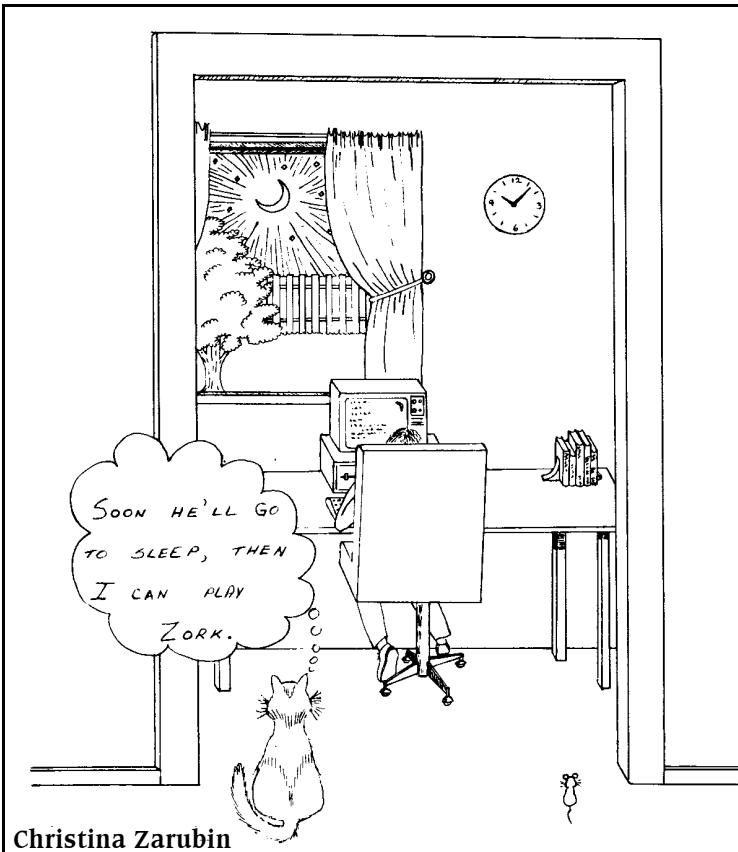
# DEAR

### Dear Miss Underground Manners:

I am a middle-aged gnome who likes to think he practices impeccable manners. Recently, my next-tunnel neighbor, an ogre of good repute and social standing, invited me to be present at his son's wedding. Naturally, I consented cheerfully. When the date arrived, I appeared at the ceremony, only to find that my wife and children had been chopped up and were to be served as hors d'oeuvres at the reception. Of course I was shocked to learn that my family was now a bowl of flesh balls. How can I express my displeasure to my host?

### Gentle Reader:

You certainly have justification to



Christina Zarubin

Marc Sylvester



# MISS UNDERGROUND MANNERS

feel shocked. As we all know, flesh balls have been considered an absolute "faux pas" since Dundor of Vriminax quashed the Yippie Rebellion, in 466 GUE. You might pleasantly suggest to your host that he instead serve flesh strips in cream-cheese, spread over delicate wafers, as is the custom these days.

**Dear Miss Underground Manners:**

I am a dragon on the debutante circuit. What are the formal rules for immolating humans?

**Gentle Reader:**

Miss Underground Manners finds the following rules applicable:

1) One should always introduce

oneself before incinerating the human in question. Making a bad impression could injure your sterling reputation, should your victim somehow manage to survive.

2) Immolation can often be an embarrassing moment for a human. There's no need to mock or intimidate your victim with malicious peals of laughter or wicked masks of hatred. Instead, put him at ease with a compliment, or a light remark.

3) If recent gourmet experiences have included such elements as garlic, onion, or rotgrub, one should politely excuse oneself and rinse one's maw with a fresh, minty solution before spewing flames at the human. Humans can be particularly sensitive to that

most unpleasant phenomenon known as "bad breath."

**Dear Miss Underground Manners:**

On a recent Sunday jaunt through a portion of the Underground Empire, in search of countless, untold fortunes as well as something to do, I found that I was encountering many more ravenous dungeon denizens than on previous trips. Why, only ten minutes into the trip, my right arm was lopped off completely in a surprise attack by a band of samurai worms! By mid-day, I found that killing had become second nature; I was hacking up just about everything that moved. At one point, as I was retrieving my pitchfork from a young

man's chest, I realized that he was not, in fact, a scheming rogue or a slaving mass of claws and fangs; it was little Davey, my neighbor's son. (Apparently, he was selling flowers to support the elderly.) Have I committed a serious social blunder?

**Gentle Reader:**

You, sir, have indeed violated what Miss Underground Manners would consider a cardinal rule of etiquette, even by dungeon standards. The recent loss of one's right arm is no excuse for holding one's fork in the left hand, which is used only when one is mashing vegetables or gathering peas. (Also, never confuse your pitchfork with your dessert fork.)



## Hollywood Hijinx

(continued from page 1)

house that's as eccentric as its owners. After a night spent in its deserted rooms, you might be feeling a little wacky, too. For although you assume Aunt Hildegard and Uncle Buddy wouldn't make it too hard for you to find the treasures, the puzzles you must solve prove that they weren't just kidding.

*Hollywood Hijinx* was written by "Hollywood" Dave Anderson, whose Hawaiian shirts and baggy shorts fit right in with the beach mural and tropical fish that decorate his Infocom office. To get YOU in the California mood, the package includes a gossip-filled copy of Tinselworld Magazine, your Aunt

Hildegard's will, an autographed photo of your Uncle Buddy, and a lucky palm tree swizzle stick.

Combining the glitz of Tinseltown with the offbeat humor of a "B" movie, *Hollywood Hijinx* is cram-packed with puzzles that will test the wits and tickle the ribs of both first-time and experienced players. Numerous amusing anecdotes about your childhood with Herman, Buddy, and Hildegard add to the fun. *Hollywood Hijinx* will be available in February for a wide variety of personal computers, at a suggested retail price of \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

## Max Yaks Null Set

Some of you have probably noticed a change in the name of this column from the previous issue. You may remember that it was titled "News Inside Infocom." Well, I received a rather threatening letter from the lawyers of News Inside the Society of Respiratory Surgeons stating that if I did not stop using the old name they would rip out my lungs and use them as weather balloons. Hence the new name. Now the news ... **LOVE NOTES:** It used to be that an old-fashioned love song was plucked out on a beat-up old six-string by the one who loved you. Not anymore. Testing Manager Suzanne Frank was recently presented with a cassette tape on which her new beau lavished praise upon praise in state-of-the-art stereophonic sound. You know, multiple tracks, electronic keyboards, and four-part harmony. Suzanne, Suzanne, I think he likes you ... I'm negotiating to have "Suzanne, Suzanne" released on *The Status Line* label for Christmas ... **WEDRUM:** Marc Blank, ex-Infocom VP and distinguished author of such Info-Favorites as *Zork*, *Deadline*®, and *TN20*, is to be married in late December. The marriage will take place in the same hotel at which *The Shining* was filmed. Don't get snowed in you two ... **THE ART OF PARTIES:** A major end-of-summer-super-surprise-soiree was held in honor of Ernie (Burnin' Ernie) Brogmus. Ernie, denizen of Bos-

ton's darkest demi-mondes, is on his way to the Western Front, aka Activision. The party was highlighted by an appearance of the Burnin' Flames. The Flames are composed of Info-vaudevillians Debbie Reilly and Carol Brangwyn. More about these two subtle performers later, much later ... While Ernie's party definitely drew the A-list, the same cannot be said for the Harvard 350th birthday bash. This massive chow-down featured His Royal Majesty Prince Charles as its featured eater. Tester Tom Bok, infamous offspring of Harvard Prez Derek Bok, was brushed off by his original table-mate, Gloria Steinem, only to be left seated with a secret service agent all evening. Tom claimed the chap was interesting enough but kept confusing his butter-knife with his UZI. The evening was not a total loss, however: Tom did get a much-sought-after autograph of Prince Charles for yours truly. His Royal Wit inscribed one of those "1000 stamps, only \$2.95" matchbook covers (one picturing himself and Lady Di) with the most unprincipally yet utterly charming "Chuck" ... **PALM-TRENEUR:** Jeff O'Neill, author of *Ballyhoo*®, has been bitten by the entrepreneurial bug that is so pervasive here in the Bay State. Jeff's scheme involves the mass production of life-size, all-weather artificial palm trees for the deprived masses of New England ... **MEET THE NEW BOSS:** Susan Goldman

Mark Rollin



## Cartoonist Wanted

In our last issue, we neglected to credit Jim Chan of Rowland Height, CA, for his cartoon portraying the "authors of Hitchhiker's Guide."

If you'd like to submit a cartoon for publication, send it to The Status Line Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. All cartoons must be in black ink on

white, unlined paper. Please don't fold your cartoon! All submissions become property of Infocom. If we print your cartoon, we'll send you a free game of your choice. Don't forget to include your name, address, phone number, the title of the game you'd like to win, and the computer system you'd like the game to run on.

has been named the new Editrix of *The Status Line*. Susan's background is mainly shopping. "When you've read as many shopping mall sales circulars as I have, the newspaper just gets into your blood," says Ms. Goldman. Goldman's future plans for the paper include changing the name to *The Credit Line* ... **JOBS OF THE STARS:** Not everyone came to Infocom from the computer field. Take Infotester Gary Brennan. He was a farmer before he joined Infocom: a sponge

farmer. It was Gary's task to keep the cute little kitchen-helpers-to-be healthy and happy, before they were thrown into blenders by his bosses at MIT ... **HOLY HACKER:** If you sometimes feel a Revelation coming on, while playing one of Steve Meretzky's games (*Planetfall*, *Sorcerer*, *AMFV* et blah), there's a good reason for that. It's because he does some of his best hacking late at night when the only light in his office is coming from his Jesus nite-lite... AMEN...

# 23 Reasons to Own a Computer

*A Mind Forever Voyaging* by Steve Meretzky (Advanced, 1985). Explore a frighteningly possible future as Prism, the first true artificial intelligence. Senator Ryder's Plan looks pretty good — or does it? The closest any computer game has come to literature: there are few puzzles to solve in this imaginative and chilling story where *you* are the main character.

*Ballyhoo* by Jeff O'Neill (Standard, 1986). Winding up a day at the circus, you become enmeshed in a kidnapping plot that takes you behind the scenes of The Travelling Circus That Time Forgot. You'll have to tame lions, scare an elephant, walk a tightrope, and perform other circus acts to win the game. Full of seedy circus atmosphere, rich with humor, and peopled with circus freaks like Andrew/Jenny (half man, half woman) and the 28-inch-tall Comrade Constantine Thumb.

*Cutthroats*® by Michael Berlyn and Jerry Wolper (Standard, 1984). Diving for treasure in the shipwrecks near Hard-scrabble Island was never easy; and now you're partners with some shady characters. Who needs enemies with friends like Pete the Rat and the Weasel? And with cigar-chomping McGinty on your tail, you might end up in over your head.

*Deadline* by Marc Blank (Expert, 1982). Industrialist Marshall Robner is found dead in his Library, the door securely locked from the inside. An obvious suicide. Then why is everyone so defensive? The cast of suspects includes Marshall's charming wife Leslie; their petulant son George; and the family's friends, staff, and business acquaintances.

*Enchanter* by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Standard, 1983). A novice Enchanter must save the world from the nefarious Krill. First of the *Enchanter Trilogy*, where magic outweighs fighting ability. With spell books and scrolls, you'll turn enemies into newts, talk to animals, display fireworks, and perform numerous other magical feats.

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams and Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1984). Based on the best-selling book. Arthur Dent doesn't realize his troubles are only beginning when the bulldozer arrives to demolish his house. Putting a fish in your ear never sounded more logical or seemed more difficult. The puzzles are tough, but the wild situations and zany wit make this one of Infocom's most popular games.

*Infidel*® by Michael Berlyn (Advanced, 1983). By lying, cheating, and stealing, you get to within a few hundred yards of a long-lost Egyptian pyramid. Then your crew deserts you. You must find and gain entry to the pyramid, decipher the hieroglyphs, and survive the diabolical

traps of the ancient Egyptians, to lay your hands on the sacred treasures that will make you fabulously rich and famous.

*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* by Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1986). The year is 1936, and the evil Leather Goddesses plan to turn Earth into their private pleasure palace — unless you can stop them. This racy space-opera comedy is packed with puzzles and can be played in "tame," "suggestive," or "lewd" mode. Equally enjoyable for both men and women; play with a friend!

*Moonmist*™ by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence (Introductory, 1986). Spend the night in a haunted English castle, where a ghost threatens you and your friend. Is one of the other castle guests doing the haunting? Four variations on this theme, each shorter than a full-length game, and each with its own riddles and solutions. The suspects include grizzly Dr. Wendish, dashing Ian Fordyce, artist Vivien Pentreath, flighty Tamara Lynd, and others.

*Planetfall* by Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1983). When you joined the Space Patrol, they didn't say you'd end up swabbing the decks. When the ship is destroyed, you must survive on an apparently deserted planet. Fortunately, there's Floyd, a faithful multi-purpose robot with the personality of an eight-year-old, to keep you company. Infocom's first science-fiction comedy.

*Seastalker*® by Stuart Galley and Jim Lawrence (Introductory, 1984). From the videophone in your laboratory, you learn that the Aquadome — an underwater research lab — is being attacked by a "Snark," a giant sea monster. So you're off to the rescue in a special two-seater submarine. An easy game with plenty of hints, full of inventions and faithful helpers at your side.

*Sorcerer* by Steve Meretzky (Advanced, 1984). In the midst of hellhounds, amusement parks, mazes, and flumes, rescue Belboz and defeat the evil demon Jeearr. Second in the *Enchanter Trilogy*: turning yourself into a bat, seeing the future, and probing minds are among your many new powers.

*Spellbreaker* by Dave Lebling (Expert, 1985). Magic fails, and you must make your way through some of the hardest puzzles in interactive fiction to find out why. Exploring an object's mystic connections, making time stand still, and turning yourself into a grue are among the magic spells in this riveting conclusion to the *Enchanter Trilogy*.

*Starcross*® by Dave Lebling (Expert, 1982). You play a down-at-the-heels asteroid miner who discovers a strange alien artifact which has entered the solar

system. Once aboard the artifact, you'll meet a number of alien races, including the Rat-Ants, and you are drawn into a puzzle that could give mankind the stars.

*Suspect*® by Dave Lebling (Advanced, 1984). Your editor sends you to cover a society Halloween Party. Then the hostess is murdered, and guess who's the prime suspect? Can you clear yourself before the police arrive? Other party guests include blue-bloods, power brokers, senators, and real-estate magnates. You'll uncover dirty dealings and private affairs among the rich and powerful, as you try to prove you've been framed.

*Suspended*® by Michael Berlyn (Expert, 1983). You are the controlling brain of a totally automated planet, and you must repair the system before the planet's inhabitants "replace" you. You can communicate only through six highly specialized robots: Iris (with visual sensors), Waldo (an industrial robot), Sensa (with a mixture of sensory apparatuses), Auda (with auditory sensors), Whiz (a font of information), and Poet.

*Trinity*™ by Brian Moriarty (Standard, 1986). Travelling through time and space, you must escape from several atomic explosions, to eventually land at the New Mexico desert moments before the first A bomb explodes. Can you change the course of history? An extraordinarily large and thought-provoking game, blending whimsical fantasy, humor, history, and classic puzzle-solving.

*Wishbringer*® by Brian Moriarty (Introductory, 1985). A simple job of

letter-carrying turns sinister, as the small town of Festeron becomes twisted and dangerous. The magical Wishbringer stone grants its owner seven wishes, including Flight, Rain, Foresight, and Luck. Puzzles can be solved with magic or without, giving the game unusual replay value.

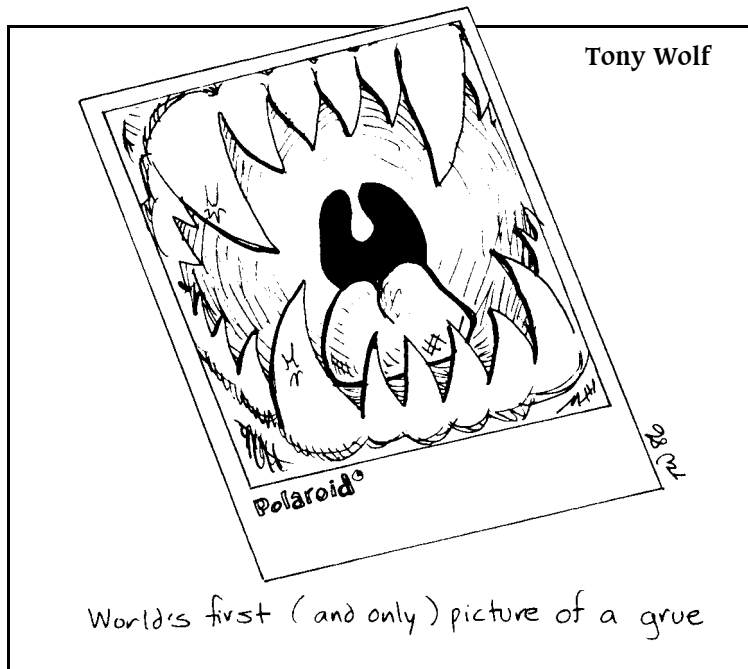
*The Witness*® by Stuart Galley (Standard, 1983). Los Angeles, 1930's. Freeman Linder wants your help on a little blackmail case, but before your eyes it becomes a murder — his! Written in the hard-boiled Raymond Chandler style, heavy on atmosphere. The suspects include Freeman's beautiful daughter Monica; Phong the butler; and Ralph Stiles, who had something going with Linder's wife.

*Zork I* by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling (Standard, 1980). The story that started it all. Treasure hunts and derring-do in the Great Underground Empire.

*Zork II* by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Advanced, 1981). Outwit dragons, demons, and the Wizard of Frobozz.

*Zork III* by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Advanced, 1982). Conclusion of the *Zork Trilogy*. An unusual goal and scoring system highlighted by encounters with Dimwit Flathead and the Dungeon Master.

*Fooblitzky*™ A unique board game played on the computer, which blends the logic and deduction of Clue with the chance and spending of Monopoly, and then adds a heavy dose of Infocom humor. A multi-player game with dozens of variations and hours of fun.



# INFONEWS GROUNDUP

We put the last three months into the meat grinder and here's what came out:

## Great Reviews

You know that we're about as modest as Mae West, so we'll start off with some of the incredible reviews we've gotten.

*Fooblitzky*, Infocom's loads o' fun graphics strategy game, has been featured in a number of national publications. *II Computing* reported that "Infocom has come out with what has to be the most successful party game for a computer. The game of *Fooblitzky* will have you thinking as hard as you're laughing." *Compute!* said, "The game's mechanics are amusing and simple, but the underlying principles are the same ones which make *Monopoly* a classic." And *Analog Computing* described it as "a product that might very well be the most-talked about game this year. *Fooblitzky* does for board games what other Infocom works did for books — revolutionize them... computerize them...and bring them into the 21st century — and beyond."

*Trinity*, Infocom's explosive fantasy, has also received numerous complimentary reviews. Said *Questbusters Newsletter*, "The puzzles are well-structured, the prose among the finest to grace the screen of a monitor. [Author Brian] Moriarty now has two homers in a row, and this one could easily wind up in the parking lot."

*Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, Infocom's up-and-coming romp through the solar system, was fea-

tured in a *Newsweek* article on gender-specific software. After starting out with a humorously racy quote from the game, *Newsweek* went on to describe *Leather Goddesses* as "an uproarious role-playing romp that heralds a new breed of computer games." The program contains two versions, one for men and another for women. Mention was also made of *Moonmist*, which blends a gothic setting with the mystery genre, both elements that are traditionally appealing to women.

Cornerstone, Infocom's powerful yet easy to use relational database, was highly rated in an *InfoWorld* special report on file managers. Said *InfoWorld*, "For sheer value and power, we have to give the top rating to Cornerstone...it's difficult to imagine more features in a \$99.95 product."

Well, that's it for tooting our horn. Now we'll give you something to toot about. A special offer for you, from Infocom.

## Free InvisiClues

That's right, you can get A FREE Infocom *InvisiClues* hint booklet and map with the purchase of *Balzhoo*, *Trinity*, *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, or *Moonmist*. Look for the special display with the Free Hints and Maps coupons in your local software store. Then send in the coupon along with the warranty/registration card and proof of purchase for any of the games listed above. We'll send you the *InvisiClues* hint booklet and map for that game. You get a free *InvisiClues* for each game you buy in our

1986 lineup. So treat yourself, treat your family, buy all four! Offer expires February 15, 1987.

## Marathon of the Mind

Yes, kiddies, the Marathon of the Mind might be coming to your town. As you may recall, the Marathon of the Mind pits local high school or college teams against each other in a challenging race-to-the-finish to solve an Infocom interactive adventure. Plans are now being completed for marathons coast-to-coast.

On November 8, we'll be at the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, November 21, at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle and on December 5, at the Fernbank Science Center in Atlanta. Until the final arrangements are made, we can't tell you which other towns will host this fabulous event. Keep your eye out — skills honed.

## Status Line Now Available on CompuServe

CompuServe subscribers can now read excerpts from *The Status Line* in the Electronics Gamer section.

Just type GO TEG from any system prompt and then follow the menus.

## Nifty Things To Do with Cornerstone

*Building Applications with Cornerstone*, written by Laura Buddine and published by Addison-Wesley, is now available in local computer or book stores, as well as directly from Infocom. It contains nineteen Cornerstone applications in over 300 pages and costs only \$14.95. Applications range from simple mailing lists and libraries through invoicing and purchase orders to complex systems such as personnel and property management.

You might well ask yourself, "If Cornerstone is so easy to use and has such great documentation, why do I need this book?" Well, you can save time in developing your database by using one of the book's applications as is, or by modifying it to what you need. *Building Applications with Cornerstone* can also generate ideas, allowing you to apply elements from various applications to your own customized system.

## By Any Other Name

First came "Adventure," and thus was born the name for an entire category of computer games.

But with Infocom leading the way toward more story-oriented, non-fantasy adventure games, the name became misleading and downright irrelevant. A new name for this type of entertainment software was needed. A couple of years ago, we began calling it "interactive fiction." The name has since been adopted by most of our competitors, although a few variations still creep up (computerized fiction, electronic novels, and so forth).

While interactive fiction is an excellently descriptive name, it has a major flaw: six syllables. No word or phrase that long is going to "catch on" and enter the common language. One says, "let's go see a movie," never, "let's go see a moving picture." And moving picture is only *four* syllables.

It gets even worse when you try referring to individual products. "Have you heard that Infocom just announced a new work of interac-

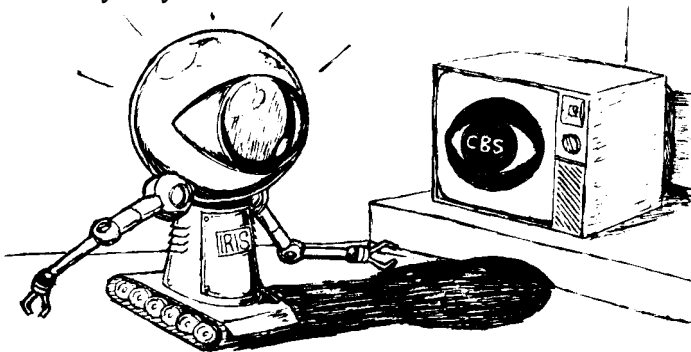
tive fiction?" "Your brother told me that you were writing an interactive fiction story?" Now we're clearly getting into the realm of the linguistically cumbersome.

What's the answer? Some people use IF for short. "I got three eye-uffs for my birthday." "Mom, where did you put my new iffie?" Pretty iffy propositions at best.

Then there's the matter of the verb. Back when they were simply adventure games, you *played* them. But does one "play" interactive fiction? Or do you read it? Some Californians here at Infocom have suggested that you "do" interactive fiction. Maybe a less common verb would fit the bill, or perhaps a new verb needs to be invented.

Let's hear what you have to say! What should the category be called? Can you think of any short and catchy phrases for a work of interactive fiction? And what about the verb? Go ahead — flood *The Status Line* mailbag — make our day.

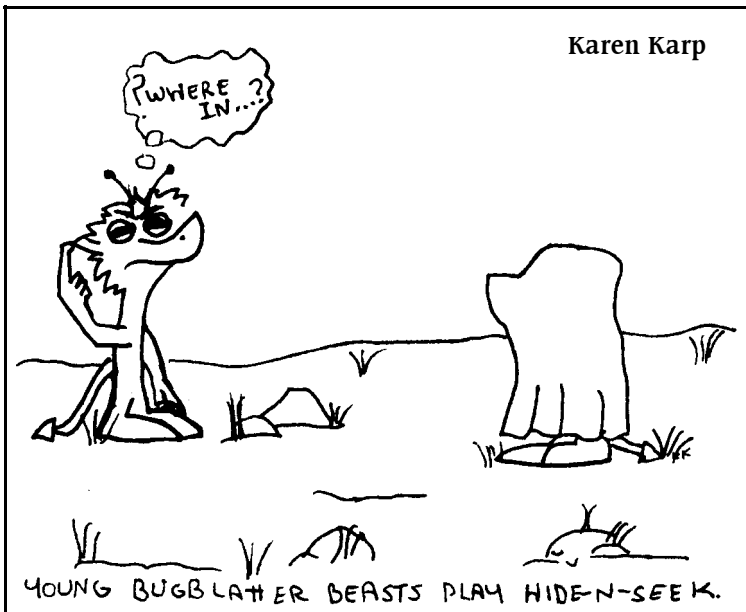
D. Anthony Mayette



IRIS DISCOVERS THE TRUTH  
ABOUT HER PARENTS . . . . .

Mayette '86

Karen Karp



## Solutions and Winners to Puzzle 10

In Puzzle Number Ten, we asked entrants to identify the two brief responses, out of a total of thirteen, which *didn't* appear anywhere in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The correct answer was D and K. Here's a list of the thirteen bits of text, and where they appear in the story:

A. The word "no" is not in our hostess' vocabulary. (At the party, as Trillian, SAY "NO" to the hostess when she asks if you want the food or drink you dropped.)

B. You already did that. It's not a merry-go-round. (WALK AROUND THE BULLDOZER a second time, when you're Ford Prefect.)

C. You have two splitting headaches. (DIAGNOSE on Damogran, when you're Zaphod Beeblebrox.)

D. Congratulations. The towel is now covered with slime. (FAKE!)

E. The effect is decorative rather than helpful. (PUT THE TOWEL ON THE BUGBLATTER BEAST.)

F. The bloody thing's been jammed shut for months, now. (OPEN THE WINDOW in the Bedroom.)

G. "We can't leave while you're in trouble, Mr. President!" (On the Dais, when you're Zaphod, after Trillian has pointed the blaster at you, ASK THE GUARDS TO LEAVE.)

H. "Sorry, current course for the legendary lost planet of Magrathea

can be countermanded only by Zaphod Beeblebrox." (ASK EDDIE TO TURN ON THE DRIVE.)

I. A footling effort. The shock waves of the Beast's laughter push you back. (THROW THE STONE AT THE BEAST.)

J. You see your environs upside-down and slightly distorted. (LOOK THROUGH THE MAGNIFYING GLASS.)

K. The sun's light is a perfectly horrible shade of orange. (FAKE!)

L. The chair is very comfortable, with a thick plush cushion. (On the Speedboat, as Zaphod, EXAMINE THE SEAT.)

M. This is one of those clever new always-open always-closed bottles. (OPEN or CLOSE THE BOTTLE OF SANTRAGINEAN MINERAL WATER.)

There were 376 entries, of which 73 (19.4%) were correct. (When we did a similar puzzle for *Zork I* a year ago, only 10.1% of the entries were correct.) 154 (41.0%) of the entries had only one right answer, and the remaining 149 (39.6%) of the entries had neither one right.

For all you trivia nuts, the number of photocopied entries for this puzzle, the second for which we allowed photocopying, was 129 (34.3%). The breakdown of answers for each excerpt follows. Note that the total adds up to 200 percent, since every entry includes two excerpts.

# You Said It, Not Us

Rumor has it that some of you think we *make up* the comments in the "Take Their Words For It!" section on our interactive fiction packages. Some of you think that no one *really* wrote (as we said on the *Wishbringer* box), "If I go crazy or become a bum, it's all your fault. I hope you're happy." Or (like we put on the *Spellbreaker* package), "I truly believe that if God had wanted us to lead our own lives, he wouldn't have given us Infocom." Or even (as we felt compelled to include with *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*), "So nerve-wracking and intense I have had to use the rest room several times."

Well, we hereby assure you that all of the above comments and commendations, as well as every other one that you see on our boxes (well, nearly every one), has actually been sent in by a bonafide Infocom player on a warranty form, survey card, or letter. Yes, folks, your words do not go unnoticed. We answer your questions, send you catalogs, put you on our mailing list, and add your comments to our ever-expanding files of possible "Take Their Words For It!" quotes. To protect the innocent, we switch around the names and cities on the quotes we use.

Some of the comments on file

will probably never see the glossy inside cover of an interactive fiction box, but are still too...well, let's say *entertaining*...to ignore completely. Here are a few:

"As I booted the square ominous disk, shimmering green blips on my screen accompanied my passage into the limitless tunnel of Infocom computer fantasy."

"It's absolutely marvelous, darlings, don't change a thing. Oh, by the way, if you like to wear that tie, fine, but you should pin-stripe your gym socks."

"Gag me with an eating implement. Not even a super nova could scare me."

"I enjoyed the game thoroughly. Then I turned on the computer."

"I frotzed my girlfriend and now I can't get any sleep."

"Splunge, scum queen. Great. Wow. Hard, sexually permissive, 64 Chevy. Bomb. Tit. Oops. Wonker, Ping, Pong, Kong King."

"Can you send me a new space fleet? Mine fell in the toilet and all the buggers drowned."

"The sunglasses I got in the Hitchhiker's package are great for the beach!! I never realized how much harder waterskiing could be."

EXCERPT	APPEAR- ANCES	PER- CENTAGE
A	32	8.5%
B	95	25.3%
C	34	9.0%
D	157	41.8%
E	22	5.9%
F	25	6.6%
G	43	11.4%
H	48	12.8%
I	23	6.1%
J	44	11.7%
K	143	38.0%
L	14	3.7%
M	72	19.1%

Since there were more than 25 entries, we had to hold a drawing to determine the 25 T-shirt winners. It was easily one of the ten most exciting puzzle drawings we've ever had. The resulting winners:

1. Jay Michael, Munster, IN
2. Jeff Yates, Mission Viejo, CA
3. Betty Martin, Moorestown, NJ
4. Cliff Tuel, San Jose, CA

5. Aric DiPiero, Hemlock, MI
6. Lola Russo, Easton, CT
7. Marie Hicks, Madison Heights, MI
8. Kuo-Hsiung Hsu, Oberlin, OH
9. Barbara Hall, Miami, FL
10. Tim Lang, Downieville, CA
11. John Prindle, Texas City, TX
12. Josiah P. Rowe IV, Fredericksburg, VA
13. Karl Feick, Itasca, IL
14. Charles Engebretson, Santa Rita Park, CA
15. Frank Tino, Tewksbury, MA
16. Steve Corum, Billerica, MA
17. Tom McGrath, Silver Spring, MD
18. Tim Rohloff, Bay City, TX
19. Greg Chung, Potomac, MD
20. Alan Hazelton, Fairport, NY
21. Alex Balas, Akron, OH
22. Pearl Tsai, Potomac, MD
23. Mark Weiher, Newburgh, IN
24. Kurt S. Gedig, Indianapolis, IN
25. Korhan Tekin, Mission Viejo, CA

## PUZZLE NUMBER TWELVE

The multiple choice questions below have directions associated with each answer. (For example, the choices for question #1 are N-E-S-W rather than A-B-C-D.) To solve the puzzle, begin at the Round Room in *Zork I*, or the Library Lobby in *Planetfall*, or the Chamber of Ra in *Infidel* (your choice).

Next, answer each question, moving in the direction associated with the correct answer. For example, if you choose *Planetfall*, and thought that the last choice was the correct answer to question #1, you would move WEST and end up in the Library.

Follow this procedure for all eighteen questions. If a question sends you in a direction for which there is no exit from your current location, then you "can't go that way" and end up staying put for that question. Also, assume that all potential exits are passable (e.g., all doors are open) and that no random factors interfere (e.g., the thief in *Zork*, hunger in *Planetfall*).

Once you have finished the last question, note your final location. The name of this location is the answer to the puzzle. NOTE: Giving *any one* of the three answers is sufficient to win the puzzle. There's no bonus for giving more than one correct answer. If you give more than one answer, and *any* of them are incorrect, the entire entry will be considered incorrect.

The answers and winners to Puzzle Number Eleven will appear in the next issue.

### 1. What is the name of the main character in 1984?

- N. Alan Churchill
- E. Wilbur Stone
- S. Winston Smith
- W. Albert Smith

### 2. Identify the person who did not sign the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

- N. Benjamin Franklin
- E. John Hancock
- S. George Washington
- W. Thomas Jefferson

### 3. Which noble gas has the highest atomic number?

- NE. Radon

- SE. Krypton
- SW. Xenon
- NW. Netron

### 4. Who was Sherlock Holmes's landlady?

- NE. Mrs. Hawthorne
- SE. Mrs. Galworthy
- SW. Mrs. Richards
- NW. Mrs. Hudson

### 5. In Monopoly, what is the rent for Park Place with 4 houses?

- N. \$750
- E. \$1050
- S. \$1100
- W. \$1300

### 6. What is the most populous city in the southern hemisphere?

- N. Rio de Janeiro
- E. Sao Paulo
- S. Jakarta
- W. Sydney

### 7. Which of the following is not a golf club?

- N. Natter
- E. Brassie
- S. Niblick
- W. Mashie

### 8. The following poets were all close friends. Who died at the youngest age?

- N. John Keats
- E. George Gordon (Lord Byron)
- S. Percy Bysshe Shelley
- W. James Henry Leigh Hunt

### 9. Which English Ruler signed the Magna Carta?

- N. King John I
- E. King Richard I (known as The Lion-hearted)
- S. Queen Elizabeth I
- W. William I (known as The Conqueror)

### 10. In which of these movies did Woody Allen not appear?

- N. *What's New Pussycat*
- E. *Love and Death*
- S. *The Front*
- W. *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

### 11. Which is the largest of the Finger Lakes?

- N. Seneca
- E. Champlain
- S. Cayuga
- W. Canandaigua

### 12. What school has the largest endowment?

- N. Yale
- E. Harvard
- S. Princeton

- W. MIT

### 13. Who was born Archibald Leach?

- N. Robin Leech
- E. Alistair Cooke
- S. Cary Grant
- W. Sean Connery

### 14. With what team did Babe Ruth finish his career?

- NE. The Boston Braves
- SE. The Boston Red Sox
- SW. The New York Yankees
- NW. The Brooklyn Dodgers

### 15. Which of these magazines has the largest circulation?

- N. *People*
- E. *National Geographic*
- S. *Time*
- W. *Reader's Digest*

### 16. Which came first in the history of the earth?

- N. First mammals appear
- E. Winged insects appear
- S. Dinosaurs become extinct
- W. The Appalachian Mountains are reformed

### 17. From whence did the advice come, "To thine own self be true"?

- N. *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare
- E. Proverbs, The Bible
- S. The Gospel of Matthew, The Bible
- W. Anonymous axiom, first written in English circa 1250

### 18. Who dies of "consumption" at the end of "La Boheme"?

- N. Kiri Te Kanawa
- E. Anna Karenina
- S. Lucia di Lammermoor
- W. Mimi

ANSWER: *Zork I* \_\_\_\_\_

*Planetfall* \_\_\_\_\_

*Infidel* \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

T-Shirt Size (S, M, L, XL) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Contest Rules

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by January 15, 1987.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, the winners will be selected randomly.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

#### Prize

The sure-to-be-a-collector's-item-as-soon-as-we-reprint-them-with-our-new-name New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt.

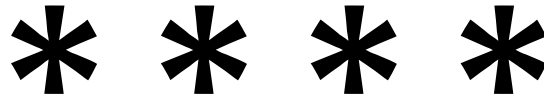
#### SEND TO:

Infocom  
The Status Line Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

When mailing stuff to *The Status Line*, please do not mix things to different "departments" in the same envelope. Puzzle entries, cartoons, "Call the Exterminator" bugs, letters to the editor, envelope designs, etc., all go to different people. Please send each such item separately,

addressed to the appropriate editor or department. As you are probably aware, the editors of *The Status Line* spend most of their time on the golf course, the beach, or their analyst's sofa, and are therefore unreliable re-routers of mail.

" \* \* \*  
\* \* , \* \* "



Weather: State of exigency

VOL. V....No. 4

—SPRING 1986—

INTERVERNAL EDITION

# Trinity: A Nuclear Time Warp



Every Trinity package includes "The Illustrated Story of the Atom Bomb," a map of the Trinity test site, an intricately decorated sundial, and instructions for folding an origami bird.

Interactive fiction lets you control the course of a story. *Trinity*<sup>™</sup>, the exciting new fantasy from Infocom, takes this one step further. It lets you attempt to alter the course of history.

*Trinity* begins in London, where you are a tourist determined to enjoy the last day of your \$599 vacation, despite ominous rumblings from the superpowers. But the peaceful ambience of a summer morning quickly turns to horror as air raid sirens fill the air and a hydrogen bomb threatens the city with instant annihilation.

If you're clever, you'll escape through a mysterious white door into a magical garden filled with curious artifacts and overgrown with gigantic toadstools. But this hauntingly beautiful landscape is only the starting point of your journey. You've discovered a twilight world in which every atomic explosion that has ever occurred is inexplicably connected; and you'll need to explore every inch of it, crisscrossing time and space, before you can understand and control its power.

Your quest will lead you from the Siberian tundra to a tropical island, from deep underground to the depths of outer space. The chilling climax takes place in the New Mexico desert, where you'll arrive minutes before the most fateful experiment

of all time: the world's first atomic explosion, code-named Trinity.

*Trinity* blends fantasy and realism to bring you an otherworldly experience somewhere between *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Twilight Zone*. Although author Brian Moriarty conducted extensive research to ensure the accuracy of locations and events, at no time are you completely in reality. Even at the Trinity site, magical things can happen.

As the first puzzle-oriented game to be written with Infocom's Interactive Fiction Plus<sup>™</sup> development system, *Trinity* has more of all the things Infocom fans have grown to know and love. There are dozens of challenges, nearly 600 objects and locations, and a vocabulary of over 2100 words. Interactive Fiction Plus doubles the potential size of a program, allowing for larger, richer stories and more sophisticated user interfaces.

To get you started, the *Trinity* package includes a copy of *The Illustrated Story of the Atom Bomb*. This historical comic book fills you in on the facts behind the fantasy, as well as providing valuable clues to the puzzles in the story. Also included are an intricately decorated punch-out sundial, a detailed

Please turn to page 9

## Cornerstone For \$99.95

Cornerstone<sup>™</sup>, the powerful, easy-to-use database from Infocom, is now available for only \$99.95. Why did we lower the price on a product that's already getting great reviews from users and press? Simple. We realized that

many of the people who would benefit most from Cornerstone just couldn't afford it. So we repackaged it to cut costs and set a price more accessible to the individual user it was originally

**DEI \*\*\***

Somewhere out there, beyond the Great Underground Empire, exists a strange world where a gruespaper — er, no — a newspaper called *The New York Times* is published. We don't know for sure what a york is (something like a yak, we suppose), but if they're as nasty as grues, we don't want to meet one. Anyway, they and their lawyers (which we are quite sure are at least as nasty as grues) think that a zork and a york are pretty much alike.

So, we're looking for a new name for \*\*\*. If you have a suggestion (*The New Zork Post* is right out), send it to \*\*\*, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

The winner will receive a subscription to *The New York Times* or the newspaper of his or her choice. Now that you know the difference, we're sure that your choice will be \*\*\*. We apologize to the millions of people who bought *The New York Times* hoping to receive \*\*\*. Entries must be received by August 15, 1986, and become the property of Infocom, Inc. (We reserve the right to come up with our own name, if we think yours are all terrible, but we'll award the prize to the least bad entry if that happens.)

Please turn to page 9

## Infocom Weds Activision

On February 19, 1986, Activision, Inc. announced that Infocom would be purchased by Activision, in a transaction valued at approximately \$7.5 million. Mere weeks later, in a dramatic affirmation of combinatorial spirit, Activision President James H. Levy and Infocom President Joel M. Berez were merged in a moving ceremony presided over by InfoRabbi Stuart W. Galleywitz. Infocommies cheered, participated in responsive readings from *Hackers* (written by Steven Levy — no relation to Jim), and threw rice at the beaming CEOs.

Berez read a tone poem drawn from the purple prose of several Interactive Fiction stories, and Levy

responded with a (clean) limerick.

The bride wore a veil made from five yards of nylon net, and carried artificial flowers. Both bride and groom wore looks of bemused surprise.

After a honeymoon at Aragain Falls, the newly merged couple will maintain their separate product development and marketing facilities in Mountain View, CA, and Cambridge, MA. (i.e. We'll still be the Infocom you know and love.)

Queried about graphics in Interactive Fiction stories, or better parsers in Little Computer People, the happy couple declined comment, but smiled enigmatically. **Z**

# Fooblitzky Available at Your Corner Store

Would you rather spend an evening with a serial murderer than with a mailman? Does the mere thought of licking a postage stamp cause your mouth to dry up and your tongue to swell? Do you shudder and hyperventilate to the beat of *Mr. Postman* by the Marvelettes? Do you break out in hives or a cold sweat when you're within a hundred yard radius of a mailbox? Will you only eat *Kellogg's* raisin bran? If you answered "yes" to one or more of the above questions, you most likely suffer from **postaphobia** — the fear of anything pertaining to the post office or mail service.

In the past, victims of this crippling condition have been unable to enjoy all the pleasures and treasures that life has to offer — namely, *Fooblitzky*<sup>™</sup>. *Fooblitzky*, Infocom's unique graphic strategy game, has been available only through mail order. If postaphobics attempt to purchase anything via mail order, they are sent into a terrifying tailspin. Their anxiety attack is of such great proportion that nothing short of a frontal lobotomy will relieve their condition. Therefore, they have been forced to lead empty lives, devoid of the wondrous experience of *Fooblitzky* ownership.

And what a wondrous experience it is! We asked people who were fortunate enough to be capable of buying *Fooblitzky* to express their feelings about it. Here's just a sampling of their responses:

*It's the best multi-player game ever to come around! It's fun, exciting, enjoyable, enthralling, fantastic, and great.* —Jeff, age 15

*Even my wife likes this game, and she hates my computer.* —Carl, age 26

*My brother and I played this today for about 2½ hours — we laughed, cried, and generally had a great time!! The graphics are fabulous. Keep up the great work!!* — Sarah-Ann, age 41

*Good family involvement game — favorite of my 11-year-old daughter.* —Edward, age 38

Basically, people's experiences with *Fooblitzky* confirmed what we have always believed: *Fooblitzky* is a

great game. It reminds people of classic board games like *Clue*<sup>®</sup> and *Mastermind*<sup>™</sup>. It's a challenging strategy game with fun graphics. It's a competitive game which promotes social interaction between players. It's a perfect family game, one that young and old can play together. It's enjoyed by males and females alike. It's a game that even computer-haters can love!

Having confirmed our belief in its greatness, we knew we must embark on a crusade to make *Fooblitzky* available to every man, woman, and child in the free world who owns or

has access to an IBM PC/XT/AT (with 128K, graphics card, and preferably a composite monitor), or an Atari XL/XE (with 48K and 810 or 1050 disk drive), or an Apple II plus/IIe/IIc (with 128K), and at least \$39.95 of disposable income. As part of this crusade, we are now making *Fooblitzky* available through retail channels, thereby ending one of the greatest discomforts that postaphobics have had to suffer. With *Fooblitzky* painlessly available at their local software dealer, victims of postaphobia need no longer be deprived of the joys of *Fooblitzky*

ownership.

Bringing *Fooblitzky* to the postaphobics is just the beginning of a long, long crusade. There are still many more computer owners that need to be united with this unique game. For example, people who do not subscribe to \* \* \* \* might not be aware of *Fooblitzky*. Or this might be the perfect Infocom game for the few lost souls who don't care for interactive fiction. So please join us in our crusade. We need your help. Spread the news of *Fooblitzky* — because a thing of beauty is meant to be shared. **Z**

## Eniac and Other Little Known Computer Facs

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of ENIAC, the first modern-day computer. Built at the University of Pennsylvania, ENIAC was the first all-electronic digital computer. Unlike earlier computers, it used vacuum tubes rather than relays in its logic circuits.

ENIAC's anniversary has gotten tremendous amounts of attention from the computer-related press. Ignored in all the hoopla, however, are some other great machines of the late 1940s that helped usher in the computer age:

**MAINEEAC.** A powerful computer, but given to odd, unexplainable errors. Here's a typical example. Programmer: "MAINEEAC, what is the sum of 3 and 5?" MAINEEAC: "I'm going to butcher your entire family, starting with your baby sister."

**EENIE-MEENIE-MYNIE-MOENIAC.** Designed to use simple algorithms to make choices between equally good possibilities, this computer never performed satisfactorily. Its selections always seemed to be random, or based on algorithms beyond the understanding of its programmers. Also, it was prone to holler "Ollie Ollie Oxen Free" for no apparent reason.

**KADILAC.** The classiest of computers, more powerful than any of its contemporaries. Occupying fifteen floors of an office building in Detroit, KADILAC could go from 0 to 60 instructions in just seven seconds, but used an extraordinary amount of electricity to operate. A smaller version of the machine, PONTIAC, was also a disappointment.

**CATARAC.** An early artificial intelligence experiment, CATARAC was the first computer designed to "see." Its built-in camera would analyze objects in attempt to identify them. Unfortunately, the lens was prone to fog, causing wildly erroneous identifications. A military-sponsored program, CATARAC was dismantled in 1967 after it identified a visiting Five Star General as Leon Trotsky.

**BIGMAC.** The first of the big computers built for practical purpose, BIGMAC was designed to plan the menu at several government cafeterias. Too many programmer-cooks spoiled the brew; BIGMAC formulated meals consisting entirely of carbohydrates, and the project was eventually scrapped amidst a flurry of finger-pointing.

**NEKROFILIAIC, NYMFOMANIAC, and AFRODEEZIAC.** This trio of computers were funded jointly

by Masters and Johnson, the U.S. Air Force, and Paramount Pictures. No results from this experimental project were ever published, but whispered rumors indicated that the interactions between the three machines were "intriguing."

**CULDESAC.** The research leading up to this computer seemed promising, but turned out to be a dead end.

These are just a handful of the electronic marvels built by the pioneers of the computer revolution. Many others have also carved their niche into silicon history: TARMAC, LILAC, BIVOUC, KARDIAC, B R I K A B R A C, Z O D I A C, HEMOFILIAC, and INSOMNIAC.

Yes, in paving the way toward the computers of today, ENIAC was definitely an important paving stone — but let us not forget the other stones that also line that road. **Z**

## Design a Better Envelope

Did you notice anything different about the envelope that this NZT issue arrived in? Did you notice the unique pen-and-ink rendering on the front of it?

Did you notice dramatic competition of bold black against the wash of white? The soothing flow of the lines that lend, if you will, an almost musical quality? The hypnotic play of light glinting from the whetted edge of the axe blade? And ah — the face! What drama lies therein! Intense emotion emits from the eyes, their gaze searing the onlooker like fiery embers. The

twisted mouth, while baring its lethal fangs, seems to form yet a whispered plea for sympathy, understanding, perhaps even love.... Truly a noteworthy objet d'art — tasteful, and yes, beautiful in its simplicity, yet poetic and equally beautiful in its emotional complexity.

Look, I'm talking about that dude in the lower left-hand corner. Yeah, that stick thing. And quit calling him Mr. Salty, the pretzel man! It's a troll — okay?! If you think you can do a better job, then go ahead!

Come on — I mean it! Let's see

*Please turn to page 12*



# Getting to Know You

We would like to get to know you a little better. We want to know what makes you tick — your likes and dislikes, your strengths and weaknesses, your successes and failures, your hopes and fears, your aspirations and dental hygiene habits. Therefore, we're putting together a series of reader surveys that we will be running in this and future issues of \* \* \* \*. Please take the time to fill out these surveys. They will help us to create the kinds of entertainment products that you'd enjoy most, or to write stories for \* \* \* \* that you'd find the most interesting, or maybe even to develop that electrical dental flosser you've been longing for. The survey results will be published in upcoming issues.

## \* \* \* \* Reader Poll #1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Computer brand and model: \_\_\_\_\_

On the average, how many hours per month do you use your computer for entertainment?

On the average, how many hours per month do you play Infocom games?

### Check One

### Check One

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-40
- 41+

- 0-3
- 4-8
- 9-15
- 16-25
- 26+

Please list the Infocom games you have played *in the order you played them* and put a check mark after each title you have completed.

Title	Completed?	Title	Completed?
1. _____	_____	11. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	12. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	13. _____	_____
4. _____	_____	14. _____	_____
5. _____	_____	15. _____	_____
6. _____	_____	16. _____	_____
7. _____	_____	17. _____	_____
8. _____	_____	18. _____	_____
9. _____	_____	19. _____	_____
10. _____	_____	20. _____	_____

In order, which 3 Infocom games were ...

... your favorite?

... your least favorite?

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ |

... the most difficult?

... the easiest?

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ |

Listed below are various aspects of an Infocom interactive fiction game. By circling the appropriate number, please indicate how important each aspect is to your enjoyment of the game.

	Very Important			Not Important	
Puzzles .....	1	2	3	4	5
Character interaction .....	1	2	3	4	5
Exploration and mapping.....	1	2	3	4	5
Descriptive prose .....	1	2	3	4	5
Humor .....	1	2	3	4	5
Storyline .....	1	2	3	4	5
Packaging .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attention to detail .....	1	2	3	4	5

Below is a list of current and potential categories of Infocom interactive fiction stories. Please indicate your level of interest in each.

	Very Interested			Not Interested	
Fantasy .....	1	2	3	4	5
Science Fiction.....	1	2	3	4	5
Mystery .....	1	2	3	4	5
Tales of Adventure.....	1	2	3	4	5
Comedy .....	1	2	3	4	5
Romance.....	1	2	3	4	5
Western .....	1	2	3	4	5
Intrigue (Spy).....	1	2	3	4	5
Horror.....	1	2	3	4	5
Historical .....	1	2	3	4	5

Any others? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your favorite non-Infocom adventure games?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the space below to tell us how you think we could improve our games. Is there anything we should change or add to our games — perhaps some aspect from one of the non-Infocom games you mentioned above? Your comments are greatly appreciated. Use additional pages if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please clip out or photocopy this form and mail to:  
 Infocom, Inc.  
 \* \* \* \* Reader Poll #1  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

# Mail Bag

Dear \* \* \* ,

Help, I think I'm possessed! I used to be a nice suburban housewife, mother of three, PTA president, you know the type. Now, I'm an INFO-MANIAC.

How bad is it? All right, I'll tell you how bad it is. The other day I was in a computer store watching a salesperson demonstrate the new Atari 520 ST. Big deal, you say; well, read on. "Impressive machine," I remarked, "but what about software?" The salesperson hesitatingly pointed to a small glass cabinet nearby. I casually walked over to the case. "Oh, Infocom games, how nice," I said. Just then, it caught my eye: a strange new title called *A Mind Forever Voyaging*<sup>™</sup>. A rush of excitement came over me. But alas, after reading the packaging, I realized that this new Infocom game could only be played on machines with 128K like that new computer over there, and not on my old klunker at home. Which up until now, by the way, was my pride and joy. "I'll take it!" I shouted. Out came my checkbook, and within moments I was on my way home with my new computer and, best of all, my new Infocom game. WAIT...

There I was, all set up and ready to boot, when my husband walked in the door. "Oh, look, dear," I said lovingly. "I bought a new Infocom game." He eyed the huge mass sitting on the kitchen table and said, "Infocom really outdid themselves on packaging this time. By the way, hon, did you remember the bread?"

\* DARK \*

Sincerely,

**Barbara Razzano,  
Ontario, CA**

P.S. I was disappointed to see that your new game, *Fooblitzky*, isn't available for the Atari ST. I really did buy it, you know. Oh well, I guess I'll just have to play it on the old klunker.

Dear Sirs [*sic*]:

Just a quick note to let you know that you at Infocom have among other things inspired romance. We are newlyweds who are spending our honeymoon playing *Spellbreaker*<sup>™</sup>. This is in keeping with the fact that we were just lone Zorkers until we accidentally met in the G.U.E. while trying to vanquish the cyclops.

After *Zork*<sup>®</sup> I we tackled the rest of

the series, and *Enchanter*<sup>®</sup> and *Sorcerer*<sup>™</sup>. When *Wishbringer* arived we were engaged. *Spellbreaker* is keeping us busy and is much better than a boring trip across Flathead Ocean.

By the way, 2 copies of the \* \* \* now reach our room. Perhaps you could speak to the delivery boy. He only comes at night when it is very dark. (Is he a grue?) Thank you for giving us a chance to share our common goals (how to get past the cyclops, open the egg, etc.) and having something great develop from it all as well.

Sincerely,

**Scott and Darbi Henderson,  
Los Angeles, CA**

To whom it may concern:

I am an avid (rabid?) fan of your games, and have been trying (unsuccessfully) to get my trembling hands on a copy of the new game *Spellbreaker*. This poem expresses my frustration of not being able to get one.

**What? No *Spellbreaker*?**

The *Zorks* are great, *Deadline*<sup>®</sup>'s neat;

*Planetfall*'s Floyd just can't be beat.

*Infidel*<sup>®</sup>'s rat pits are a pain,

And *Cutthroats*<sup>™</sup> treasure is hard to gain.

*Enchanter*'s fun and really cool,

For *Sorcerer* I was glad to go to

Magic School.

But when I feel I can be no greater

I hear a new test — *Spellbreaker*!

In anticipation, my robe I don

To the software store my body's drawn.

I search the aisles, search the walls,

For any hope it's in these walls.

With cash in hand I hope to pay

Only to find out (gasp!) they're out this day!

**Jake M. Wark,  
Boston, MA**

Dear Infocom:

I started my quest

Deciding to go north, south, east, and west.

I made it past the troll with the axe,

Who tried to kill me with pretty big hacks.

I know I'm one of the few

Who didn't get eaten by a grue.

Despite all my pleasures

I got all the treasures

And even killed the crook

Because I bought the hint book.

**Michael Gatto,  
Los Angeles, CA**

Dear Infocom:

I felt that your game *A Mind Forever Voyaging* was quite a disappointment, primarily because it was much too easy for an advanced-level game.

*A Mind Forever Voyaging* had hardly any challenge. There were only one or two real puzzles, and the rest of the game seemed to be devoted only to exploration. The overall plot, the puzzle in Part III, and the prose were all very well done, but the rest of the game seemed to be somewhat meaningless. I fondly recall the old days of *Zork* and *Deadline*, in which the player's brain could really get a workout.

Your rating system also seems to have a few serious flaws. *A Mind Forever Voyaging* is only one example of this. How could you rate *Zork I* to be easier than both *Zork II* and *Zork III*? I feel that it was by far the hardest of the three.

Although I was let down by *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, I have enjoyed most of your other games. I am looking forward to *Spellbreaker*, and hope that it will live up to its level.

Sincerely,

**Arthur DiBianca,  
Chapel Hill, NC**

*You're right: A Mind Forever Voyaging has only a few puzzles, and most of the game is devoted to*

*exploration. We decided to call AMFV advanced-level because we didn't think it was a good game for a first-timer. The concept of AMFV is more complicated than in most games. For instance, sometimes you simulate a human being, other times you're a computer (and when you're a computer, you have specialized commands unique to AMFV); you travel forward in time, but only in your "computer imagination." In short, we felt someone who had already "experienced" interactive fiction would appreciate AMFV more than a novice. It wasn't intended to be a brain teaser like most of our other games, but rather a thought-provoking exploration of a sobering future world. We're glad you enjoyed the plot and prose, anyway.*

*As for the "other" flaws in our rating system, we admit a certain imprecision. Surely you recognize how subjective ratings must be. Even though you found *Zork I* harder than *Zork II* or *Zork III*, you're in the minority. (That doesn't mean you're "wrong" and we're "right.") The rating system is meant merely as a guideline. If you want to know more about a game, read the synopsis on the back of the package. It should give you a pretty good idea whether the game has lots of puzzles, or has other characters in it, or is "story-like."—Ed.*

\* \* \* \*

**Writers** Gary Brennan, Mike Dornbrook, Elizabeth Langosy, Dave Lebling, Steve Meretzky, Brian Moriarty, Jonathan Palace, Gayle Syska

**Photos** Suzanne Frank  
**Production** Dave Anderson, Cynthia Curtis, Jonathan Palace

**Special thanks to** Andrea, Barry, Brian, Chris, Craig, Dave, Elizabeth, George, Gina, Joe, John, Ken, Linda, Mike, Nancy, Paul, Renata, Richard, Rob, Ron, Stuart, Tara, Tim, and Tom

This issue is dedicated to our friend Phil Trabucco.

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# Cartoon Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners (Ferne Campbell, Mark Cantrell, David R. Horlick, Mike Nuell, and Matt Babcock) of this issue's cartoon contest! \* \* \* is proud to honor the warped individuals whose drawings appear on these pages.

Every cartoonist whose work is printed in \* \* \* receives a free Infocom game of his or her choice. If you'd like to try winning a game, send us your cartoon drawn in black ink on

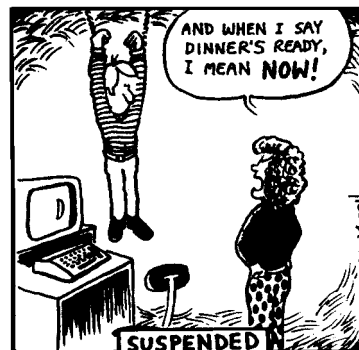
white, unlined paper. No pencil or colors, and please don't fold your cartoon! All submissions become the property of Infocom, Inc. Send your entries to \* \* \* Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. Include a separate sheet of paper with your name and address, as well as the title of the game you'd like to win, and the computer system it should run on. **Z**

Ferne Campbell

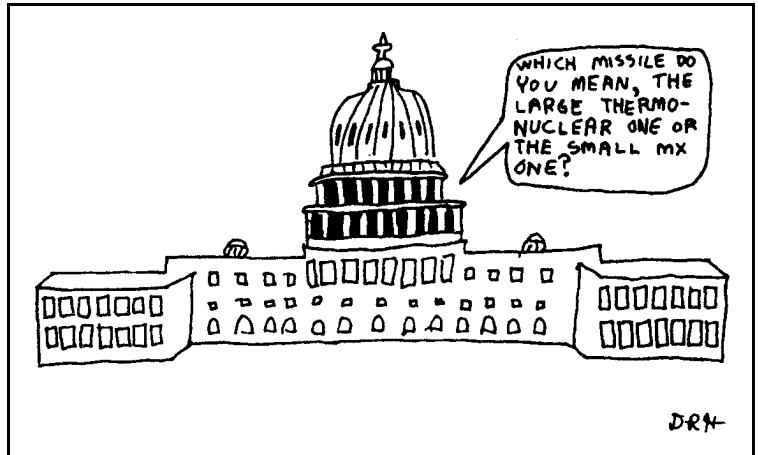


Mark Cantrell

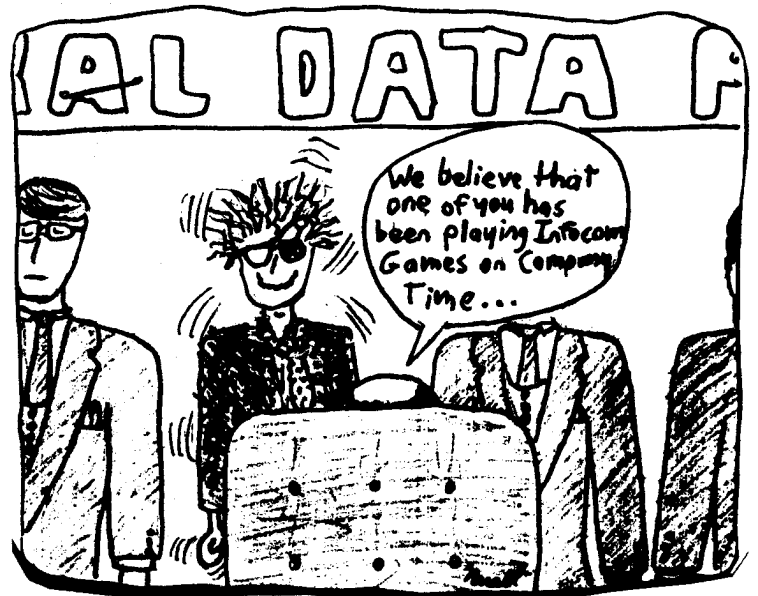
EVER WONDER HOW GAME IDEAS EVOLVE? HERE ARE SOME **INFOCOM GAME CONCEPTS THAT NEVER MADE IT...**



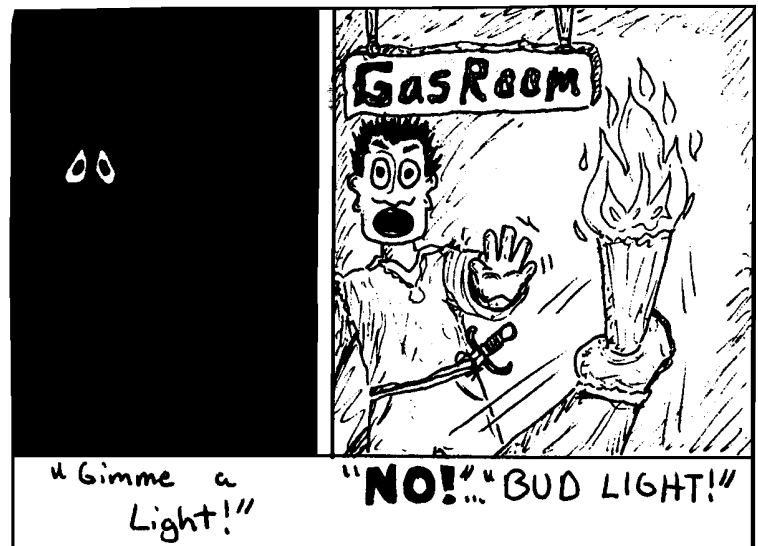
David R. Horlick



Mike Nuell



Matt Babcock



# How I Spent My

## By Brian

"You want to go *where*?"

"Albuquerque." I hoped this would be easy. "Halfway between Los Alamos and White Sands. The National Atomic Museum is there, and I've been talking to this professor at UNM who —"

"Great. Go." Marc Blank was never one to mince words.

A month later I was easing a brand new T-Bird out of the Hertz lot at Albuquerque International Airport, ready to start researching my next interactive fiction title, *Trinity*. Those long, empty roads I'd seen from the window of my jet made me insist on something with cruise control. Air conditioning isn't optional in New Mexico, especially around mid-July.

I drove north for two hours on 25, New Mexico's central artery. It winds between the blue mountains and brown arroyos, past quiet Indian reservations and the shopping malls of Santa Fe, to the foothills of the Jemez mountains. From there I began to climb west.

How can I describe the landscape? The colorful mesas, rugged hills and forests are profoundly old and silent; there is nothing in New England to compare with them. I drove for miles without seeing another car, house, or any sign of human habitation. Just when I was certain I'd missed a turn and lost myself in Colorado, a McDonald's flashed by.

"New in town?" The girl ringing up my postcards sounded like she really wanted to know. New Mexicans take small talk very seriously.

"Just visiting," I replied, fighting to suppress my Boston accent. "Isn't there supposed to be a museum around here?"

"There's a big one down at the Lab," she drawled, gesturing through the window of the drug store. "Just follow the signs."

"The Lab" is Los Alamos National Laboratory, announced by a sign that stretches like a CinemaScope logo along the fortified entrance. One of the nation's leading centers of nuclear weapons research. The birthplace of the atomic bomb.

The Bradbury Museum occupies a tiny corner in the acres of buildings, parking lots, and barbed wire fences that comprise the Laboratory. Its collection includes scale models of the very latest in nuclear warheads and guided missiles. You can watch on a computer as animated neutrons blast heavy isotopes to smithereens. The walls are adorned with spectacular color photographs of fireballs and mushroom clouds, each respectfully mounted and individually titled, like great works of art.

I watched a teacher explain a neutron bomb exhibit to a group of schoolchildren. The exhibit consists of a diagram with two circles. One circle represents the blast radius of a conventional nuclear weapon; a shaded ring in the middle shows the zone of lethal radiation. The other circle shows the relative effects of a neutron bomb. The teacher did her best to point out that the neutron bomb's "blast" radius is smaller, but its "lethal" radius is proportionately much larger. The benefit of this innovation was not explained, but the kids listened politely.

It isn't clear whether visitors are allowed to visit the adjoining Oppenheimer Library or not. The building stands behind a high fence with signs hinting an awful fate for unauthorized personnel. But the gate was open, and the Lab employees

eating lunch under the trees were unarmed. So I stepped inside and roamed the stacks for hours. Nobody questioned my presence, and I drove away from Los Alamos without being shot.

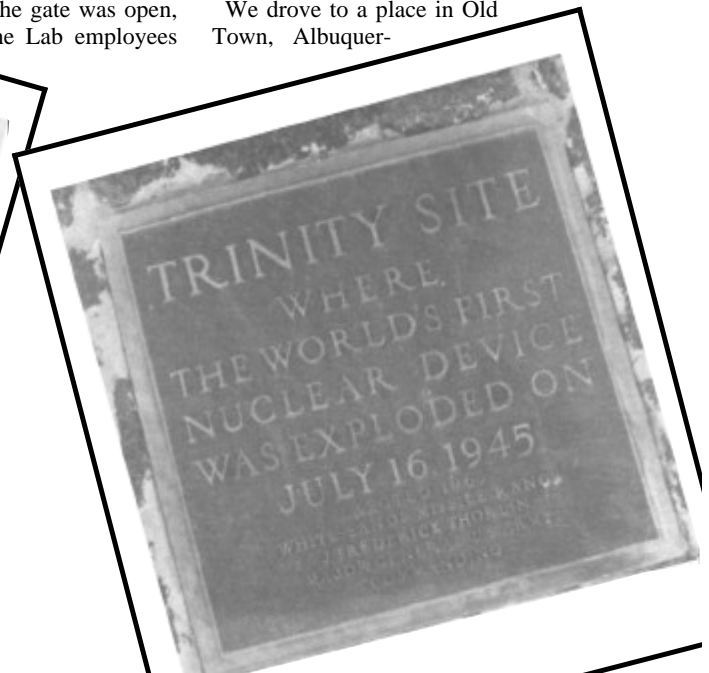
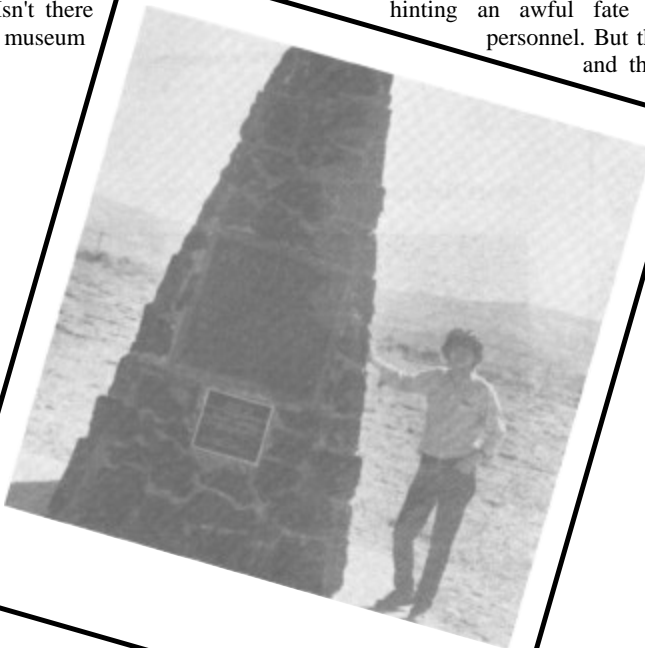
\* \* \*

Albuquerque's National Atomic Museum is a different story. It's right in the middle of Kirtland Air Force Base. You have to stop at a security shack and persuade a very young man with a crewcut to issue a visitor's permit. This valuable document gives you the right to proceed to the Museum by the most direct route possible, but with no stopping on the way. Cameras are forbidden outside the Museum grounds, and they can search you or your car if they decide they don't like you. I didn't bother locking the T-Bird as I went in.

A third of the exhibit space is devoted to "Energy Horizons," featuring a solar TV set and other equally arresting wonders. The rest of the Museum looks a lot like its counterpart at Los Alamos, except that the missiles are even bigger and more numerous. One of the four H-bombs they accidentally dropped over Spain in the 1960s is on display, still wrapped in its silk parachute like a naughty baby.

After the Museum closed I took Ferenc Szasz and his family out to dinner. Professor Szasz teaches history at the University of New Mexico, and had just published a book about the testing of the first atomic bomb. As we shook hands he grinned at me mischievously. "Ever had real Mexican food?"

We drove to a place in Old Town, Alberquerque-



# Summer Vacation

## Moriarty

que's historic district near the river's edge. I ordered an obscure chicken dish, and the waiter asked me if I wanted it served Mild, Medium, or Hot. Szasz grinned again.

"Hot, please."

The waiter looked up from his pad. "Have you eaten here before?"

I cleared my throat, determined to know the worst. "Hot."

It wasn't too bad. I had to eat very slowly, and convince myself that I was savoring the food instead of tolerating it. But I think the Professor was impressed. He'd ordered his Medium.

\* \* \*

The alarm in my Albuquerque hotel room went off at 5:00 AM on Tuesday, the 16th of July. I wanted to go outside and learn what the desert air felt like at that time of day. The sun was still behind the mountains to the east; the sky was gray and lightly overcast, much as it had been on that same morning in 1945. At 5:29:45 I turned my eyes to the south, across the airport, and wondered what I might have seen at that precise instant 40 years earlier.

Trinity Site is located in Jornada del Muerto, "the Journey of Death," a barren stretch of high desert that lies within the jurisdiction of White Sands Missile Range. The Site is normally open to the public only one day each year, the first Saturday in October. But in May I got a hot tip from a White Sands official, who told me they were planning to open the Site for five hours on July 16th to commemorate the 40th anniversary.

The drive from Albuquerque to

White Sands takes a couple of hours. At nine o'clock sharp the Army opened the Stallion Gate on the northern boundary of the Missile Range. I was near the beginning of the caravan of cars that began to snake down the paved road, into the desert. Twenty miles later, I caught my first glimpse of Ground Zero.

There is no crater to speak of. The bomb was fired from the top of a hundred-foot tower, too high to dig much of a hole. Instead, there's a shallow depression, a quarter mile across, where the desert floor caved in under thousands of tons of pressure. Slap your palm hard on a piece of styrofoam. *Whack!* That's what it looks like.

The whole area is enclosed by a chain link fence. Yellow signs warn of radioactivity ten to fifteen times higher than normal. I left the T-Bird in the dusty parking area and joined a growing retinue of sightseers for the last, long walk across the sand.

What monument could do justice to that fateful experiment? Events and people of far less significance are commemorated by mighty pyramids and heroic statues. Yet the simple stone obelisk at Ground Zero is effective in its understatement. When you look around at the vast, timeless desert that stretches away in every direction, it's easy to imagine the hopes of all generations, past and future, balanced on that spot. To visit Trinity is to stand at the fulcrum of history.

The reaction of the crowd was mixed. Many felt ripped off; I think they expected a glowing, smoke-filled canyon, inhabited by mutated jack-rabbits the size of buffalo. Others, myself among them, just stood looking at the monument, lost in thought. A few actually wept.

All the major networks were running around with TV cameras, interviewing anyone who looked interesting. Children combed the ground for bits of "trinitite," a green, glassy substance composed of sand that was fused in the stellar heat of the blast. A man kept running a Geiger counter around the base of the obelisk, and turned up the volume so that everyone could hear the steady tick, tick, tick.

The Army ran shuttle buses from Ground Zero to a small ranch house about two miles southeast. Once it was a private home, owned by the McDonald family, until it was appropriated (ahem) by the Manhattan Project for the final assembly of the bomb. The people who felt ripped off at Ground Zero got really annoyed at the ranch, as there is nothing to see except a cluster of small rooms, all alike, and all completely empty.

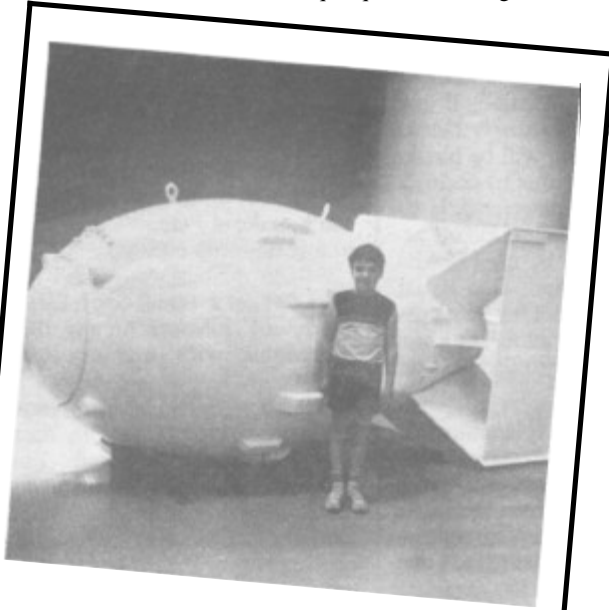
\* \* \*

My last morning in New Mexico was spent at the Rio Grande Zoo. Very tasteful. The shady walkways almost make you forget the heat of the surrounding city.

I wandered slowly past the monkey houses and prairie dogs, lingering at the seal pool and the yak pen, until I came at last to a big cage filled with cacti. A gray bird was perched inside, sleek and fast-looking, with sharp eyes and a long tail splashed with color.

"I'm gonna make you a star," I whispered.

The roadrunner blinked at me, and pretended not to understand. **Z**



# Is Something Wrong with My Game?

## I have a defective disk. What do I do?

First, be sure it's defective: verify the disk yourself. To do so, boot the program, and at the game prompt type \$VERIFY. Then press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. The disk will spin for a moment or two, and a test result will appear. If an internal error or bad message appears, the disk is probably defective. Send your original disk only for testing and replacement to: Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. It is important to enclose a note explaining the problem and any error messages you received, as well as your hardware specifications. Disks outside of the 90-day warranty period (or disks which you damaged or erased) should be accompanied by a \$5 check or money order. To

protect your disk, use a disk mailer or sandwich your disk between cardboard pieces.

## The status line in *Cutthroats* stops at 8:20. What's wrong?

This is part of the game; it's a puzzle, not a program bug. Reread page 17 of the game manual documentation for more information.

## Internal Error 14 appears on my Apple program, even though it verifies as "game correct."

Internal Error 14 is a specific problem to some of our Apple programs. Although the \$VERIFY procedure shows the game to be correct, the error code appears randomly. Our investigation points to a problem in the program's interpreter. We have since reprogrammed the Apple

interpreter to correct the problem and will provide you with a replacement disk at no charge should you encounter this particular problem (refer to the previous question).

## A line of strange characters — arrows, brackets, and numbers — appears on my status line when using the IBM PC-DOS/MS-DOS 2.0 diskette.

These are ASCII characters which appear if the DOS file, ANSI.SYS, hasn't been loaded. Go through the INSTALL program again. To load ANSI, be sure to reboot the system (by pressing CTL, ALT, and DEL simultaneously) after the installation is complete. If rebooting has no effect, be sure that the DOS file ANSI.SYS resides on your disk (the root directory of hard disks). Also be

sure that the CONFIG.SYS has the line which reads: device=ansi.sys. You may need to create a CONFIG.SYS file using the DOS EDLIN or COPY CON command to include a line: device=ansi.sys. (TI PRO and DEC users do not have the ANSI file on their DOS directories.)

## Why am I having problems loading your games on my Commodore 128 with 1571 drives?

Some 1571 drives, when starting up, default to 1571 mode instead of 1541 mode. A one-line BASIC command found on page 5 of your 1571 Owner's Manual will put you in 1541 mode:


```
OPEN 1,8,15,"U0>M0"
```

(Note that 0 = zero.)

## Why don't you provide hints? Sometimes all I need is just a small hint to get me going, but you always refer me to your *InvisiClues*.

With 20 games now released on over 20 different computer versions, we can no longer provide hints on our games. We want to be sure the hotlines is accessible to those experiencing *technical* problems (e.g., installing, booting, saving). We not only receive calls from new purchasers, but also from those who have purchased through the years (including persons with pirated copies). Were we to provide a "hint" service for 20+ games sold over the past 6 years, our products would have to be priced out of reach of the average consumer in order to cover the costs of a continually expanding Customer Support Department. So please understand why we can't make a "small" exception to our no-hints policy.

## Why do I get a "Fatal error: Illegal operation" message on my IBM compatible with memory over 512K?

Early game versions of *Zork I*, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, *Deadline*, *Starcross*, *Suspended*, and *The Witness* were not designed to accommodate computers with memory over 512K. When run on computers with increased memory, the screen displays "Fatal error: Illegal operation," "Please write-protect your disk," or "ILL" messages. Updated versions are available to accommodate the memory increase, and disks are exchanged free. 

# Is Something Wrong with My Database?

## When I try to enter UPDATE mode, I keep getting the message "Can't update file previously viewed." Help!

You can enter (VIEW) files from the initial menu, or you can get them directly from other files without having to go back to the initial menu. For example, if you issue VIEW CUSTOMER from initial mode, then directly VIEW another file, then issue another VIEW CUSTOMER, you will not be able to update the customer file since it was previously viewed. To update records, press <DONE> until you return to the first level of interaction with that file. *Hint:* Take note of the lower-right corner where the number of "Files Viewed" is displayed. If the number is greater than "1," you have viewed several files without returning to the initial menu first. You'll encounter this error message only if you've viewed the same file twice.

## I've defined a new attribute in my file definition, but when I go to enter data the new attribute doesn't show up on the screen. What's wrong?

Remember that the screen that appears when you enter data is just a format named Update. (If you haven't altered the default Update format, new fields are automatically inserted.) When you add an attribute to your file, you need to edit the

Update format and insert the new attribute into the format where you want it to appear. After adding the new attribute to the Update format, be sure to SAVE the new format as Update to save your changes.

## How do I print beyond 80 columns (or set right margin)?

Under REPORT FORMAT RECORDS, use the MOVE FIELD and/or ADJUST-WIDTH commands to either move fields or lengthen fields beyond the 80th position. You probably need to begin moving the field which is farthest to the right to make room for the others. (Print setup options will allow you to set left, top, and bottom margins only.)

## I have changed some of the print options for one of my reports. Can I save these options so that I don't have to re-enter them every time I run the report?

Yes. After setting the print options the way you want, return to VIEW mode and SAVE the FORMAT with the name you want to use for the report. This will save the report format as well as the print options, and those options will be in effect each time you USE this FORMAT.

## Can I print mailing labels more than 1 across?

No. Cornerstone will only allow you to print one record across, no matter

what report format you use.


## I have a derived attribute defined as the sum of other attributes in my file, but sometimes there's a blank result. What's wrong?

As a safeguard, a derived attribute will be left blank if any of its variables is blank. For example, you may have a derived attribute defined as:

```
Derived_attrib =
  Attrib_1 + Attrib_2 + Attrib_3
```

Derived\_attrib will only be computed if there is a value in Attrib\_1 and Attrib\_2 and Attrib\_3; if any one of these attributes is blank, then Derived\_attrib will be blank. If you don't want this to occur, a possible way to prevent it is to define an initial value for all attributes that will be used in the derivation expression. This initial value could be zero if it's being used in addition derivations, or a one if it's being used in multiplication derivations.

## Where can I find explanations of Cornerstone error messages?

Whenever you get an error message on your screen (and you are still within Cornerstone, not at the DOS level), just press your help key to get a specific explanation of the problem and how to remedy it. If you should ever be bounced out to the DOS level and receive an error message or "Exit value," refer to Chapter 11 on Crash Recovery. 

# “True” Tale Tellers

As you all know from our multi-million-dollar television campaign blitz, we held a contest. (Okay, maybe we only mentioned it in passing on page 7 of the *Cutthroats* manual.) We asked readers to write and send us "True Tales of Adventure." The writers of the best 10 tales were promised a free Infocom game of their choice.

We received millions, maybe billions (actually dozens) of adventurous tall tales, all claiming to be "true." As we read the tales, the word "truth" kept coming to mind (as in "There's not one shred of truth here" or "Doesn't anyone tell the truth anymore?"). Space (and credibility) considerations prevent us from printing the winning tales in their entirety, but here are some excerpts:

"Dr. Kreigschmidt had built rocket engines in one side of the planet Mars so that at 12:01 a.m. on the 12th of April, he could crash Mars into earth!"

"He grabs m' shirt an' says, 'Wanna hear a *good* frog joke?'"

"The creature fell dead in my foyer. I went to my study, and left the butler to clean up the mess."

"The monk offered me some of his dry crackers and some thin chocolate milk, but as a true adventurer I stayed on a staple of gazelle jerky and plover eggs."

"I came out into a strange world. The people have two arms, but only one head. Cows eat grass. How can I get home?"

"A warrior hurled a spear at me. I grabbed it and hurled it back, killing the chief. I rowed to the other side of the island and climbed up a mountain. The tribe came after me,

## Trinity

(Continued from page 1)

map of the Trinity site, and instructions for folding a paper bird.

*Trinity* is Brian Moriarty's second work of interactive fiction, following the record-breaking bestseller *Wishbringer*<sup>™</sup>. Geared to the standard-level player, *Trinity* will be available in June for most personal computers with at least 128K of memory. It will carry a suggested retail price of \$39.95. Z

but I started an avalanche which killed them all."

"I found a secret entrance. I knew it was a secret entrance because of my quick eyes, and the sign that said 'Secret Entrance.'"

"Rain is sort of like boredom

## \$99 Solution to Information Problems

(continued from page 1)

designed for.

You might be asking: Why do I need a database? Well, sometimes you want to file the same information in more than one way. That's when a relational database can save you time, effort, and a lot of headaches.

For example, in the Public Relations office here at Infocom, we keep a copy of every article published about the company or our products. These are filed by publication in several large file cabinets. It's easy to learn what *Time* magazine has said about Infocom, but finding every review of *Planetfall* involves hours of searching through file folders. Setting up an articles file on Cornerstone, with each article listed by title, author, subject, publication, and date, lets us easily access every review of *Planetfall*, every article by a given freelance author, or even articles we remember only by title or date of publication. Cornerstone tells us exactly where to find what we want, so it's easy to go back into the file cabinet and pull it out.

In Pittsburgh, Congregation Beth Shalom has found a very different use for Cornerstone: it keeps track of the Congregation members and their 80,000 gravesite cemetery. Quite recently, the records for the cemetery alone filled an entire wall of filing cabinets. To give you an idea of what Cornerstone can do with the information on thousands of pieces of paper, here's how Bruce Weimer, man of many talents in the Congregation office, arranged his.

Bruce took full advantage of Cornerstone's relational abilities when setting up Beth Shalom's database. He filed names, addresses, phone numbers, birth dates, and

liquefied."

"The catfish shot three miles downriver in four seconds; the wave obliterated several towns. Around hairpin loops roared the maddened mudsucker, plowing through sandbars, ripping down bridges. Cities flashed by like bugs on the highway."

Congratulations to the 10 winners of the True Tales of Adventure

contest, who have each won the Infocom game of his or her choice. The winners are: H. Goodman, New York, NY; Nina Karp, Needham, MA; Monte Mitzelfelt, Knoxville, TN; Richard Nathan, Los Angeles, CA; Rhett Newman, Charlestown, Australia; Nafiz Rahman, Norwell, MA; David Thornley, St. Paul, MN; Robert Uyeyama, San Jose, CA; Douglas Wellington, Glen Rock, NJ; and Joshua N. Winn, Deerfield, IL. Z

other general information (including membership in Beth Shalom's many organizations) for each member of the congregation, so it's easy to produce mailing labels for general or specific purposes. High holiday appeals and billings and building fund pledges and payments are recorded, using Cornerstone both to produce mailing labels and to track contributions. Beth Shalom's Cornerstone also maintains listings and billing for the Book of Remembrance, a memorial book.

Here's but one example of how this wealth of information can be used. Since marital status is also recorded, Cornerstone's data arithmetic could calculate the ages of all single members, pulling out the names of those between 21 and 30. Mailing

labels could then be printed out for invitations to a Young Singles Dance. It's a matchmaker's delight!

For those at the other end of life's journey, the cemetery part of Beth Shalom's database tracks cemetery sections and costs, plot owners, and individual gravesites. Using Cornerstone, information is readily available on the owner of a given plot; when it was purchased and paid for; who is buried there and when the burials took place; whether reservations have been made for other family members; which company installed the monument and when; and what types of plantings or floral arrangements have been ordered and paid for, and the care they need.

Please turn to page 12

## InfoNews Roundup

**Once again**, Infocom won the Softsel/Business Week Award for Most Titles on the Softsel Hot List, Recreational Software.

**The Cornerstone Book**, written by Laura Buddine and published by Addison-Wesley, will be available in August. It contains twenty Cornerstone applications in over 250 pages, and costs \$14.95. Look for it in your local computer or book store, or order it from Infocom. *The Cornerstone Book* contains the Official Infocom Softball Team Statistics application, as well as more prosaic (or even useful) items: everything from a Personnel system to a Time and Billing system.

**The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** won the *Family Computing* award for Best Text-Only Adventure.

**A Mind Forever Voyaging** and

*Trinity* (our two Interactive Fiction Plus games) are now available on the Commodore 128.

**Many more titles** are now available on the Tandy Color Computer, including *Zork I*, *Zork II*, and *Ballyhoo*.

**Zork I** is again available for the TRS-80 Model III!

**Two Infocom products** have been nominated for Software Publishing Association awards: Cornerstone for Best Packaging and *A Mind Forever Voyaging* for Best New World.

**Playboy** named *Zork I* the best computer game (February 1986).

**Antic** magazine's "Outstanding Product Award" was won by Infocom, for the whole Interactive Fiction line (May 1986). Z



# Gnu News

Now for more gnu news.

Hot off the wire: Huey Lewis and the Gnus will be giving a special concert at the Gazebo in the Formal Garden.

Their warm-up band is rumored to be a surprise reunion of The Animals.

Pepsi, in response to Coke's recent marketing ploy, is announcing Gnu Pepsi. Copies of the secret formula were leaked to this reporter, and among the ingredients will be gnu's milk (not grue's milk as previously reported by

our Witchville reporter).

Did you know that:

- ▶ gnus obtain a shoulder height of 3 to 4 feet?
- ▶ a gnu calf can run as fast as an adult within 24 hours of birth?
- ▶ the white-tailed gnu is extinct in the wild?

▶ both male and female gnus have horns?

- ▶ Sir Isaac Gnuton discovered gravity when an apple fell on one of his horns?
- ▶ FDR's "Gnu Deal" was a plan to employ gnus as blackjack dealers?
- ▶ gnus from Gnufoundland prefer to eat lobster Gnuburg?

## Grand Opening Sale! CRAZY DIMWIT WILL NOT BE UNDERSOLD. HE AND HIS PRICES ARE *INSANE!*

For the past few years I've been supplying Infocom with all the neat paraphernalia that you'd be willing to kill for (or at least sell your grandmother for).

Until now I wasn't crazy enough to even think of cutting out the middleman

(Infocom) and selling direct to the public. But now I'm just crazy enough to do it. Yes, my lawyers and accountants are calling me insane, and maybe that's the defense I'll use when Infocom hauls me into court; but now, for a limited time only, while our excessive supplies last, here's what I have to sell:

### T-Shirts



#### "I GOT THE BABEL FISH" T-SHIRTS

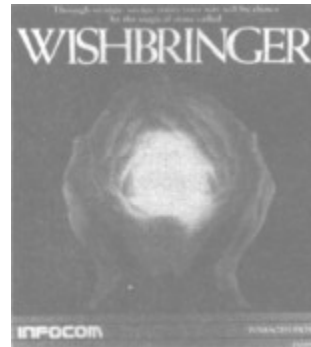
Just like the one *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* author Douglas Adams would be wearing now if we bothered to send him one. It comes in several sizes: small (S), medium (M), large (L) and excessively large (XL). High-quality famous-maker brand-name silk-screened 100%-cotton black T-shirt, with the "I got the Babel fish" slogan on the front and the Infocom logo on the back. What do you think you'd pay for this elsewhere? 100 Zorkmids? 200 Zorkmids? Well, we're selling it for only 80 Zorkmids or \$7.95 U.S. currency. (We're even taking a beating on the exchange rates for you.) Sorry, we have these in the one-headed models only.



#### SPECIAL OFFER

To celebrate my grand opening, I have a special offer. If you purchase any game through our mail order service, I'll include with your order a genuine original *Zork I* for the TRS-80 Model I in its original plastic baggie (the way we packaged software back in the good old days). Absolutely a must for serious collectors and fans. Offer expires when supplies run out.

### POSTERS! BOY, DO WE HAVE POSTERS!



#### WISHBRINGER POSTER

(Limited supply — while they last)

As seen on the cover of *Wishbringer*, this poster shows the hands of an excessively over-paid male model cupping the purple glowing Wishbringer stone. This unusual and striking piece of art is the perfect addition to any home. Imagine the imagined warmth you'll feel staring at its serene purple glow. This 22 x 26-inch masterwork is available for the demented low price of only \$5.95. Buy two!

#### TRINITY POSTER

(Limited supply — while they last)

Here is a poster with a bang. This 16 x 20-inch poster is the original artwork for the cover of the *Trinity* package. It features a sundial backlit by a nuclear explosion. This one's my favorite because I just love excessively large explosions. You could even order the poster the same time you order the game, and enjoy them at the same time. These posters are only \$5.95 each! Be really excessive and buy three!

#### INFOCOM POSTER

It's the one you've seen in all the stores, complete with the slogan, "A human never stands so tall as when stooping to help a small computer." This 22 x 28-inch, full-color masterpiece was originally sold by Infocom for \$5.95! Now, because we have an excessively large number of these fine, art-like posters, it is available to you for the excessively low price of just \$2. Buy 10,000!

#### USE THE ENCLOSED EXCESSIVE ORDER FORM!

To order these crazy products, just use the enclosed order form. (I'm using the same order form and fulfillment house Infocom uses so they'll never catch me! Ha ha ha! I must be crazy!)

#### THE HONEST TRUTH

Frankly, none of these products is a nationally advertised ginsu knife, but many a warehouse worker received a nasty paper cut from the posters. We are not responsible for typographic errors in this ad. Crazy Dimwit cannot offer rain checks for out-of-stock items; after all, this IS a while-supplies-last offer, you know.

# The Long Awaited Answers to Puzzle Number 8

Puzzle Number 8 easily qualifies as our hardest puzzle ever. There were only 28 entries, and only 4 of them (14%) were correct. Here's the solution:

- A) You are drunk.  
*Zork II*: DIAGNOSE (while fermented by the Wizard)
- B) You're going to start sloshing around soon.  
*Infidel*: DRINK WATER (a third time)
- C) He smiles. "Money is our most important product."  
*Cutthroats*: ASK THE TELLER ABOUT THE BANK
- D) You receive a painful electric

- shock.  
*Planetfall*: KISS FLOYD
- E) Weird! The candle remains lit even as it disappears beneath the surface of the river.  
*Wishbringer*: DROP THE CANDLE INTO THE RIVER
- F) What a detective! "Quick! Arrest that file drawer before it escapes!"  
*Seastalker*: ARREST THE FILE DRAWER (in Kemp's Office)
- G) I'd recommend a good doctor, but we need the eggs.  
*Sorcerer*: SIT ON THE PERCH (in Belboz's Quarters)
- H) He dodges, insisting that this is

- incorrect procedure.  
*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*: HIT PROSSER (before going to the Pub)
- I) There is no high from sniffing this powder.  
*Deadline*: SMELL THE SUGAR
- J) You twist your head to look under the four-poster bed but find nothing.  
*The Witness*: LOOK UNDER THE BED (in Mr. Linder's bedroom)
- K) You'll have to lead, you can be sure of that.  
*Suspect*: DANCE WITH THE BODY (Veronica's dead body)

- L) "Why"  
*Enchanter*: READ THE SIGN (the first sign on the Long Road)

Once you've matched the response with the number of the corresponding game, the numerical answer is, from A through L, in order:  $(2 \times 14 \times 16) + (12 \times 6 \times 15) + (5 \times 13 \times 7) + (8 \times 9 \times 4) = 2271$ . The four whizzes who got 2271 are:

1. Mark Jackson, Hendersonville, TN
2. Stephen Fan, Silver Spring, MD
3. John Carter, Richmond, VA
4. Eugene Foss, Flora, IL

# And the Not So Long Awaited Answers to Puzzle Number 9

Puzzle Number 9 drew the highest number of entries for an \* \* \* puzzle since Puzzle 4 from the Fall 1984 issue. There were 420 entries, of which 228 (54%) were correct. Had we known how popular this puzzle would be, we never would've made it so difficult to "grade"! We were fairly flexible on spellings. Here are the correct answers:

1. Charles Foster Kane (from *Citizen Kane*) (given)
2. Richard (or Rick) Blaine (from *Casablanca*)
3. Wile E. Coyote (from the Warner Brothers "Roadrunner" cartoons)
4. Robby the Robot (from *Forbidden Planet*)
5. Group Captain Lionel Mandrake (from *Dr. Strangelove*)
6. Lassie (from the TV show of the same name)
7. Kong (from *King Kong*)

Of the 192 wrong answers, 137 had one wrong, 33 had two wrong, 19 had three wrong, and 3 had four wrong. Number 5 caused the most problems; nearly a third of the incorrect entries (62) would've been correct except that they were missing "Lionel." Another 37 entrants erred only by choosing another character from *Dr. Strangelove*, such as President Merkin Muffley, Bat Guano, or Dr. Strangelove himself.

Some other common mistakes: for number 2, omitting Rick's last name. For number 4, James Bond, Doctor Who, Flash Gordon, and Buck Rogers. For number 7, Godzilla and Mighty Joe Young.

An interesting new statistic is the number of entries submitted on

photocopies of the entry form. A lot of people must save their issues, because 184 entries (44%) were photocopied. Correct entries were more likely to be photocopied than incorrect entries (52% versus 34%).

We decided to allow photocopied entries because people complained that they were being forced to cut up their issues. However, a small number of people seem to be taking advantage of the new rule by sending in large numbers of photocopied entries for the spouses, children, second cousins, and pets. Therefore, we're adding another puzzle rule to help limit this practice: each entry must be mailed separately.

Overall, people seem to enjoy this puzzle quite a bit. We'll probably do a slightly harder version of the same concept in a future puzzle.

The 25 T-shirt winners were randomly chosen from the 228 correct entrants. They are:

1. Joyce Greenfield, Lincoln, NE
2. Richard Barclay, Davison, MI
3. Mitch Turitz, Richmond, CA
4. Jamie Lear, Brooklyn, NY
5. Tom Landon, Los Angeles, CA
6. Sharon Creekmore, Hammond, IN
7. Les Silvan, Kent, WA
8. Tom Lankford, Severna Park, MD
9. Sara Memmott, Olean, NY
10. Martha Shelton, Plano, TX

11. Bill Leininger, Prospect Heights, IL
12. John Lensen, Fridley, MN
13. David Newkirk, Warrenville, IL
14. Lawrence Nussbaum, Upper Montclair, NJ
15. Paul Dick, San Jose, CA
16. Thomas Grover, Provo, UT
17. Steve Spet, Houston, TX
18. Paul Feigelman,

- Bayside, NY
- 19. John Lindgren, North Babylon, NY
- 20. Neil Berry, Akron, OH
- 21. Steve Holst, San Francisco, CA
- 22. David Buchanan, Oregon City, OR
- 23. Harris Schiffman, Panaroma City, CA
- 24. Gary Moore, San Jose, CA
- 25. Leslie Ann Evans, Parma, OH

## Puzzle Mail Bag

Dear Sirs [*sic*]:

I am pleased to find that Infocom is not perfect. In Puzzle Number 9, question number 2, you had the name Louis Renault. In fact it is actually Renault who is portrayed by Claude Rains in *Casablanca*. Thank you for your time.

**Dan Donahuen,**  
Lake Havasu City, AZ

*The \* \* \* stands by its spelling. --Ed.*

Dear Sirs [*sic*]:

I have enjoyed this puzzle [number 9] more than others I have seen in the \* \* \*, because I have not yet had a chance to get ALL the Infocom games, and thus am at a decided disadvantage in that respect.

However, I have greatly enjoyed all the ones I have seen, both for their wit and their logic (or lack thereof).

**Anonymous**

*Based on the popularity of Puzzle 9, there will certainly be more puzzles in the future that aren't dependent on knowledge of Infocom's interactive fiction. --Ed.*

Dear Infocom:

Alas! I didn't receive my latest \* \* \* until Monday, February 24th (our mail is delivered by yak). Thus the tardiness of my contest entry. I hope you will accept it anyhow.

**Sue Oppenheimer,**  
Providence, RI

P.S. Thanks for the change of pace. I suspect there are many of us who would lose our jobs if we took the time to play ALL the Infocom games. The \* \* \* puzzles seem to have been getting more encyclopedic and less fun as the number of games has grown.

*Your mail is tardy because it's deliv-  
Please turn to page 12*



## Puzzle Number Ten

This puzzle is a reprise of one of the most popular puzzles we've done, \* \* \* Puzzle Number Six. However, that puzzle was based on *Zork I*, and this puzzle is based on *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Below are thirteen alleged responses from *Hitchhiker's*. Actually, only eleven of them are really in the game; two of them are fakes. Imposters. To win, simply write down the letters corresponding to the two false responses. There are no tricks; for example, the fake responses are not simply real responses with one word changed.

There's another rule this month. A number of people took advantage of our new photocopy rule by sending huge numbers of photocopied entries in the same envelope, often with many different names but the same address. To prevent this, the new rule states that all entries must be mailed separately. We apologize for the inconvenience to those who legitimately send in their entries together.

A. The word "no" is not in our

hostess' vocabulary.

B. You already did that. It's not a merry-go-round.

C. You have two splitting headaches.

D. Congratulations. The towel is now covered with slime.

E. The effect is decorative rather than helpful.

F. The bloody thing's been jammed shut for months, now.

G. "We can't leave while you're in trouble, Mr. President!"

H. "Sorry, current course for the legendary lost planet of Magrathea can be countermanded only by Zaphod Beeblebrox."

I. A footling effort. The shock waves of the Beast's laughter push you back.

J. You see your environs upside-down and slightly distorted.

K. The sun's light is a perfectly horrible shade of orange.

L. The chair is very comfortable, with a thick plush cushion.

M. This is one of those clever new always-open always-closed bottles.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### CONTEST RULES:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by August 15, 1986.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.
6. There is no rule 6.

PRIZE: The coveted \* \* \* Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

SEND TO: Infocom  
\* \* \* Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

## Puzzle Letters

(Continued from page 11)

ered by yaks? But according to a recent yak fact I saw somewhere, yaks can travel over 7000 miles in a single day. That seems considerably faster than the average U.S. mail carrier! —Ed.

Puzzle Research Dept.:

The situation described in question 7 of Puzzle Number 9 is incorrect. When Kong destroyed the subway train, he had not yet located Ann Darrow, and so he could not be carrying her.

Kenneth Carter,

Knoxville, MD

Ah, but that's the wonder of interactive fiction! In countless showings of the movie version of King Kong, poor Kong had no choice; time after time he would escape from the theatre, then knock a few subway cars around, then grab Ann Darrow, then climb the Empire State Building... However, in our hypothetical interactive fiction version of King Kong, you (as Kong) can do whatever you want, in any order you choose, because (all together, class) "what happens next is up to you!" —Ed.

## Envelope Design Contest

(Continued from page 2)

what you can do. In fact, if you can do a better job than I — or anyone else — then I'll put your design on the next \* \* \* envelope. Yeah, that's it! I'll even give you a free Infocom story of your choice. Yeah, we'll have a contest!

So this is what you do: Come up with a design that will fit on an 8½" x 5½" envelope, allowing enough room for an address and postage (and Infocom's return address if it's not part of your design). Draw it in black ink on a clean, unfolded sheet of white paper. Then send it along

with your name, your address, the title and computer compatibility of the Infocom game you'd like to win, to:

Infocom, Inc.  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
Attn: Cezanne

The best design will appear on the next \* \* \* envelope, and the artist will win the Infocom game of his or her choice. Sorry, but artwork will not be returned. All artwork becomes the property of The Frobozz Gallery of Art.

## Cornerstone Now \$99.95

(Continued from page 9)

Again, this information can be used in many different ways. For example, it would be easy to find out how many gravesites are still available and where they are located, as well as to categorize them by cost. This information could then be sent to current owners, as well as to Congregation members who have not yet reserved a gravesite. And Cornerstone's "tickler" file can be used to remind the Beth Shalom office when to expect a monument installation, and send out a second billing, or order a floral arrangement for a perpetual-care plot.

Maybe you don't manage a Public Relations office or a cemetery. But

almost everyone manages information of some sort, whether at home or at work. Do you ever find yourself making 6 copies of the company report on snack machine vendors in order to file it in 6 different places? Or looking through hundreds of index cards for your 1983 Phalaenopsis germination records? Or wishing that you had some way of cataloging your stamp collection as well as the names, addresses, and trustworthiness of your rare stamp suppliers? Or trying to figure out which of the 700 members of your Zippy the Pinhead fan club haven't yet paid their dues? If any of these aggravations sound familiar, then you need Cornerstone.

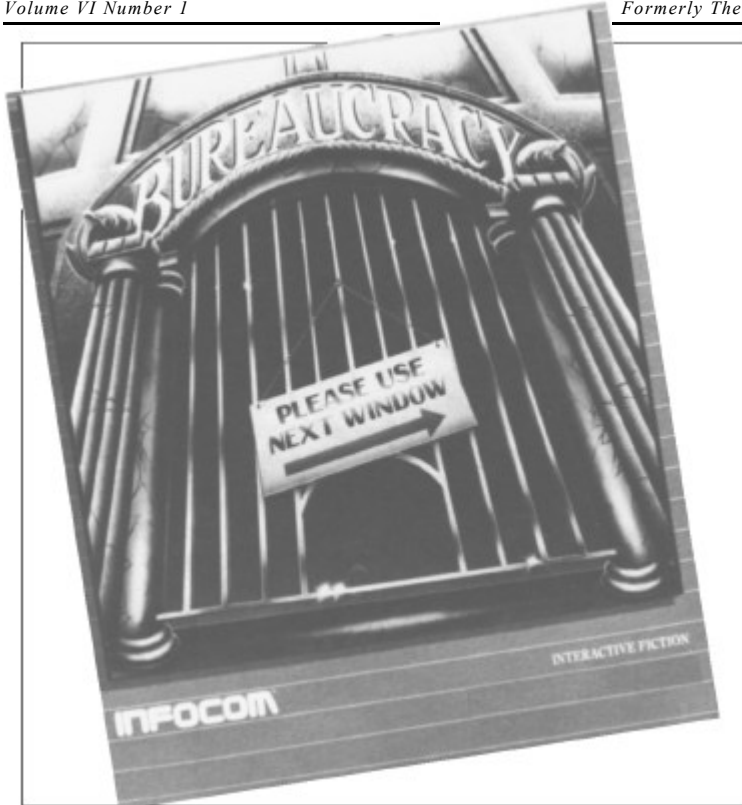
# INFOCOM™

P.O. Box 478

Cresskill, New Jersey 07626

Address Correction Requested





Creative Services Manager Carl Genatossio slaved over a hot drafting table for over two years before completing the cover art for *Bureaucracy*

## Douglas Adams' Bureaucracy

Not very long ago, Douglas Adams (who is, as everyone knows, the best-selling author of that zany interactive story *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*<sup>™</sup>) moved from one apartment in London to another. He dutifully notified everyone of his new address, including his bank. In fact, he personally went to the bank and filled out a change-of-address form.

Soon after, Douglas found that he was unable to use his credit card. He discovered that the card had been invalidated by the bank. Apparently, the bank had sent a new card to his old address.

For weeks, Douglas tried to get the bank to acknowledge his change-of-address form. He talked to bank officials, and filled out new forms, and applied for another credit card, but nothing worked. He had no credit, and the bank behaved like... well, like a bank.

It's a sad story, one that's replayed every day for millions of people worldwide. Of course, it's not always a bank at fault. Sometimes it's the postal service, or the telephone company, or an airline, or the government. All of us, at one time or another, feel persecuted by a bureaucracy. What can be done?

Only Douglas Adams would exact such sweet revenge. He retaliated by writing *Bureaucracy*<sup>™</sup>, a hilarious interactive journey through masses of red tape.

You begin *Bureaucracy* in your spiffy new apartment. You're going to Paris this very afternoon for a combination training seminar and vacation, so you'll need to leave as soon as you get the money order your boss has mailed you. Unless, of course, there's some problem with the mail...

You'll soon find yourself entangled

Please turn to page 3

## Genuine Zorkmid coin minted for the Zork Trilogy

*Together again for the first time; Zork I, Zork II and Zork III in the same package*

In the beginning, three little *Zorks* lived happily together in one big mainframe computer. They flourished under the loving care of Marc Blank, Dave Lebling, and a lot of other nurturing computer types, and grew up to be humorous, challenging, and full of riveting puzzles.

Finally, it was time for *Zork*<sup>®</sup> I, *Zork II*, and *Zork III* to venture out into the world of personal computers. As everybody knows, they made their parents proud. One million people welcomed the little *Zorks* into their homes. They were called "remarkable," "fascinating," "beautifully written," "masterpieces of logic." Countless awards and accolades were won, including "Best All-Time Computer Game" from Playboy Magazine in 1986.

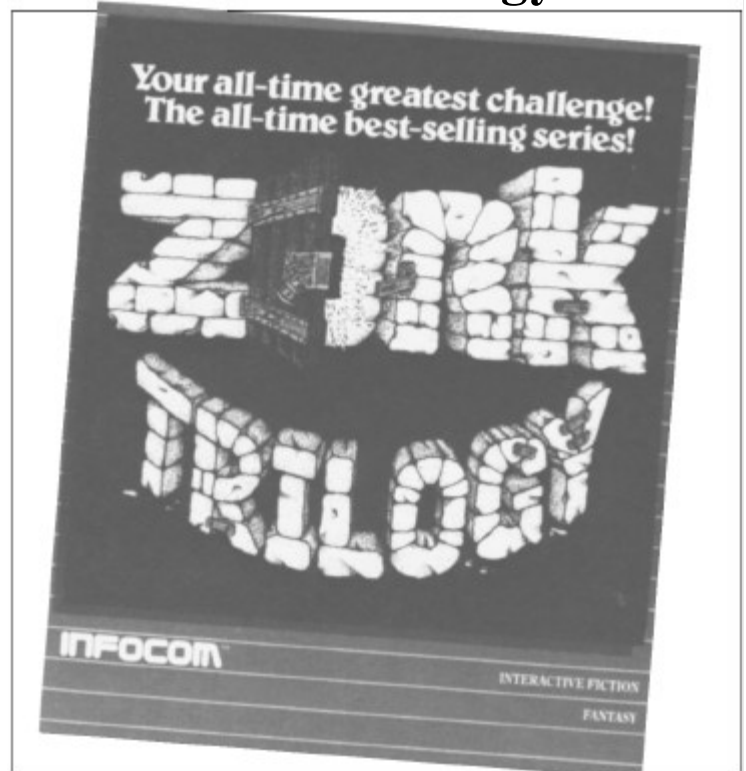
Now, five years later, *Zork I*, *Zork II*, and *Zork III* are together again, happily reunited in one incredible *Zork Trilogy* package.

To commemorate this momentous occasion, the staff of the Frobozz Mint struck a special Zorkmid coin.

The coin, which bears the handsome visage of Belwit the Flat, is included in *The Zork Trilogy* package, along with the complete games of *Zork I*, *Zork II*, and *Zork III* on disk; a history of the Great Underground Empire; a Frobozzco International stock certificate; resort brochures from Bozbarland and Grayslopes; a letter from John D. Flathead IX; and a strange old map.

Just imagine... *Zork I*, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, a heap of fascinating documents, and a not-available-anywhere-else Zorkmid coin. And it's all yours at a savings of 50% off the original combined cost of the three *Zork* packages. Commodore 64/128 and Atari XL/XE versions cost just \$59.95. Apple II series, Macintosh, Atari ST, Amiga, and IBM versions carry a suggested retail price of \$69.95.

If you haven't yet welcomed the three little *Zorks* into your home, now is the time to do so... now that they're all together in the extra special *Zork Trilogy*.



Here's the surprisingly original cover of the new *Zork Trilogy*, chosen from literally thousands of entries from across the globe.



**Dear Infocom:**

I eagerly ripped open the envelope with the Infocom logo and quickly pulled out the latest edition of *The New Zork* ... wait! A little change threw me off balance -- but it was quickly regained. I opened the edition and turned to page 6. Ah, yes, page 6, home of puzzle number 11. I thought -- no, I prayed -- that I would be able to complete the program puzzle and win! Yes, me! Winner! Winner of the Infocom game of my choosing! I read about *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and I wanted it. That would be the game of my choosing. Plenty of sex, action, sex, puzzles, sex, zany humor, sex; why, it had my name all over it! The tension within me built!

I looked at the puzzle. Then I looked at it once again. Puzzlement befell my shattered hopes and dreams! You had to match quotes with games! This got me to thinking. I personally have only two games (*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* would've been my third) so I recognized very few quotes (four to be exact). To win your puzzle, I would have to know dialogue from 17 games. Fine; how much would this be? I calculated it out to be \$654.15 plus 4% sales tax; if I ordered them through you, it would have been \$688.15. Being a college student on a very strict budget, I cannot afford \$600 for games in order to compete in your puzzles. This is very disconcerting to me. I love your newspaper, with all its wit, and I want to participate to the fullest. Please help me in the future. Thank you for your cooperation. Admiringly yours,

**James Tibbitts**  
Kalamazoo, MI

[Editor's reply: We've run several "one game" puzzles and even one "no games" puzzle. And it's possible to solve even our multiple-game puzzles with knowledge of just a few games. Besides, what's more important: your tuition or a new Infocom game? Don't answer that.]

**Dear Infocom:**

I just wanted to say that I couldn't believe how easy puzzle number 11 was. Even though the only Infocom games I own are *Hitchhiker's, Zork III*, and *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, I figured out the puzzle in less than 20 minutes. I only filled out seven numbers before I figured out I was drawing the legs of something, and in a few minutes of drawing and erasing I had completed the "dead man." I grabbed a back issue of a computer magazine and found an Infocom ad showing all of your game's covers. There was the cover of *Deadline*.

I suppose you'll get a few billion

entries for the puzzle, but remember: I sent mine in first.

Sincerely,  
**John Sadowski**  
Buffalo, MN

**Dear Infocom:**

The snow fell at an ever-increasing rate, obscuring my view of the tree line ahead. The wind whistled through my cloak, and my lantern squeaked in the cold. The miles had trudged by at an ever-slowning rate, until I finally couldn't go on any further. I entered the small grove of trees and gratefully collapsed beneath a large tree with low branches. Totally exhausted, I did the only thing I could think of to pass the time 'til the end came: I whistled. As I whistled, a beautiful little bird flew over me into the branches of the tree. The end must be close, I thought; this is too familiar to be true.

Then the little bird dropped something on my head that was nothing like a brass bauble and flew away. Coincidentally, I realized that I had been whistling the theme song to the TV series *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. I decided to figure the odds of these two events happening together, hoping that it would take my mind off of the increasing force of the wind. I came up with a seven-digit number that was the same as the phone number of a girl who told me to do just what I had done: get lost in a snow storm. This drove me even further into despair. In my deep depression, I didn't notice I was sweating until I took off my cloak (actually, my jacket). A Chinook wind was passing through! By the way, the Hitchhiker's Guide has no info on a Chinook wind, so I'll tell you what it is: a warm wind that blows over the Rockies and raises the temperature. It raised my hopes too. All the snow melted and the sun came out, making the day quite beautiful, however leaving me still just as lost. I felt rather rested now, so I left the grove of trees and began trudging across a field. The ground began to rumble and shake, and the sky filled with mist! I looked around in terror and what should I behold stampeding over the hill straight at me? YAKS?!? In Montana? No, no, cows! I stood there dumbfounded long enough to wish I had an izyuk memorized before running as fast as I could, but slower than the herd.

I thought I heard something in the air behind me so I looked over my shoulder to check. Lo and behold! Be still my beating heart! Keep running my beating feet! A helicopter! I was

# Mail Bag

really glad I had looked back at the helicopter until I turned back around to see where I was running. When I woke up on the helicopter, they were still picking tree bark out of my face. Never mind that, though, I was rescued! Free to watch more reruns of Gilligan's Island and Hogan's Heroes! Free to solve *Zork* a twelfth time! Of course the snow storm came back in force. Fortunately, we crashed on top of three cows. Not only did they soften the blow, but I ate steak for four days until the forest rangers rescued me again.

Finally, I spied the lovely little quaint abode with boarded windows and a front door intentionally left blank that I called home. I wondered what I could have possibly done to deserve what happened to me. I opened my big mailbox with the usual difficulty (it hates to give up posted mail) and realized what it was: my copy of *The Status Line* had been in my mailbox for six days unopened! I quickly remedied that fault as I stepped inside. Reaching into my cabinet for a cup, I found one of my china cups was inexplicably missing, so I grabbed another and poured myself a cup of tea. The stories and news items were wonderful, but the thing I wanted to see most was the new puzzle contest. I flipped to it eagerly, but just as I opened it up, my head started to feel as funny as the tea tasted. Before I knew it, the floor rushed up to greet me. The police came by and drew lines around me before the ambulance took me away, but as I was wheeled out of my library (kitchen, actually), I saw those lines on the floor. That's it! I realized, I knew it all

along. "Deadline!" I creaked from the stretcher, "Deadline is the answer!" The police sergeant named Duffy asked me, "That T-shirt you're wearing is a large, isn't it?" I told Duffy, "No, it's a medium."

Interactive-affectionately yours,

**Jon Ramer**  
Great Falls, MT

**Dear Infocom:**

My newsletter came with a distinct perfume (perhaps *Moonmist*) permeating the paper. My guess is that the newsletters are stored near the scratch-and-sniff cards used in the *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* game. On the other hand, my wife is convinced that the Infocom letter was perfumed because in the mail box it was sitting next to a letter from my (non-existent) lover. The perfume makes me a prime *Suspect*, and of course I hid the incriminating letter (according to her) but she managed to sniff out my *Infidelity* by paying attention to *Invisible Clues*. Our mutual trust, the *Cornerstone* of our marriage, is missing. She thinks some *Enchanter* or *Sorcerer* placed a love spell on me and that she, my lover and I are *Starcrossed Trinity*. Now she is looking for a good *Spellbreaker*. I need an honest *Witness* to tell my wife the truth. Without your help, my wife and I will become *Cutthroats*. Be my *Wishbringer*, and tell my wife that I'm inno-scent. Until we get an answer, she has me *Suspended* upside-down with a rope, twenty-five *Fooblitzkys* above the ground. The future of my marriage (not to mention my life) rests in your hands. Please answer as soon as possible; she has given me a strict *Deadline*, under which the rope will be cut and I will make *Planetfall* with my fragile skull. Sincerely,

**Phillip Gabbard**  
New York, NY

## The Status Line

**Susan Goldman**  
Chief

Writers:

Stu Galley, Elizabeth Langozy, Steve Meretzky,  
Curtis Montague, Jon Palace, and Gayle Syska

For the desktop publishing cartel:  
Hollywood Dave Anderson, Tom Veldran

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# Bureaucracy: Adams' wit in triplicate

Continued from page 1  
 in a series of bureaucratic mishaps as you attempt the seemingly simple task of getting to Paris. Along the way, you'll wrangle with a very bureaucratic bank. And a very bewildering

airport. And an eccentric assortment of characters ranging from a greedy llama to the paranoid owner of a camouflaged house. When you find yourself hanging upside down from a tree deep in the Zalagasan jungle, you know you're experiencing the outer limits of bureaucracy.

To make sure you are prepared for any eventuality, the packaging includes an official letter from your boss; a credit card application form (in triplicate); a skinny pencil; a helpful brochure from your bank; and a charter membership flyer for *Popular Paranoia* magazine.

Douglas Adams was assisted in

writing *Bureaucracy* by the staff of Infocom, primarily the mysterious hacker W.E.B. "Fred" Morgan. He (she?) has worked on most Infocom products at one time or another. Mr. Morgan refuses to reveal any personal information about himself (herself?) other than a mailing address for cash and bearer bonds.

*Bureaucracy* will be available in March for the IBM, Apple II series, Macintosh, Atari ST, Commodore 128, and Amiga. Retail price is \$34.95 for the Commodore 128, and \$39.95 for all other computer systems.

## InfoNews Roundup

### Hollywood Hijinx/Bureaucracy InvisiClues

Now, for only \$2 more, you can get double the hints. That's right! For only \$9.95 you get two complete sets of InvisiClues for two fantastic Infocom games, all in one booklet. InvisiClues Hint Booklets will give you only the help you need, when you need it. If you become stuck, all you have to do is find the question in your InvisiClues Hint Booklet that pertains to your problem, run your InvisiClues latent image marker (included in your InvisiClues kit) over the first answer and the answer appears before your very eyes. Be on the lookout for the Hollywood Hijinx™/Bureaucracy InvisiClues Hint Booklets and maps in mid-May.

### Our circulation tops Dallas Times Herald

Hard to believe? We're a bit skeptical ourselves. The Status Line mailing list has topped a whopping 240,000. Just to make sure that there's not one avid fan out there who is receiving 100,000 copies of The Status Line, we've decided to undertake the massive task of updating our list. Those of you from whom we have not heard in the last 12 months will find a Renewal Card bound into your issue of The Status Line. If you do not return the card, we will assume that you are no longer interested in receiving The Status Line. Thanks for your help.

### Mitch, it's only a game

On July 10, 1986, Infocom beat softball rival Lotus Development in a hard-fought game. The final score was 14 to 13.

On July 11, 1986, the news broke that Lotus founder and Chairman Mitch Kapor was resigning his active role in the company.

While none of the news stories revealed the REAL reason for Kapor's resignation, Infocom soft-ball fans were not fooled.

### A blithering idiom

In its November issue, the German magazine "Happy Computer" reviewed Infocom's *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*™ (which, in German, is "Die Leder-Gottinnen von Phobos").

Immediately, Infocom's resident German semi-translators began struggling through the review, valiantly attempting to wrestle those thirty-seven syllable German words into submission.

The sentence which gave them the most trouble was one which read, "Programmierer Steve Meretzky ... holt vielmehr zum groben 'Durch den Kakao ziehen' aus." This apparently translated to "Programmer Steve Meretzky likes to drag people through cocoa." Naturally, this had everyone around here scratching their heads until someone discovered that "dragging someone through cocoa" is a German idiom for kidding someone.

### All the news that's fit to print

Recently, an Infocom author was visiting the venerable newsroom of the venerable *New York Times* for an interview about the author's not-so-venerable latest work.

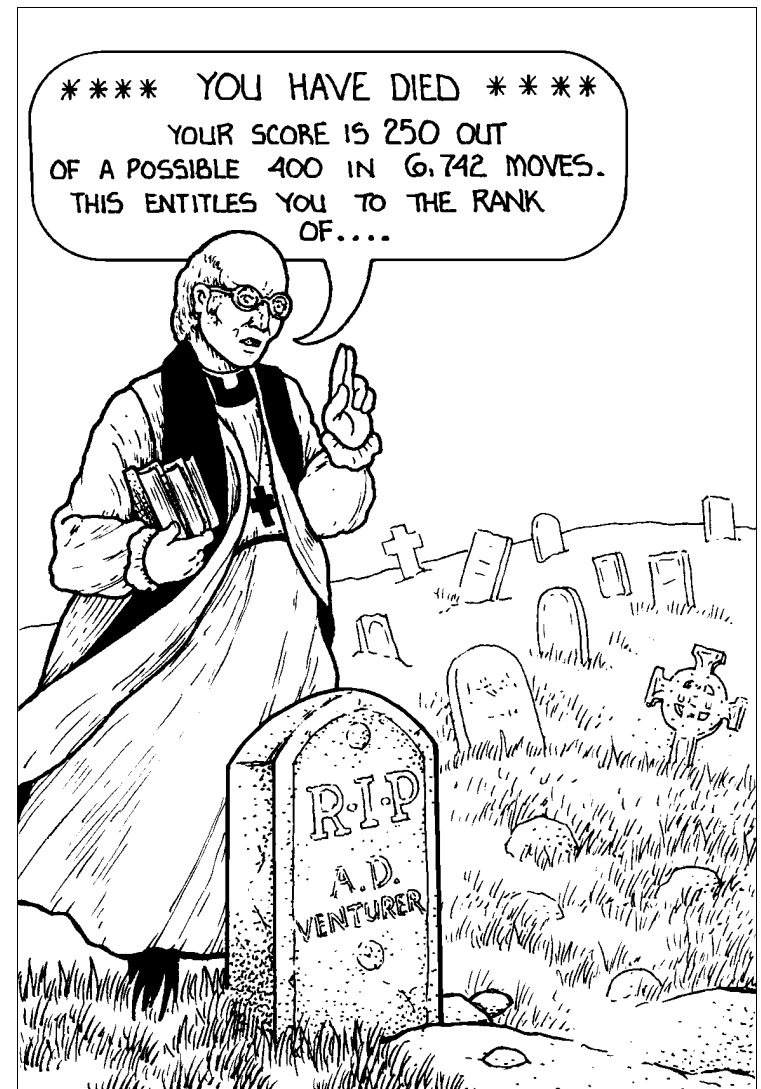
Naturally, the author took this occasion to vent his disgust at the legal staff of the *Times* (which recently bullied Infocom into changing the name of this newsletter from *The New York Times* to *The Status Line*). The *Times* reporter proceeded to lead our author to the newsroom bulletin board.

There, in the very center of that crowded board, was a copy of the article from *The Status Line* about the forced name change. The headline, "Times to Infocom: Drop Dead" was circled with a fat red editing pen. Apparently, the folks in the newsroom don't hold their legal department in much higher stead than we do.

## These classics titles for just \$14.95

*Starcross*,<sup>®</sup> *Suspended*,<sup>®</sup> *Infidel*,<sup>®</sup> *Seastalker*,<sup>®</sup> and *Deadline*.<sup>®</sup> These award winning titles are now available only direct from Infocom -- allowing us to pass on some extraordinary savings to you, our faithful readers. Each of these

games, ordinarily a \$35 - \$50 value, is an unbeatable \$14.95. At this price, they're a must addition to any software library. (See enclosed Order Form for further details.)



Lori Glickman and Bradley Schenck



# Infocom pumpkin play a smash

The annual Infocom Halloween Party included many of the features one normally associates with Halloween parties: costumes, heavily spiked punch, bobbing for pumpkins, and so forth. It also included one feature not normally seen at a Halloween party: an interactive skit.

The skit, entitled Halloween Hijinx, told the story of a small town. Its cemetery is coveted by a huge condominium developer, and the deed to the cemetery, the last stumbling block between the developer and a hideous housing project, has mysteriously vanished.

As the action of the skit began, the main character (You) and his two friends (Zebulon and Jedediah) are heading out on Halloween for some trick-or-treating. They've decided to keep their eyes and ears open for any clues about the missing deed.

Characters in the skit included the church's forgetful pastor, Cyrus McGee; incredibly corrupt Mayor Slimebucket; a town bully named Chuggo; and elderly spinster Elmira Bat, the town gossip. Other townspeople were Doctor Goodbody, a kindly philanthropist; Abdul, a suspicious foreigner living in a tent near the cemetery; and Abdul's trained mule. The mule, named Mr. Zeke, could answer any questions whose answer was a number.

The skit was interactive in much the same way that an Infocom story is. After each action in the skit, the players would freeze, and the audience would shout out suggestions for what to do next. InfoAuthor Dave Lebling played the skit's "parser," screening inputs from the audience and forwarding appropriately-worded ones on to the players.

Players appeared in the skit in whatever costumes they had worn to the party. InfoTester Max Buxton, who played You, came as Punch, and his girlfriend was Judy. Dave Lebling was costumed as a giant computer chip; thus his parser role. InfoAuthor Steve Meretzky (Jedediah) and his wife were dressed as Baby Time and Father Time, respectively. InfoTester Tom Bok (Elmira Bat) was a nun, InfoAuthor Stu Galley (Abdul) was a beatnik, InfoEditor Jon Palace (Goodbody) was a basket of dirty laundry, and InfoAuthor "Hollywood" Dave Anderson was costumed as a huge *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* scratch 'n' sniff card.

As the story of the skit unfolded, the audience discovered that Slimebucket and Goodbody were in



Elderly spinster and town gossip, Elmira Bat, (played by InfoTester Tomas Bok, in the nun costume) perched in her window overlooking the town square, provides our adventurers with a much needed clue.



InfoImp Steve Meretzky convinces Computer and Video Game magazine American Correspondent/Photographer Marshal Rosenthal to strip down and join the fun. Rosenthal said he would be back next year.

**"Halloween Hijinx brings new life to a dead holiday."**

—Vincent Canby, New York Times

**"The chainsaw finale raised the hair on my neck."**

—Rex Reed, New York Daily News

cahoots, and that Goodbody had kept the absent-minded pastor occupied while the Mayor stole the deed from the church. The deed was discovered locked in a chest buried in the cemetery. As the skit reached its climax, Goodbody was overpowered through the use of Abdul's voodoo doll, but Slimebucket arrived at that moment with a gun. Suddenly, Slimebucket was jumped by Chuggo, who was mad



"You" (played by InfoTester Max Buxton, dressed as Punch, of Punch and Judy fame) waits for instructions from the Parser (played by InfoImp Dave Lebling in the computer chip costume).



Later at the cast party, InfoImp "Hollywood" Dave Anderson discovers the chainsaw was not a prop, but an actual working model. His handywork took first-place in the pumpkin toss.

because the cemetery was the location of his secret clubhouse. But it wasn't over yet! Goodbody recovered and came after our heroes with an electric chainsaw, and the audience had one final puzzle to solve: PULL OUT THE PLUG!

Much later in the evening, the chainsaw was used for pumpkin carving.

## How much you wanna bet?

# Dinner in Paris or Tokyo: A history of InfoBets

Infocom might just be the Atlantic City of the software world. For some folks here, wagering is more than a diverting pastime; it's a way of life.

Perhaps the culprit is one-too-many trade shows in Las Vegas. Perhaps it's just a by-product of working in such an intense atmosphere of high-stakes high-tech entrepreneurship. But whatever the reason, whenever one Infocommie says "X," and another one says "Y," there's going to be a wager any minute. You can bet on it.

For example, take Info-Marketeer Mike Dornbrook, a cheery optimist, and InfoAuthor Brian Moriarty, an industrial-strength pessimist. When Brian's *Wishbringer* was released in June of 1985, Mike bet him that it would sell at least 45,000 copies by the end of that year. By December, *Wishbringer* sales were nearly double that figure, so Mike ended up enjoying a fine dinner at the swank Parker House restaurant at Brian's expense. Seeking revenge, Brian made the

same bet in 1986 for his second game, *Trinity*. As this issue was going to press, that bet was going right down to the wire ...

InfoAuthor Steve Meretzky made the first in a series of bets with Dornbrook after Mike predicted that people would send the postcards from their *Planetfall* package to Infocom as fan mail. So Steve bet him that less than 100 postcards would be received during the first year after *Planetfall's* release. When only 3 postcards arrived by September 1, 1984, Steve cheerfully ran up a sizable tab at The Ritz. Mike, by being off by a factor of 33, set an InfoBetting record that has never been equalled since.

Those same two were at it again a few months later. Mike bet that *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* would, some time before the end of 1985, hit the number-one spot on Softsel's Hot List, which was then the industry's bellwether bestseller list. When the game hit number one in early 1985 and stayed there for most of the year, Steve was obliged to pay off the terms of the wager: six hours of manual labor. Imagine all those

people who bought *Hitchhiker's*, unaware that they were indirectly helping Mike Dornbrook get a new patio!

Steve swore revenge, and bet Mike that "no way would *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* sell more than 87,500 copies" by the end of 1986. The stakes were raised: this one was for EIGHT hours of manual labor. At last report, Steve was rumored to be stocking up on shovels, pickaxes, and a good steady whip.

But the optimism of a Mike Dornbrook and the pessimism of a Brian Moriarty pale in comparison to that of Marc Blank, co-author of *Zork*, and Brian "Spike" Berkowitz, co-author of *Cornerstone*. In fact, it was Spike who coined such immortal InfoPhrases as "It'll never work" and "It's worse than that."

Marc's first bet with Spike was that Infocom's sales would top \$5 million in 1983, at a time when projections were for \$3 million. Sales passed \$6 million, doubling the forecast and quadrupling the 1982 figure. Spike paid off at The Ritz. The next year, Dornbrook took over for Marc and

Please turn to page 9

## California Academy of Sciences debuts 'Marathon of the Minds'

By Stu Galley

It's the middle of the night in a museum of science in a major North American city. The exhibits, drained of visitors, seem larger and darker than usual. A lone human guard strolls the empty corridors over and over, periodically joining the other guard at the museum entrance for a cup of coffee between rounds.

But wait! All is not quiet on this particular night. One exhibit hall is brightly lit, filled with teams of teenagers who are plotting strategies, trying experiments, tapping at keyboards, and occasionally breaking into cheers. Fortified with caffeinated soft drinks and vitamin-rich juice, these brave souls spend the whole night venturing through a fictional world, searching for a path to the end of a story, hoping to win a personal computer for their school.

It's true! I've seen it myself! It's Infocom's "Marathon of the Minds"! It's a sneak preview of an unreleased Infocom interactive fiction, with the author attending in person! It's a chance for high-school students to win fabulous prizes! And it may invade your city sooner than you think!

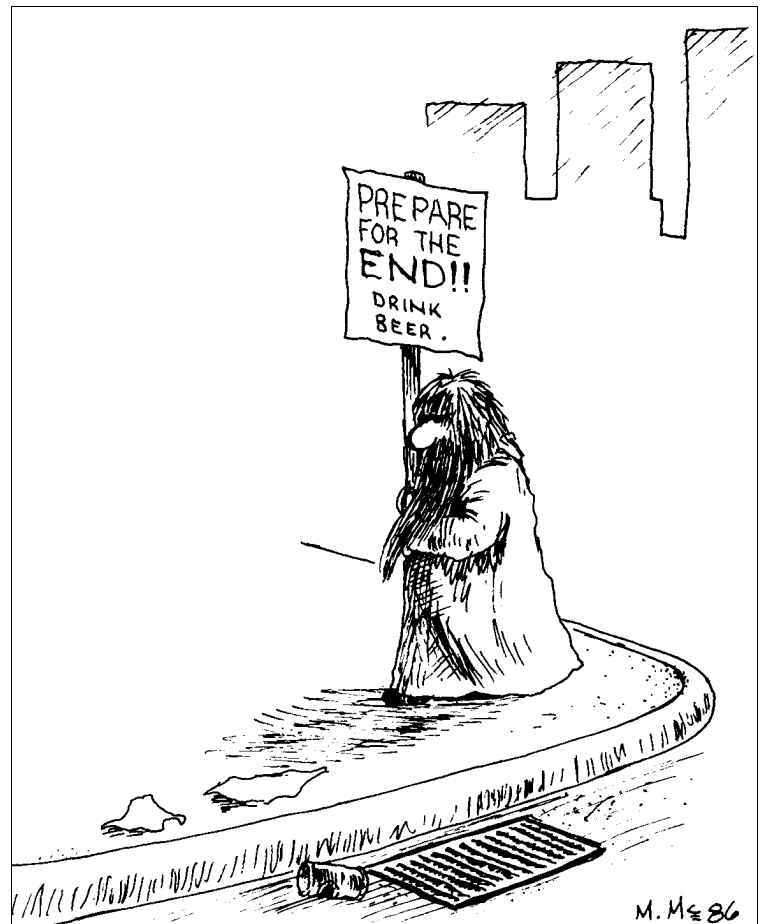
It came to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park on November 8-9. In the Hall of Africa, the stuffed animals, still frozen in their tableaux of jungle and grassland, saw 20 teams of three people each dive into *Hollywood Hijinx* under the friendly eye of its author, "Hollywood" Dave Anderson. At a discreet distance, journalists from local newspapers got their own chance. While the "Space Nerds"

team, composed of finalists in NASA's Journalist in Space program, tackled standard-level *Hijinx*, more laid-back players tried their hand at introductory-level *Moonmist*, which was just appearing for sale in stores.

After a few hours, the adult teams threw in the towel and called it a fun night. After more than 12 hours, the contest concluded with not one but TWO winning teams: Corey Gates, Mike Greengard, and Greg Templeton from Contra Costa Christian, and Dan Connolly, Eric Hedstrom, and Craig McLaughlin from Amador Valley High School. (Why were there two winners instead of one? It's a long story, but basically the teams finished so close together that both deserved to win.)

The next Marathon of the Minds hit the Pacific Science Center in Seattle Center on November 21-22. This time the local electronic media hopped on the bandwagon, with three TV stations doing stories, including two live remote reports within minutes of each other on the nightly news. Three radio stations joined in with reports, interviews, and a series of give-aways for listeners. Several newspapers also covered this event.

This time 26 teams from high schools all over Washington state tackled *Hijinx* in a large two-story hall that was empty after an exhibit from India moved out and before an exhibit of model railroads moved in. After 16 hours, one team finished: Brian Lane, Mark Montague, and Cougar Van Eaton from Eatonville High School. And the Infocom Marathon team headed back to Boston to prepare for future events.



Michael McKenzie

# Readers Poll #2

Hi, Paula the Pollster here! As you might recall, I conducted a Reader Poll in the Spring '86 issue of The Status Line. Your response to the survey was overwhelming. In fact, I was so overwhelmed that I suffered a nervous breakdown and spent the remainder of 1986 recovering. But now I'm better and I'm back and I've managed to compile some information from the mountains of surveys you all sent me. Here is a sampling of what I was able to conclude:

Of the people who responded to the survey, 82% were men and 18% were women. 46% of the respondents were age 20 or under and another 46% were between the ages of 20 and 41. The remaining 8% of the respondents were over the age of 40.

When asked what was your favorite game, *ZORK I* was the top choice. *HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY* came in second and *PLANETFALL* was third. This was really not so surprising because *Zork I* and *Hitchhiker's* are Infocom's biggest sellers and therefore are the two games with which most people are familiar.

But what about those games that haven't been played as widely? Maybe if you tried one of those you'd like it best. So I looked at what the experts (people who have played 15 or more games) thought were the best games. These Infocom aficionados also voted for *ZORK I* as their favorite. But they rated *PLANETFALL* as the number two game and *ENCHANTER*® as their third choice! If you haven't already, maybe you should check out these two titles and see what you've been missing.

What are the most important aspects of an Infocom game? In order of importance, here's what aspects you felt contributed most to your enjoyment of an Infocom game:

- 1. Attention to detail
- 2. Storyline
- 3. Descriptive prose
- 4. Humor
- 5. Character interaction
- 6. Puzzles
- 7. Exploration and mapping
- 8. Packaging

Your favorite categories of interactive fiction were FANTASY in first place, SCIENCE FICTION as the #2 favorite, followed by ADVENTURE in the third slot. This held true across all age groups. Although women preferred FANTASY, ADVENTURE, and COMEDY respectively, they represented too small a faction to influence the overall vote. Come on ladies! Get in there and let our voice be heard!

When asked what you thought was the most difficult Infocom game, you said *HITCHHIKER'S* was the toughest. *SPELLBREAKER*™ came in second and *ZORK II* was the third most difficult.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, *WISHBRINGER* was ranked the easiest. *ZORK I* was the second easiest and *THE WITNESS*® and *SEASTALKER* tied as the third. These votes, however, are somewhat misleading. Just as in the voting for the favorite Infocom game, some titles are named more often because they are the titles that more of you own. There might be some Infocom games that are easier or harder than the ones you've played, but you just don't know it. So once again I turned to the experts - the people who have played at least 15 different Infocom games. Here's what they said:

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Most difficult...      | Easiest...            |
| 1. <i>SPELLBREAKER</i> | 1. <i>WISHBRINGER</i> |
| 2. <i>SUSPENDED</i>    | 2. <i>SEASTALKER</i>  |
| 3. <i>HITCHHIKERS</i>  | 3. <i>THE WITNESS</i> |

Now, in Reader Poll #2, I would like to find out what you think about The Status Line itself. Please take a few moments to fill out the following form. And pay no heed to my state of mental health - I feel stronger than ever and am eager to arise to the poll-taking challenges of 1987! So let the piles upon piles of polls pour in!

### THE STATUS LINE READER POLL #2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Computer brand and model: \_\_\_\_\_

How many Infocom interactive fiction games do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

How many Infocom InvisiClues booklets do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own Infocom's database, *Cornerstone*™? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

On the average, how many people in addition to you read YOUR copy of The Status Line? (check one)

\_\_\_1 \_\_\_2 \_\_\_3 \_\_\_4 \_\_\_5 or more

Listed below are various aspects of a typical issue of The Status Line. By circling the appropriate number, please indicate how you feel about each aspect.

	Love it		Indifferent		Hate it
Articles about Infocom employees	1	2	3	4	5
New product information	1	2	3	4	5
Articles about the creation of Infocom games	1	2	3	4	5
Puzzles	1	2	3	4	5
Cartoons	1	2	3	4	5
Contests	1	2	3	4	5
Letters to the editor	1	2	3	4	5
Humor	1	2	3	4	5
Photo essays	1	2	3	4	5
Cornerstone articles	1	2	3	4	5
Hints to games	1	2	3	4	5
Technical support issues	1	2	3	4	5
Articles about fellow Infocom game players	1	2	3	4	5
Yak Facts	1	2	3	4	5

Have you ever tried to solve one of The Status Line (or NZT) puzzles? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

Have you ever sent in your Status Line puzzle solution to Infocom? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

If you are familiar with The Status Line Puzzles, please complete the three following sentences:

- The Status Line puzzles are usually...  
\_\_\_ too easy \_\_\_ too hard \_\_\_ just right.
- I prefer puzzles that require...  
\_\_\_ in depth... \_\_\_ general... \_\_\_ very little...  
knowledge of Infocom games.
- I like puzzles that involve... (check all that apply)  
\_\_\_ word problems (cryptogram, crossword puzzle, etc.)  
\_\_\_ math problems  
\_\_\_ a visual (maze, pictures, etc.)  
\_\_\_ trivia (science, sports, film, literature, etc.)

Please use the space below for suggestions for feature articles, regular columns, or any ideas that would improve The Status Line. Use additional pages if needed. Thanks!!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please clip out or photocopy this form and mail to:  
Infocom, Inc.  
Attn: Paula's Poll #2  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

# InfoDream Date: Meet Mrs. Right

After months of soul-wrenching deliberation, a winner has been selected in the InfoDream Date Contest. The judges have chosen Mary Ann Hallenborg of New York, New York.

When told of her good fortune Mary Ann began laughing and confessed she was married at which point we began laughing and said marital status meant nothing to Mike. Mary Ann was very excited and said she would visit Infocom in the near future. She only had one question, "Was I the only entry?"

Well Mary Ann, the samplings shown here should prove to you that you are not alone in your pursuit of an evening of interaction with Infocom's Director of Marketing, Mike Dornbrook. Here is Mary Ann's winning entry:

InfoDream Date,

I've been crazy with desire since laying eyes upon that big slice of beefcake, Mike Dornbrook, on page 12 of the summer edition of "The Status Line". What a photo -- arms posed seductively over his balding head; eyes beckoning "take me". And, he's got a job -- what a MAN!!!! Well, enough about Mikey.

I am a kinky goddess who fills her brass bikini quite nicely and the closest thing you'll find to Lane Mastodon this side of Mars. Not only will I kiss your kneecaps, but I also can afford an air-shuttle ticket to Boston (round-trip if necessary). I don't enjoy but will eat Polynesian food and know all the words to "Tiny Bubbles" (a polynesian classic made popular by Don Ho).

If you care about Mikey, you'll choose me. We'll dine and dance, yak it up at Club Zork or even Joe's Bar. We'll scratch and sniff. It will be a night to remember.

Yours very truly,

Mary Ann Hallenborg



Marian Apgar—*"I prefer to remain enigmatic!"*

## Marian promised psychological purge

Dear Jim,

I would like to have a date with Mike because I'm quite sure that he would find it both comfortingly familiar and psychologically purging in spending the day with someone who has the same name as his mother.

Sincerely,

Marian Apgar

Napa, CA

## "It's better than a poke in the eye"

Dear InfoDream Date Contest:

We would like to go on a date with Mikey because why not? As Bert in Mary Poppins asserts "It's better than a poke in the eye."

We are 2 slightly middle-aged housewives that are also computer nuts. We'd love to see where our Zorks and Witness got their start.

Sincerely,

Bobbe Anderson & Sue Arkuszewski

N. Easton, MA



Photo submitted by John Gerecht

## Well, we had to run the photo

Mikey,

Because of my name and because this is NOT a real photo of me, I bet I don't win the contest! But I bet that this does go up on someone's wall or bulletin board! Love The Status Line and think your company has a great corporate sense of humor!

Good luck on your date,

John Gerecht

Olympia, Washington

## If not Mikey, is anyone else available?

Attention: Jim Lange

I can see myself now, arriving at Infocom. The Vogon driver will open the door to our Mercury Lynx limo, and I'll sweep up the stairs in my new Norwegian blue fox (Spiegel's, \$995) and Addidas. Mikey will of course be resplendent in a tasteful club tie and Swatch watch.

In adoration,

Naomi B. Orbeck

Odessa, TX

## This cat wants to cut the small talk

Dear Mikey,

I've enclosed a photo, and I think it's a good likeness. Let's cut the small talk,

**Please turn to page 9**



# Religious fringe has own ideas about Infocom

By Steve Meretzky

Pat Robertson isn't President yet, but that hasn't stopped a lot of religious fringe types from crawling out of the woodwork lately. At least Infocom's woodwork, anyway.

For years, we've been receiving occasional letters from ladies and gentlemen around the country who insist that our Zork and Enchanter games

are evil because they deal with magic. The use of magic, even in fiction, apparently promotes all sorts of nasty things, such as devil worship or forgetting to send money to Jimmy Swaggart.

The recent wave of activity began a bit more than a year ago, with a letter from a woman in California who wanted a full refund for Zork I. "I had

no idea when I bought it that it was dealing with demonistic realms ... I was appalled that my ten year old son was being influenced in this way ... What kind of perversions are you trying to promote in youngsters?"

Shortly after that, a Cape Cod woman, a self-described "kamikaze for Jesus," discovered the Zork decision novel that her son had purchased

at a school book fair. She immediately recognized the book for what it was, a dangerous promoter of violence and demonic worship, and attempted to have it banned from the school library. (See "Zork Banned," The New Zork Times, Volume IV, Number 4, Fall 1985, page 1. Also see "Zork book ban to be debated by Dennis-Yarmouth School Committee," The Register, Yarmouth Port, Mass., issue of 5/16/85, page 1.)

You MUST have seen our advertisement for The Enchanter Trilogy (which depicts a wizard stirring a bubbling cauldron of purple smoke). Because it was so eye-catching that a whole slew of religious zealots discovered that Infocom was actually the Great Satan. For example, one letter carrier dropped us a note to say that he was refusing to deliver any copies of Boy's Life which ran this ad.

Another person sent in a copy of the ad with all the offending phrases circled: "magic" and "spells" and "powers" and "sorcerer" and "Circle of Enchanters"—not to mention "thrilling proportions," which must surely have spilled directly from the mouth of Lucifer himself. Written in the corner of the ad: "No thanks! The world has got enough evil in it! We don't need made up evil from FOOLS like you!" The person also wrote "Jesus (heart's) [sic] you!" across the Sorcerer package, obviously mistaking it for a car bumper.

Most recently comes this letter from Ocean Grove, New Jersey, hardly the heart of the Bible Belt: "I was looking through a mag. [sic] I saw your ad. I hope you are with plain tricks and not magic. Just what infocom [sic] means I dont [sic] know — I hope the U.S. gets back to the faith of our Fathers. [sic] Amen." Enclosed with this note were several pamphlets and articles, most annotated with scribbles like "Never take no 666 it is the number of the antichrist -- it leads to everlasting fire." In a new twist, Infocom's godless magic was linked to godless Communism: "Deals with the Communist are woe woe woe woe" was scrawled on the pamphlet entitled "The Communist Plan for the Conquest of the U.S.A."

That brings you completely up-to-date on our contacts with the hardcore religious right. But then again, can you trust any information coming from well-known Satanic cultists like us?

Finally, if anyone who thinks that Wishbringer erodes the moral fabric

Please turn to page 9

## A line of strange characters on my status line

**Question:** A line of strange characters -- arrows, brackets, and numbers -- appears on my status line when using the IBM PC-DOS/MS-DOS 2.0 diskette.

**Answer:** These are ASCII characters which appear if the DOS file, ANSI.SYS, hasn't been loaded. Go through the INSTALL program again. To load ANSI, be sure to reboot the system (by pressing CTL, ALT, and DEL simultaneously) after the installation is complete. If rebooting has no effect, be sure that the DOS file ANSI.SYS resides on your DOS disk (the root directory of hard disks). Also be sure that the CONFIG.SYS has the line which reads: device=ansi.sys. You may need to create a CONFIG.SYS file using the DOS EDLIN or COPY CON command to include a line: device=ansi.sys. (TI PRO and DEC users do not have the ANSI file on their DOS directories.)

**Question:** Why am I having problems loading Infocom games on my Commodore 128 with 1571 drives?

**Answer:** Some 1571 drives, when starting up, default to 1571 mode instead of 1541 mode. A one-line BASIC command found on page 5 of your 1571 Owner's Manual will put you in 1541 mode: OPEN 1,8,15,"U0>M0" (Note that 0 is zero, not "oh").

**Question:** Are there any Cornerstone user groups which I can join?

**Answer:** Infocom does not sponsor any user groups, but individuals may certainly form their own groups. In particular, Mr. Michael Forrest wants to get together with other Cornerstone users in the Rockville, Maryland, area, and Mr. James Kelly is interested in starting a group in the Oak Parks, Illinois, area. Anyone interested may contact Mr. Forrest at (301) 443-6650. Mr. Kelly can be reached at (312) 848-9650.

**Question:** How can I change the order of the attributes in my file in DEFINE mode?

**Answer:** Cornerstone keeps the attributes in the file in the order in which you typed them. You cannot change the order. What you CAN do is create a report format which shows the attributes in the order you wish. Remember, by saving your report format under the name VIEW, UPDATE, or SELECT, your format will appear as the default format when you enter that mode.

**Question:** I put some headings and totals on my report, but when I print the report, the headings and totals don't print. What's wrong?

**Answer:** If you formatted the headings and totals for the report by using REPORT FORMAT HEADER and REPORT FORMAT TOTAL, you must do a REPORT SHOW HEADER and REPORT SHOW TOTAL to get the headings and totals to appear on the screen. Whatever you see on the screen is what prints out when you enter PRINT mode.

**Question:** I entered my Zip Code attribute as a NUMBER, but now I want it to be a STRING so I can combine it with City and State for my mailing labels. How can I do it?

**Answer:** Create a new STRING attribute with an Initial Value of NUMBER\_TO\_STRING(Numeric Zip Code attribute name,0). Recompute this attribute to copy in all the Zip Codes. Delete the numeric Zip Code attribute. Take the Initial Value off the new STRING Zip Code attribute. And you're all set!

**Question:** How do I print wider than 80 columns?

**Answer:** We get this question quite a bit at Cornerstone Support, and the answer is really quite simple. All you need to do is to get the information you want to print on the screen and enter REPORT FORMAT RECORDS from VIEW mode. Use the MOVE FIELD com-

mand to move the fields beyond the 80th position. You'll want to start with the field furthest to the right to make room for the others.

**Question:** My database crashed and now I find out that my only backup contains the same error. What can I do?

**Answer:** We cannot stress enough the need for keeping a series of backups of your database, especially if you do a lot of data entry. Many people simply keep backing up onto the same disk. However, if you have a separate backup after each data entry session, then you can minimize your losses by restoring a backup that is at most a few days old. For example, we have a database that keeps track of all the Cornerstone registration cards we receive. These cards are entered twice per week and a BACKUP ALL FILES is done after each data entry session. A series of 5 backups are kept and the most recent backup is done on the oldest backup disk in the series.

**Also a reminder:** *Building Applications with Cornerstone* is available through Infocom at 1-800-262-6868 for \$14.95. Don't miss out!

Customer Support  
Q&A

# More about InfoBets

## Continued from page 5

wagered that sales would break \$15 million. This time it was Brian's turn to sup for free, as sales "only" increased by 70%.

Marc returned next year, betting Spike that sales would more than double. The stakes were raised: dinner at Lutece in New York City, including transportation. Pessimism won for the second year in a row; sales "only" went up 20%.

Then came the granddaddy of InfoBets. The bettors: Marc and Spike. The bet: whether Infocom stock would be publicly traded at a price of at least \$20 a share by June 30, 1987. The stakes: dinner in Paris, including transportation and lodging. When Activision purchased Infocom during 1986, the sale price worked out to significantly less than \$20 per share of Infocom stock. (We can't reveal the actual price, but this is the only bet which rivals Mike Dornbrook's error factor.) Spike has not yet collected; as he and Marc are both now living on the west coast, an amendment to dinner in Tokyo has been discussed.

More recently, InfoBetting has taken some rather silly turns, with bets being waged over such odd points as the lyrics of "Puff the Magic Dragon" and the number of calories in a banana. The most interesting bet of the last year, however, involved Spike, InfoPrez Joel Berez, and InfoSales Manager Gabby Accardi. The winner, the first person to lose 15 pounds, would get an all-expenses paid trip to Bermuda! The bet ended in indecisive confusion, but Spike and Joel took Gabby to Bermuda anyway. The trio has since been known as "The Bermuda Triangle."

# Religious fringe

## Continued from page 666

of America is actually reading this, we have a message for you: Keep those letters coming! They're really entertaining! Write to:

Infocom Inc.  
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Cambridge, MA 02140  
Attn: Frothing Nutcake Dept.

Advertise  
in this space

Contact  
Miss Love

617-492-6000

# Hey Datemeisters, looking for the rest of those letters

## Continued from page 7

o.k. Mikey? A cat's life is a short one, we only get one or two big thrills out of the whole deal. I think you could be one of those thrills.

Hopefully yours,  
Whiskers, the wonder cat  
Somewhere on Long Island

I don't.  
Sincerely,  
Rita Hao  
Knoxville, TN

Dear Mr. Lange:

I want a date with Mikey because, frankly, I think Infocom owes me one.

July 1984 marked both my husband's discovery of *Zork* and the end of our love life. Being awakened at three a. m. by a scraggle-faced, bleary-eyed man muttering something about a babel fish hardly makes me want

That's 50 words. I have to stop.

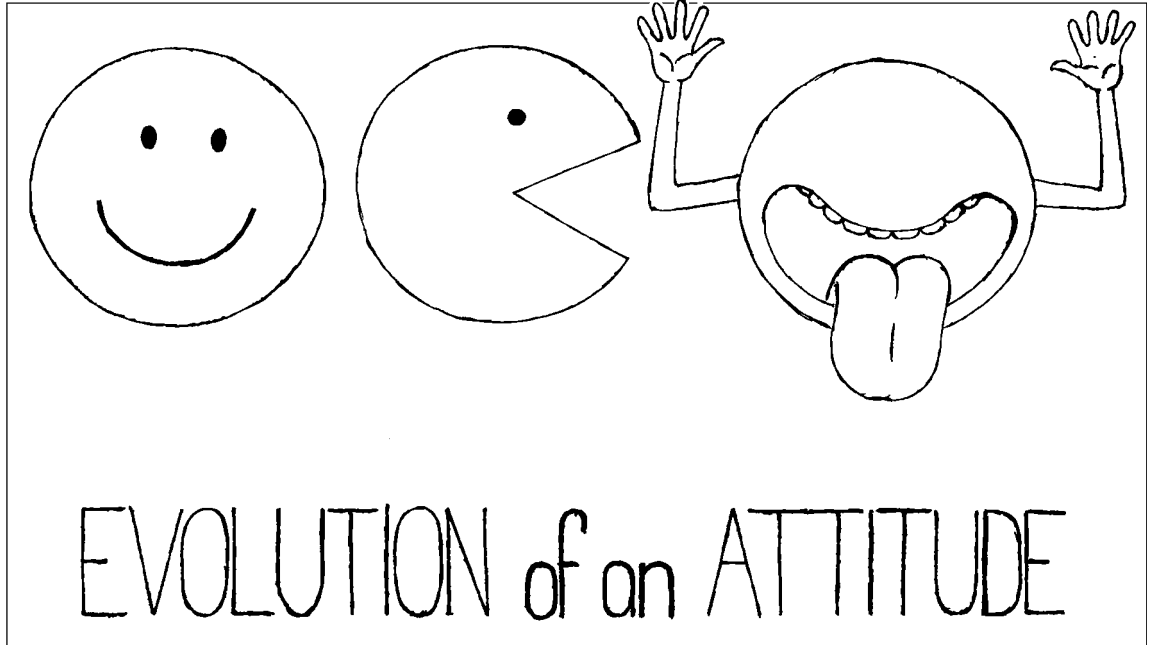
You know, Mikey is really kinda cute. Tell you what, I'll even pay for dinner, and we can leave my husband

back at the office playing *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*.

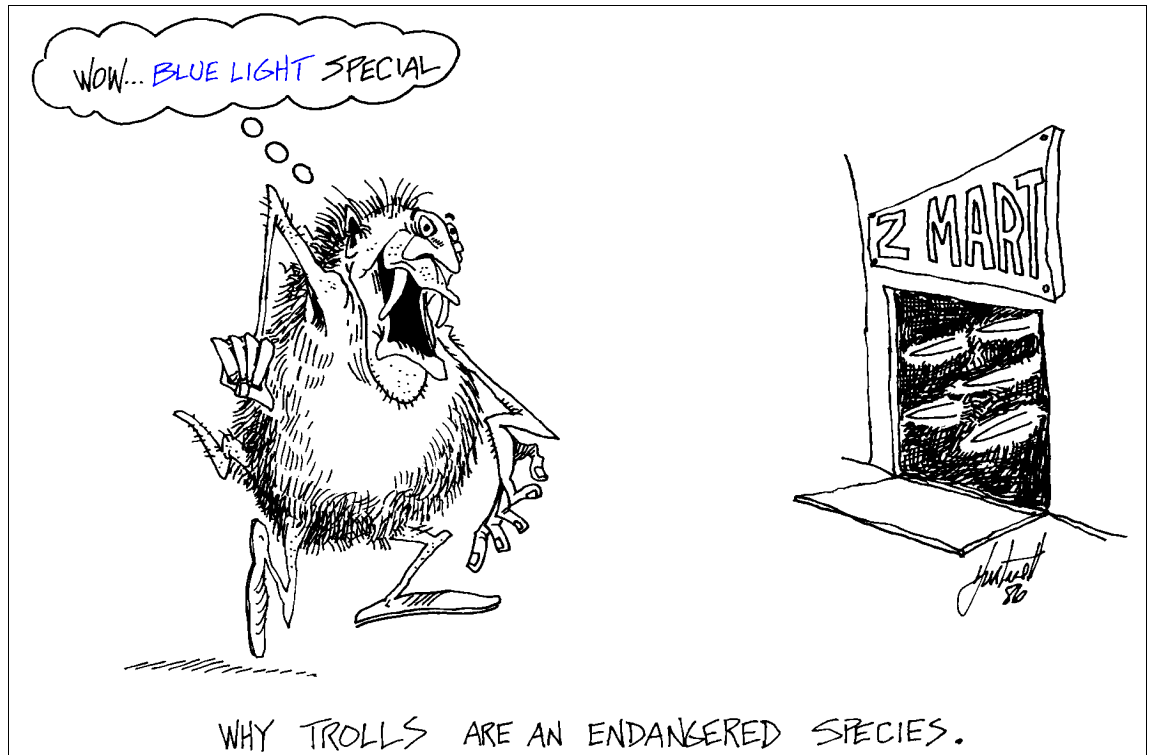
Yours truly,  
Jacqueline M. Kiffe  
Bryan, TX

# Do you have an idea for a contest?

Send it to us, attention Pat Sajak. If we use your idea, we'll send you a free game



D. Anthony Mayette



WHY TROLLS ARE AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.

E. Patrick Hartnett

# Match the quotes: Answers to puzzle number 11

In Puzzle #11, we asked you to match some quotes from Infocom stories with the characters who said them. Then you had to use that information to assign numbers to a series of dots. Finally, you had to connect the dots and use the resulting graphic to identify a game. To begin with, here are the answers to the matching section of the puzzle:

A. "This has been my desire e'er since this charlatan bent me to his service. I perform this deed with pleasure!" -- The Demon, *Zork II* (#40)

B. "One more step and the President of the Galaxy is fried meat!" -- Trillian, *Hitchhiker's Guide* (#35)

C. "You reporters have all the sensitivity of buffalo. Can't you leave me alone?" -- Michael Wellman, *Suspect*® (#36)

D. "Uh, no thanks. I prefer to stay near my beach. I don't see much yummy seaweed out that way." -- The Turtle, *Enchanter* (#34)

E. "We have a position for an Ensign Ninth Class in the toilet-scrubbing division, you know." -- Blather, *Planetfall* (#37)

F. "I dinna give a hoot about you or your questions! Now, begone!" -- Angus McNabb, *Deadline* (#38)

G. "She spake against the Church; she tried to poison the mind of a child too young to know the Truth." -- Mitchell Simm, *A Mind Forever Voyaging* (#39)

H. "Ragweed!" -- Ogre, *Spellbreaker* (not on number list)

I. "My, I wonder what this fine rope is doing here." -- The Thief, *Zork I* (#33)

J. "That's strange! Maybe you should use the Computestor." -- Tip Randall, *Seastalker* (#32)

K. "I've heard talk of a merger between Dad's company and another one, but I don't think it's happened yet." -- George Robner, *Deadline* (not on number list)

L. "When we began to approach your system, I got excited! A whole new culture to learn!" -- Gurthark-tun-Besnap, *Starcross* (#22)

M. "My court thanks you most humbly for rescuing the life of my daughter." -- Anatinus, *Wishbringer* (#21)

N. "Aha! A thief! Didn't I tell you that we needed more security!" -- Dimwit Flathead, *Zork III* (#31)

O. "You may not be aware of this, but I'm not working. I need to get repaired." -- Iris, *Suspended* (#30)

P. "I thought I should come here on the streetcar, in case you needed help." -- Sergeant Duffy, *The Witness* (#29)

Q. "Frobizz! Frobozzle! Frobnoid!" -- The Wizard of Frobozz, *Zork II* (#23)

R. "If anyone tries anything stupid, you won't live to regret it." -- Johnny Red, *Cutthroats*® (#24)

S. "Squawk! This tea is cold! Get me another cup. Squawk!" -- Pollibar, *Sorcerer* (#26)

T. "I'm gonna use it to find the legendary lost planet of Magrathea. Let's go sit in the sauna while I explain." -- Zaphod Beeblebrox, *Hitchhiker's Guide* (#25)

U. "I have a busy appointment schedule and little time to waste on trespassers, but for a small fee I'll show you the way out." -- The Volcano

Gnome, *Zork II* (#27)

V. "Is this...is this a squash court?" -- Floyd Planetfall (#28)

W. "Detested words! Even now it sticks my soul to hear them uttered." -- The VI'Hurg Warrior, *Hitchhiker's Guide* (not on number list)

X. "We could be in danger! The Snark may attack again any time!" -- Zoe Bly, *Seastalker* (#12)

Y. "He always promised me wealth here in America, but I've never seen it." -- Phong, *The Witness* (#13)

Z. "Guards! Throw this trespasser into the glass maze!" -- Duncanthrax, *Sorcerer* (#20)

AA. "This is surely a terrible waste of time, not to mention upsetting, having all these police marching around the house." -- Leslie Robner, *Deadline* (#19)

BB. "You should not even be here. You will disturb our rest." -- Belboz, *Spellbreaker* (#11)

CC. "My sister was a fool to send the likes of you on such a quest!" -- The Evil One, *Wishbringer* (#2)

DD. "Here come da clone, here come da clone." -- Poet, *Suspended* (#10)

EE. "A courtly gentleman, isn't he? That black cape makes him look almost cuddly." -- Alicia Barron, *Suspect* (#14)

FF. "If he's going to read us his poetry, just pray he softens us up with some cudgels first..." -- Ford Prefect, *Hitchhiker's Guide* (not on number list)

GG. "Mmm. Just like Mom used to make 'em." -- Cyclops, *Zork I* (#15)

HH. "If you won't turn it off, I will. I can't take the noise any more." -- The Navigational Computer, *Starcross* (#18)

II. "The last vat, I swear it, tasted as if grues had been bathing in it." -- Hoobly, *Spellbreaker* (#1)

JJ. "You're going to be a hero, you know. You'd probably get a call from the President congratulating you..." -- Abraham Perelman, *A Mind Forever Voyaging* (#3)

KK. "Take the victim to the tower. I shall prepare for the sacrifice!" -- Krill, *Enchanter* (#9)

LL. "We will need that boat after all." -- McGinty, *Cutthroats* (#16)

MM. "Do this. Pick up that. Unjam the opening mechanism of the other." -- Marvin, *Hitchhiker's Guide* (#17)

NN. "Can't you talk this copper into letting me loose?" -- Monica Linder, *The Witness* (#4)

OO. "I am not permitted to enter the prison cell." -- The Dungeon Master, *Zork III* (#5)

PP. "Daydreaming again, eh? I've been looking everywhere for you!" -- Corky Crisp, *Wishbringer* (#6)

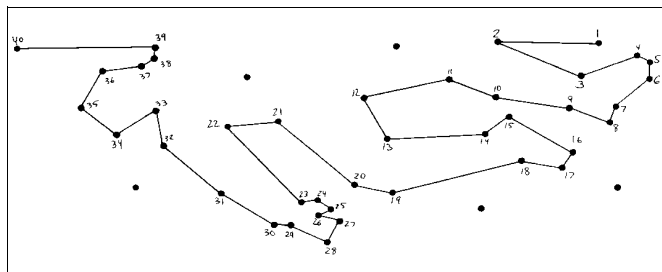
QQ. "Bleem miserable venchit! Bleem forever mestinglish asunder frapt." -- The Vogon Captain, *Hitchhiker's Guide* (#7)

RR. "Just because he's a boor doesn't make him guilty." -- The Detective, *Suspect* (#8)

SS. "I have waited three ages for someone to say those words..." -- The Sailor, *Zork III* (not on number list)

## Did yours look like this?

Plugging the numbers from the quote answers into the field of dots and connecting them in numerical order creates the following graphic:



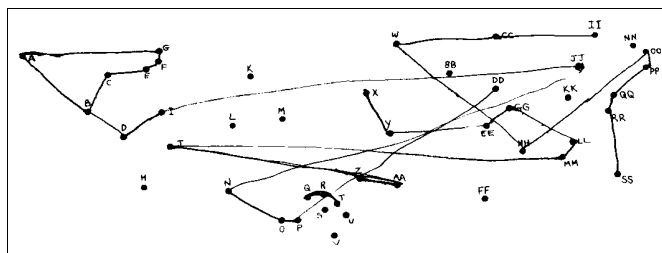
*Deadline logo from Deadline.*

This graphic is the outline of the dead body in the *Deadline* logo, and therefore the correct answer to the puzzle is "Deadline."

There were 343 entries, of which 319 were correct (93%). The closest thing to a common wrong answer was *The Witness* (5 entries). Several entrants misread the directions and supplied answers like "Mr. Robner's body." One person gave a non-Infocom game as their answer, and one particularly deranged entrant guessed "Puzzle Number Eleven" as the answer.

## Or did yours look like this?

Speaking of particularly deranged, the puzzle editors felt that the readers of *The Status Line* would be considerably amused by Infocom Marketing Director Mike Dornbrook's attempt at Puzzle #11:



"Wiring diagram for the Improbability Drive--Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy." Submitted by Infocom Marketing Director Mike Dornbrook.

(See next page for winners.)



# Puzzle winners: Sorry Mark, Bob, Bill, Buzz, Steve, Joe...

Puzzle Number 11 generated an unusually high number of comments, most of them claiming that the puzzle was too easy. While the percentage of entries that were correct was very high, that wasn't unexpected, since it's the sort of puzzle where you usually know whether you're right or not. Furthermore, the total number of entries wasn't unusually high; less than the number for either of the two previous puzzles, and far less than the record number of entries. (This record was 697 for Puzzle Number Two, and our mailing list was considerably smaller back then!) Oh, well, puzzling is still far from being an exact science.

Now, from the can-you-believe-what-people-will-go-through-to-win-a-stupid-T-shirt department comes the amazing story of 21 brothers living together in Wellesley, MA. Not only did all 21 of these brothers enter Puzzle #11, but all 21 have virtually

indistinguishable handwriting! To top it off, all 21 had a different answer to Puzzle #11, encompassing every single Infocom title! Mark, Bob, Bill, Buzz, Steve, Joe, John, Louis, Ed, Richard, Sam, Mike, Fred, Pat, Neal, Brian, Greg, Chris, Matt, Josh, and Tom -- that must be one heck of a household!

Since there were more than 25 correct entries, we had to have a drawing to determine the winners. To uphold the legendary Solomon-like integrity of The Status Line Puzzle, the drawing was presided over by the prestigious firm of Flathead, Flathead, Flathead, and Beeblebrox. The lucky winners:

1. Dennis L. Perkins, APO, NY
2. Travis Wilson, San Diego, CA
3. Bonnie Kachen, Boardman, OH
4. Robert Cook, Snohomish, WA
5. Eric Przybylko, Colonia, NJ
6. Jill Bayeux, Clifton, NJ

7. Hollie Vizier, Galliano, LA
8. Allen Salisbury, Lorton, VA
9. Lee Williamson, Claremont, CA
10. Charles Guarino, Troy, NY
11. Jaime Gathercole, Miami, FL
12. Craig Hemenway, Gray, ME
13. Stan Piechocinski, Mississauga, Ontario
14. Doug Dorst, Chappaqua, NY
15. Bob Hurley, Arnold, MO
16. James Fujimoto, Los Angeles, CA

17. Judie Eatough, Provo, UT
18. Ken Crosby, Jackson, MI
19. Bonnie Packert, Escondido, CA
20. Matthew LaMotte, Birmingham, MI
21. Chet LaBarr, Brooksville, FL
22. Wayne Preisman, Herndon, VA
23. David English, Mundelein, IL
24. Bruce Stedwell, Lake Havasu City, AZ
25. John Dickson, Jacksonville, FL

Congratulations to all the winners of The Status Line Puzzle.

## No Null Set, Max cracks at party

Max Yaks was hospitalized the day after the company holiday party suffering from an acute hangover. Doctors were optimistic about recovery. Upon awakening from his coma Max recounted a dream in

which Steve Meretzky walked into the men's room, lifted the cover to the toilet tank and removed a bottle of rum. The last thing Max remembers was Meretzky opening the bottle and asking "Wanna shot?"

## Hey Puzzlemeisters, looking for the rest of puzzle number 13, well, here it is

### Continued from page 12

A huge puff of orange smoke envelopes you.

The hellhound pounces, tearing out huge chunks of your flesh with its massive teeth. Slowly, it dawns on the hellhound that you are not dying. It stops attacking and begins circling you warily.

### > \_\_\_\_\_ THE HELLHOUND

The hellhound snarls, "Me eat you!"

### > \_\_\_\_\_ THE VIAL

You discover some potion inside the vial.

The hellhound continues to circle around you, probably wondering why you are still alive.

### >DRINK THE \_\_\_\_\_ POTION

The potion tasted like lime jelly, and sent vibrations through your muscles.

The hellhound decides that thinking hurts too much, and leaps upon you. Displaying amazing speed and agility, you wrestle the hellhound to the sand, clamping its powerful jaws safely shut. In the process, you seem to have levelled the sand castle again. Belboz raises his hands as though to hurl some fireballs, but instead he merely counts to ten, takes some deep breaths, and incants another restoration spell on the sand castle.

> \_\_\_\_\_

You have a few superficial scratches, apparently incurred during your recent struggle.

The hellhound squirms in your grip.

You can feel yourself tiring.

### >CAST THE \_\_\_\_\_ SPELL ON THE HELLHOUND

The monster closes its eyes and curls up. Its lips slowly curl into a smile, and it begins drooling profusely. You're rather glad you don't know what it's dreaming about.

> \_\_\_\_\_

The sea breeze increases to hurricane levels, and a huge wave batters the beach, washing the whale back to sea and completely destroying the sand castle. Belboz shouts some words you'd never have even guessed he knew, and hurls a powerful spell in your direction...

### Grotto

You are in a tiny cave of rock, about ten miles underground. There are no exits.

On the ground is a small white cube.

### > \_\_\_\_\_ THE CUBE

Your surroundings suddenly shift.

### Slime Room

You are in a small location whose

walls are dripping with sticky goo. There are openings to the east, west, and south.

There is a box here.

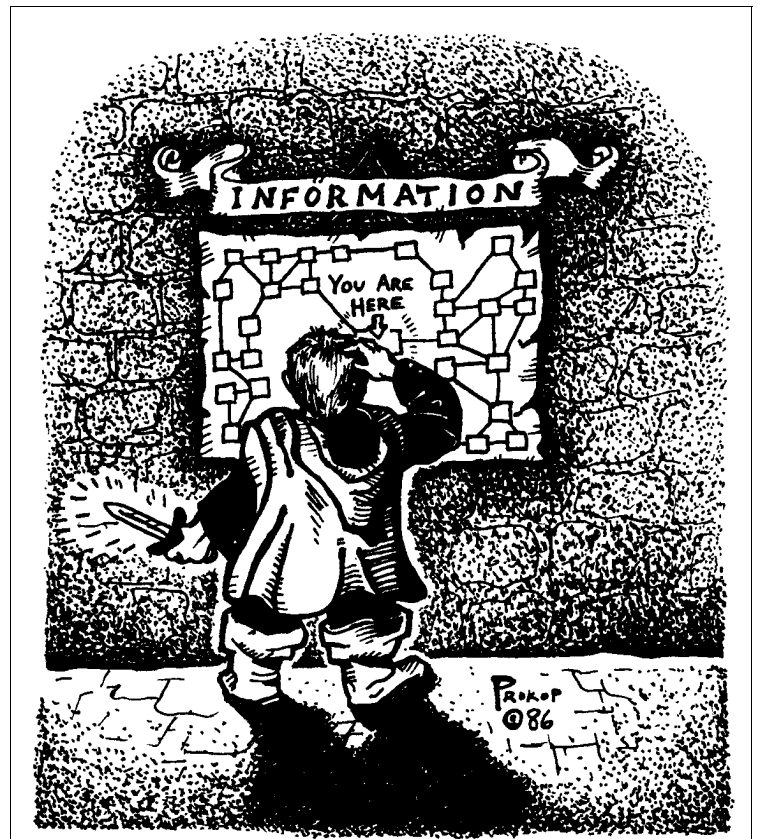
### > \_\_\_\_\_ THE BOX

You can't. It seems to be protected

by a spell.

### > \_\_\_\_\_ THE BOX

The box springs open, revealing a copy of the bestselling book, "47 Tips for Building a Better Sand Castle" by Belboz the Necromancer.



Robert Prokop

**THE STATUS LINE PUZZLE**

**#13**

Puzzle #13 is based on *The Enchanter Trilogy* (*Enchanter*, *Sorcerer*, and *Spell-breaker*). The trilogy was recently released as a set for the first time (see the previous issue of *The Status Line*). To solve this puzzle, you will need to be familiar with the games as well as the game packages.

Notice that in the transcript below, there is a blank space in every input. The first step toward solving this puzzle is to figure out the correct word for each blank. By correct, we mean the word which would cause each input to produce the response that follows that input.

The second step is to look at the first letter of every word you've filled into a blank. These first letters will form a sentence with the final instructions to the puzzle.

For example, let's say the first input was >THROW THE \_\_\_\_\_ AT THE CLOWN and the response was "It bounces off the clown's rubbery nose and lands on your own head, cracking open. I guess the yolk's on you!" The word that belongs in the blank space is "EGG" and the first letter of the sentence you're trying to form would be "E."

The sun is getting low in the sky, and you decide that you've gotten enough of a tan. Shaking the sand off your wizardly robe, you slip it over your bathing suit and scramble down off the dune.

**On The Beach**

The blue waters and white sands make Accardi beach the finest in the province. The beach stretches north and south, and a path leads west, away from the ocean. A dune is low enough to climb.

There is a sand crab here.

>CAST THE \_\_\_\_\_ SPELL ON THE CRAB

The crab looks at you for a moment, and you look at it. "Hello," it says.

>\_\_\_\_\_ BELBOZ

You suddenly find yourself in a different part of the beach.

**Southern End of Beach**

The beach curves north from here, and a creaky old wharf, overgrown with seaweed, juts west into the ocean.

Belboz is here, building a sand castle. It looks like a scale model of Entharion's castle, Largoneth, in loving detail.

Another fellow member of the Circle of Enchanters is lying on a blanket. Her scowling face is completely hidden by sun cream. There is a beached whale here.

>CAST THE \_\_\_\_\_ SPELL ON THE SEAWEED

The seaweed dies instantly, and the ocean breezes blow it away.

>CAST \_\_\_\_\_ ON BELBOZ

Moving in a blur, Belboz completes twenty-eight turrets, the main tower, and the entire north wing of the castle.

>CAST \_\_\_\_\_ ON THE OCEAN

Unsurprisingly, this has no effect on such a huge body of water. The ocean breeze now seems a bit cooler. Then again, it might just be your imagination.

>\_\_\_\_\_, TELL ME ABOUT THE WHALE

The old enchanter looks disapprovingly at the mammal. "I think it's a friend of Belboz. I certainly hope it doesn't follow us back to the Guild Hall. In fact, I think I'll cast a boredom spell on it." She begins to recite the spell.

>\_\_\_\_\_ HER

Just as she is about to complete the enchantment, your fellow guild member crumples to the sand, snoring loudly.

>\_\_\_\_\_ THE WHALE

A blow hole forms on the back of your neck and your body bloats to tremendous proportions. As you grow, you accidentally crush the

sand castle beneath your belly. Belboz utters an oath, casts a spell to return you to your normal form, and uses some simple magic to restore the ruined castle.

You suddenly notice a hellhound slinking down the beach.

>CAST \_\_\_\_\_ ON ME

**Please turn to page 11**

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-Shirt size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

**Puzzle Rules:**

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a on a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by May 1, 1987.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners.
6. Winners who are residents of the Andromeda Galaxy must pay shipping costs to receive their prize.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

**Prize:**

The New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt, or perhaps The Status Line Puzzle Winner T-Shirt if some of the sizes begin to run out and we have to reprint the T-shirts with our new name.

**Send to:**

Infocom, Inc.  
The Status Line Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

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After 7/31/87 call 1-800-262-6868 for the latest pricing and availability.

System	Cornerstone <sup>2</sup>	Zork I	Zork II	Zork III	Zork Trilogy	Enchanter	Sorcerer	Spellbreaker	Enchanter Trilogy	Trinity	Witness	Suspect	Ballyhoo	Moonmist	Planetfall
Apple II Series (48K, 16-sector)		IZ1-AP1 \$39.95	IZ2-AP1 \$44.95	IZ3-AP1 \$44.95	IT1-AP1 \$69.95	IZ4-AP1 \$29.95	IZ5-AP1 \$44.95	IZ6-AP1 \$49.95	IT2-AP1 \$79.95	IZ7-AP1 \$39.95	IM2-AP1 \$39.95	IM3-AP1 \$39.95	IM4-AP1 \$39.95	IM5-AP1 \$39.95	IS3-AP1 \$39.95
Apple Macintosh		IZ1-AP2 \$39.95	IZ2-AP2 \$44.95	IZ3-AP2 \$44.95	IT1-AP2 \$69.95	IZ4-AP2 \$29.95	IZ5-AP2 \$44.95	IZ6-AP2 \$49.95	IT2-AP2 \$79.95	IZ7-AP2* \$39.95	IM2-AP2 \$39.95	IM3-AP2 \$39.95	IM4-AP2 \$39.95	IM5-AP2 \$39.95	IS3-AP2 \$39.95
Apricot		IZ1-AC1 \$14.95				IZ4-AC1 \$14.95									IS3-AC1 \$14.95
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)		IZ1-AT1 \$34.95	IZ2-AT1 \$39.95	IZ3-AT1 \$39.95	IT1-AT1 \$59.95	IZ4-AT1 \$24.95	IZ5-AT1 \$39.95	IZ6-AT1 \$44.95	IT2-AT1 \$69.95		IM2-AT1 \$34.95	IM3-AT1 \$34.95	IM4-AT1 \$34.95	IM5-AT1 \$34.95	IS3-AT1 \$34.95
Atari ST Series		IZ1-AT2 \$39.95	IZ2-AT2 \$44.95	IZ3-AT2 \$44.95	IT1-AT2 \$69.95	IZ4-AT2 \$29.95	IZ5-AT2 \$44.95	IZ6-AT2 \$49.95	IT2-AT2 \$79.95	IZ7-AT2 \$39.95	IM2-AT2 \$39.95	IM3-AT2 \$39.95	IM4-AT2 \$39.95	IM5-AT2 \$39.95	IS3-AT2 \$39.95
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Commodore 128		IZ1-CO1 \$34.95	IZ2-CO1 \$39.95	IZ3-CO1 \$39.95	IT1-CO1 \$59.95	IZ4-CO1 \$24.95	IZ5-CO1 \$39.95	IZ6-CO1 \$44.95	IT2-CO1 \$69.95	IZ7-CO5 \$34.95	IM2-CO1 \$34.95	IM3-CO1 \$34.95	IM4-CO1 \$34.95	IM5-CO1 \$34.95	IS3-CO1 \$34.95
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\* NOTE: This game requires 512K.

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3 NOTE: Requires graphics card; Composite monitor recommended; Not available for PCjr.

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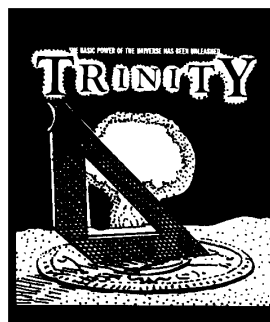
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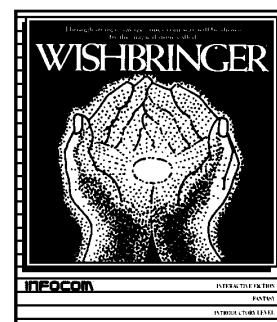
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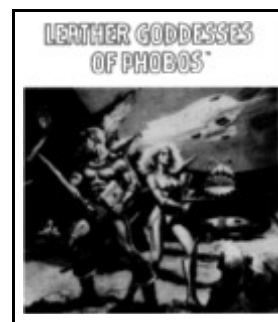
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## The Lurking Horror and Stationfall

### Do panic! A demon on the loose at GUE Tech

It's a dark and stormy night. The wind howls around the monolithic buildings of G.U.E. Tech, sending the heavy snow into blinding swirls. In the Computer Center, you huddle over your terminal, struggling to complete an assignment.

Suddenly, strange images appear on the screen, hinting at a ghastly fate close at hand. Darkness overcomes you as you're drawn into a fiendish world full of unimaginable horrors. When you struggle awake (for surely it must be a dream), you find yourself clutching an object last seen in your nightmare...

Thus begins *The Lurking Horror*<sup>™</sup>, Infocom's first interactive horror story.

#### G.U.E. Tech

In *The Lurking Horror*, you're a student at George Underwood Edwards Institute of Technology. Although you're dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, once you "awake" from your nightmare, you've got more on your mind than your term paper. As though pulled by a powerful force within the object you've so mysteriously acquired, you leave your computer and venture into the dark nether regions of the Institute.

Now you're treading on dangerous ground indeed. For beneath the Institute lies a warren of dimly-lit corridors and storage rooms, some so ancient that they contain only rotting piles of unidentifiable junk. There are miles of decrepit tunnels, crumbling into hazardous piles of timber and brick. But negotiating the terrain is the least of your problems.

Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so horrifying that they will feed your nightmares for weeks. A ghastly presence is at work here, committing unspeakably loathsome acts. Can you stop it... before it stops you?

#### H. P. Lovecraft and Stephen King

*The Lurking Horror* follows in the tradition of H. P. Lovecraft and Stephen King, as author Dave Lebling turns an everyday world into a frightening web of uncertainty. The numerous puzzles will challenge both first-time and experienced players, and Lebling's chilling descriptions will leave you with images you'll never forget.

As with all Infocom games, the package includes items to introduce you to your role as the main character in the story. There's a copy of "G.U.E. at a Glance," chock-full of photos, tips, and inside info on George Underwood Edwards Institute of Technology. And to make sure you can get your delicious dining hall lunch, there's also a genuine G.U.E. Tech student I.D. card.

Please turn to page 4



*That Lurking Horror package really makes eye contact, doesn't it? And the cover of Stationfall features you in your new job as a member of the Stellar Patrol's Paperwork Task Force.*

### Marathons from coast to coast

The motley crew of seven settled down at the two-foot-high table for the big game. Six-foot-four Steve Meretzky was a bit uncomfortable on the 18-inch seats—but it did not matter. The stakes were high. "I'll raise you two paper clips and five rubber bands," bluffed Tim Anderson. Another Monday night of poker at Infocom? No, it was the first "international" Marathon of the Minds, at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto.

As Infocom and Science Centre staff battled it out with a deck of cards, 15 teams, representing high schools from the entire Province of Ontario raced to be the first to solve *Stationfall*. The overnight event on March 6-7 was the eighth such grueling competition. In our last issue, Stu Galley reported on

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### Floyd returns in boffoid sequel to Planetfall

When the results came in from the recent Status Line poll, high on the list of favorite Infocom games was Steve Meretzky's *Planetfall*<sup>®</sup>. We weren't surprised. *Planetfall* has long been popular with interactive fiction fans. And Floyd, your mischievous robot companion in the game, easily takes the prize for best-loved Infocom character.

*Planetfall* is also a favorite of reviewers and critics. Meretzky won a Best Computer Software Designer award for *Planetfall* in 1983, and additional awards include Best Adventure Game of 1983 from InfoWorld. One reviewer mirrored the enthusiasm of many when he said, "*Planetfall* is just about worth the purchase of a computer."

#### Requests for Planetfall sequel

Steve Meretzky has received countless requests for a sequel to *Planetfall*. Now he has made everyone happy by writing *Stationfall*<sup>™</sup>. All the elements which made *Planetfall* one of Infocom's best-loved games are here in *Stationfall*: the ever-efficient Stellar Patrol, the comical characters and situations, the amazing tools and machines of the future, the ingenious puzzles, and the endearing little robot Floyd. Although *Planetfall* fans will delight in meeting old friends, it's not necessary to have played one game to enjoy the other.

At the start of *Stationfall*, you're still enlisted in the Stellar Patrol. Your heroics in saving the planet Resida in *Planetfall* earned you a promotion to Lieutenant First Class, but that was five long years ago, and since then nothing has changed at all. You've merely gone from a scrubworker to a paper-pusher.

And today promises to be just as boring as every other day. You're being sent to a nearby space station to pick up a supply of Request for Stellar Patrol Issue Regulation Black Form Binders Request Form Forms.

But wait... all is not lost. By a happy twist of fate, your companion for the journey turns out to be your old pal Floyd! That's right, it's the very same mischievous little robot who was your playful buddy in *Planetfall*.

#### Floyd and his paddleball

With Floyd and his paddleball set in tow, you're soon on your way to the space station. As you can see from your packet of blueprints, the station has nine levels of offices and living areas, not to mention a huge plant for printing Stellar Patrol forms. Not included on the official blueprints, but fully visible from the spacetruck, is a space village, a seedy cluster of tubes, bubbles, and discarded rockets which has grown up around the space station in

Please turn to page 4



## TSL Editor Susan Goldman resigns

"I must go, perhaps into oblivion, but to those with whom I've worked and sweated these past months I say move forward without regret. Keep the proud name of The Status Line as a beacon to all those who seek to interact. And remember, automatic hyphenation is just around the corner." With those words, Susan Goldman, editor-in-chief of TSL for the past year, bid a fond farewell to her former staff and other assorted cronies at an intimate affair held in the TSL press room.

Reacting quickly to the situation, Mike Dornbrook, chief theorist of the TSL, announced, in a terse communique, that "I am in control here." He went on to say that Goldman's time at the TSL had been marked by great strides in both hard news and publishing technology.

Although Ms. Goldman's departure was a shock to many of her co-workers, it was not totally unforeseen. "The heat she took on that religion article was tremendous," commented long time staffer Gayle "Red Pencils" Syska. "I think it was the questions about ANSI that did her in," added Customer Support columnist Curtis Montague.

However, there were persistent rumors that it was her introduction of desktop publishing technologies into the TSL that had played an important part in her departure. "The old boys just couldn't take it," commented an anonymous pressman.

Acting editor-in-chief, Dornbrook, has announced that a search committee would soon be formed to find a replacement for Goldman. "I will not let this publication be compromised for one moment. The standards that Ms. Goldman created will be upheld," he said.

### The Status Line

**Mike Dornbrook**  
Chief Theorist

**Coming Soon**  
Editor-in-Chief

#### Writers:

Stu Galley, Elizabeth Langosy,  
Steve Meretzky, Curtis Montague,  
Jon Palace and Gayle Syska

*For the desktop publishing cartel:*  
Hollywood Dave Anderson, Tom Veldran

*Production Watchdog*  
Angela Crews

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125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

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Portal is a trademark of Activision Inc.

## >Read the letters

Gentlemen:

You guys are just incredible! Can't find a name for the stuff you design, huh? You've been working at it for years, and you still don't know what it's called, eh? My god, if you would just take the effort to remove your heads from the dark hole they are stuck in, you would be able to see what this particular forest is composed of.

"Interactive fiction." Great zot, the hypertensive poobah who came up with that overinflated term ought to have some of the air let out of his ego. You see, it's quite simple to spot if you just put your minds to it. For no matter what you name them, *Planetfall* or *Suspended*, *Infidel* or *Trinity*, they are one and all, all of the same class and species...by all that's holy, they are ZORKS!!!

Really, folks, it's your term. Belongs to you, and you thought it up, now use it. Why is every tissue a Kleenex, and every photocopier a Xerox, and every cola a Coke? Because these great leading-edge products set the standards and defined the territory for everybody else. Now didn't *Zork* do that for your line of products? Of course it did. Use it proudly, and thank me for reminding you.

Now, as to the verb required to "do" a zork, we must also keep in mind that zorks are a type of game that people play. Your comparison of zorks to movies was inapt in that movies are a generic medium, consisting of many types of movies. We can just as easily say "Let's play a game" as "Let's go to a movie." The response to either statement is usually, "OK, but which one?" "How about a zork?" will become the classical equivalent of suggesting "Some horror flick with lots of blood and guts."

But if you must insist upon honoring the playing of a zork with a special verb, we have to get beyond the Valspeak mindlessness of "doing a zork." I am inclined to suggest that in the main we "suffer" zorks as innocent and guileless players of these masterpieces. But the phrase "to suffer a zork" lacks absolutely tons of cachet. Redmond Simonsen is supposed to have likened the zorks to "nothing more than refrigerator lights." (Never mind who Redmond Simonsen is.) But to suggest that we "light up a zork" smacks too much of Barry Manilow, not to mention the sensation that the exercise may very well be linked in some way to cancer. No, I think that in keeping with the nature of the beast (not grues, zorks) as being of the puzzle variety of games, we should think in terms of "solving a zork," for that is what we all struggle mightily to do. "To solve a zork" is the challenge Infocom repeatedly offers to the world of the unwise, and we are forever romanced into believing that this or that particular babel fish is indeed within our grasp.

As a last note, now that we have resolved the issue of the naming, what are we to use for the collective noun? As in "a pride of lions." "And here we have a \_\_\_\_\_ of zorks." Sorry, I am not touching that one with a ten-foot swizzle stick.

Bemusedly,  
Stephen Hall, Arlington, VA

Dear Editor

(or Susan or whatever):

The enclosed list of games was found in my clothes dryer. Since I know for a fact that my socks enter the 8th dimension via the dryer, I assume that my counterpart at the other end keeps his important papers in his dryer, thus indirectly proving the existence of Infocom as a metaphysical constant.

Feel free to publish this in The Status Line, but please don't make any real games out of these without paying me lots and lots of real U.S. currency.

Infocom Games from the 8th Dimension:

*A Mime Forever Voyaging:* You're a mime on the Love Boat and you've got to convince people that you really are drowning in the pool and not just practicing your craft. Try to get saved without talking.

*Bali Hai:* You're stuck in an elevator and the record is skipping at Muzak. You've got to escape the elevator before you're driven mad. Make your way through the elevator shaft (good place for a grue) and break into the Muzak transmitting station before the city riots.

*Deadbeat:* You've borrowed money from every loan shark in town and you wouldn't have enough legs for them all to break if you were a millipede. You're broke, in the center of the city, a shark lurks at every corner, and you haven't had lunch. Get out of town by sunset.

*Hitchhikers, Guy and Melody:* You pick up two hitchhikers who offer you half of their million-dollar inheritance if you get them to Poughkeepsie by nightfall (don't forget you're travelling west to east). Fix the car, beat the cops, and find Guy and Melody when they skip out on you in Poughkeepsie.

*In Fidel:* Castro has swallowed a cigar! You are shrunk into a teeny weeny little Cuban scientist and must find your way through Fidel's digestive system (yuck!) to put out the fire. You must traverse the lower GI to win. Comes with a copy of Gray's Anatomy.

*Beanstalker:* You've traded the cows for beans...

*Suspenders:* It's the Prom and your pants won't stay up. Search through the darkened high school for a pair of suspenders and get back to your date before the band plays "Crimson and Clover."

*Trinity:* It's a kooky madcap scavenger hunt through the Vatican. Get the Pope's hat to win, but watch out for those lightning bolts!

*The Witless:* You're marooned on the isle of Crete. That's right, you're surrounded by Cretins! The natives insist on helping you whenever you try to escape and, of course, they always screw things up. Fool the Cretins into not helping you and get off the island.

*Snark I:* Finish Snark I and you get to buy Snark II.

*Snark II:* Finish Snark II and you get to buy Snark III.

*Snark III:* Finish Snark III and we've sold you three Snarks! We win!

COMING SOON...

Letter Carriers of Phobos

Alan M. Taren, Anytown, USA

## InfoNews Roundup

### Just like a baby

Infocom has often been noted for its packaging. On March 26 we received a very special tribute. Our peers in the Software Publishing Association voted *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* the Best Software Package of 1986. One thousand people crammed the auditorium at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, California, where Douglas Adams was master of ceremonies of the Second Annual Excellence in Software Awards. Infocom game player Robin Williams made a surprise appearance on stage to do a hysterical specially prepared routine related to software. Our thanks to the package design team of Carl Genatossio, Elizabeth Langosy, Gayle Syska, and Steve Meretzky. Special thanks to Angela Crews for her untiring nine-month effort to find just the right Scratch 'N Sniffs.

### Bureaucracy star of TV, radio and print

After Douglas left the spotlight in Berkeley he began a nine day publicity tour de force on behalf of *Bureaucracy*. You may have seen him on either the Joan Rivers or David Brenner shows or on one of the local TV talk shows. Douglas and *Bureaucracy* were also highlighted on numerous radio shows and in many newspaper articles all around the country. Many magazine articles are due over the next few months.

### Michael Jackson, move over

Two Infocom products were recently rewarded with Platinum Certification by the Software Publishers Association. Infocom's classic *Zork I* and classic-to-be *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* were named to this great honor. What makes this especially gratifying is the fact that these are the first and to this point only entertainment software products to be so named. The Platinum Certification is given to a product that has sold over 250,000 units in the United States.

## Ahem... in our last issue we forgot to mention

In our last issue we had some exciting news which we completely forgot about. (Those of you who carefully examined our price grid may have noticed.) We dropped the prices on three titles! Because we think it is the best introduction to interactive fiction,

we've taken *Wishbringer* down to the unbeatable price of \$14.95. If you've never played it, don't miss it. Also, to keep interest high we've reduced the price of *Enchanter* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by \$10 to \$29.95 or \$24.95 (depending on system).

## The Witness and Fooblitzky added to the \$14.95 classic titles list

Late last year we tried an experiment. We dropped the direct mail price to \$14.95 on five classic titles which we were no longer distributing to retail stores: *Infidel*<sup>®</sup>, *Seastalker*<sup>®</sup>, *Deadline*<sup>®</sup>, *Starcross*<sup>®</sup>, and *Suspended*<sup>®</sup>. The results far exceeded our expectations. (So much so that we ran out of some of them for awhile—we promise to be better prepared in the future.) We are happy to be able to extend the

savings to *The Witness*<sup>®</sup>, Stu Galley's hard-boiled 1930's mystery, and *Fooblitzky*<sup>™</sup>, our unique multi-player, strategy board game. Players rove the streets of the City of Fooblitzky trying to deduce and obtain the four items necessary to win the game.

We have plenty of inventory on all titles except *Fooblitzky*—which is first-come-first-serve.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

## Now you can have them all

All the puzzles, all the humor, all the cartoons, all the news, all the history, all the inside glimpses...

All 18 *New Zork Times/Status Lines* ever published for just \$10

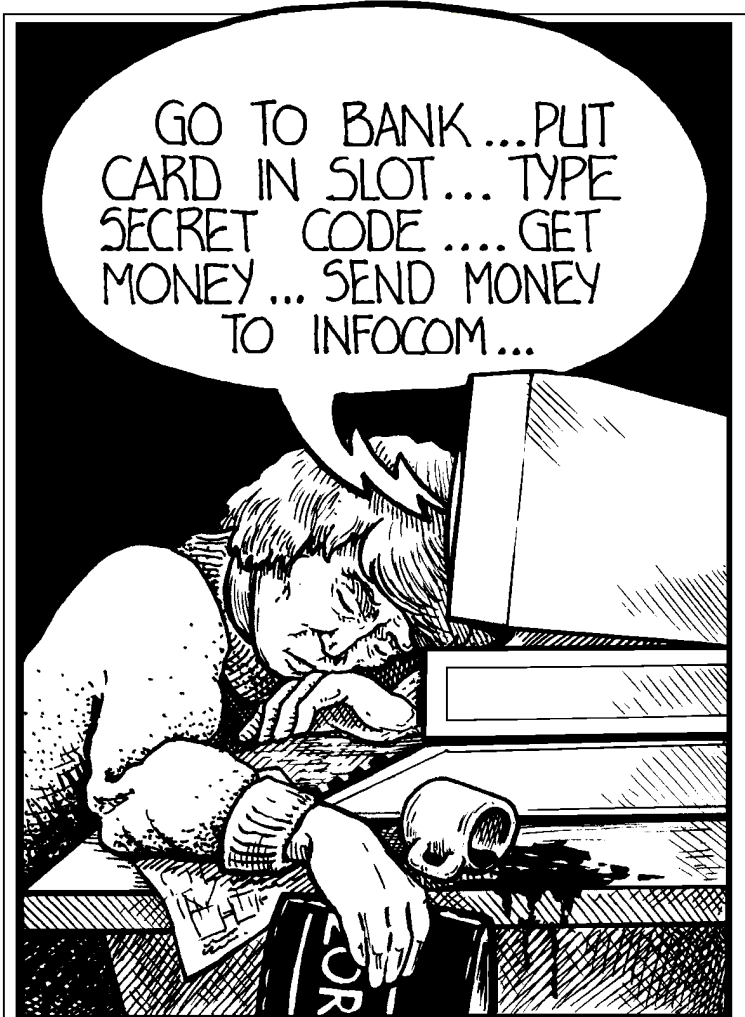
Includes the incredibly rare first 4 issues produced by the Zork Users Group! (See Mike's mother!)

Hurry. Don't miss out on this incredible offer.

Send your request (including your name & address along with a check made payable to Infocom, Inc.) to:

Infocom  
N.Z.T. Offer  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

Checks only please.



Never, never, NEVER fall asleep while playing an Infocom game.

Bradley Schenck

## Win the Imps' picnic basket

Ever say to yourself "How can I get one of those cool, square, blue picnic baskets like the game writers at Infocom use? You know—the one that the *Cornerstone* database used to be packaged in."? Well, here is your chance. Just fill out the coupon below, and your name will be entered in the "Win the Imps' Picnic Basket" Contest. No puzzles to solve. Everybody has the same chance of winning.

The prize: An old Cornerstone package filled with dozens of paper plates, napkins, plastic forks, knives and spoons. It's an exact replica of the picnic basket used by the Implementors for their weekly lunches. Three second prizes: Marathon of the Minds T-Shirts (size Medium only) left over from the marathon in Pittsburgh.

### Win the Imps' Picnic Basket Contest

Please circle or smear jelly on the number that indicates your willingness to purchase the product. One: Would not purchase. Three: Maybe. Five: Gotta have it.

Great Underground Empire Tech T-Shirts emblazoned with the never before seen GUE Tech school emblem. 1 2 3 4 5

Same as above only in a sweat shirt. 1 2 3 4 5

A beer mug with the same never before seen GUE Tech school emblem. 1 2 3 4 5

An Infocom T-Shirt. Not game specific. 1 2 3 4 5

An Infocom Calendar with significant dates from various games. 1 2 3 4 5

A Zork T-Shirt. 1 2 3 4 5

A (baseball style) cap with the Infocom logo on it. 1 2 3 4 5

A (baseball style) cap with the Zork logo on it. 1 2 3 4 5

Bumper stickers. 1 2 3 4 5

A poster of \_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Rules: All entries must be submitted on this form or on a photocopy of this form or on sheep skin. Entries must be received by July 31, 1987. Limit one entry per person. All entries must be mailed separately. Void where prohibited by law already. Send to: Infocom, Win the Imps Picnic Basket Contest, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

## Reader's Poll #3

The response to Paula's Poll #2 was so great, we couldn't compile it in time. However, we did think of some more questions, so here goes...

After the tremendous success of our first collaboration, *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (see InfoNews Roundup on page 3), we have seriously considered other collaborations. We'd like your input.

Please write in order of preference your top three choices of writers with whom Infocom should try to collaborate:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Another possible future route are games based on historical, legendary, or fictional characters (e.g. Napoleon, or King Arthur). (Please, no characters from the last 50 years.)

# The Lurking Horror

Continued from page 1

*The Lurking Horror* is Dave Lebling's eighth work of interactive fiction. His previous works have won high acclaim and numerous awards. In addition to authoring *Spellbreaker*<sup>™</sup>, *Suspect*<sup>®</sup>, and *Starcross*<sup>®</sup>, he co-wrote *Zork*<sup>®</sup> I, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, and *Enchanter*<sup>®</sup>.

To introduce you to another popular work by Dave Lebling, each *Lurking Horror* package contains a coupon which you can mail in to get *Suspect* for only \$14.95. This is a special price only available through this offer. (In *Suspect*, Lebling places

you in a different sort of fiendish situation. You're a newspaper reporter who attends a high-society Halloween masquerade ball and ends up being accused of murder.)

Scheduled for release in late June, *The Lurking Horror* will be available for a wide variety of personal computers, including Apple II series and Macintosh, Atari XL/XE and ST series, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga, and IBM PC series and MS-DOS compatibles. The suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

## Floyd returns with his paddleball in Stationfall

Continued from page 1

blatant violation of all Stellar Patrol regulations.

From the moment you arrive at the station, you can tell something is wrong. For one thing, no one's there to meet you. In fact, the whole place is deserted, save for an ostrich, an Arcturian balloon creature, and a brainy robot named Plato. As you explore the station and the derelict village, you find even more to worry you.

A creepy alien ship carrying only an empty pedestal rests in a docking bay. The commander's log describes the mysterious breakdown of machinery, demonstrated by a roving hull-welder that nearly does you in. And finally even Floyd begins acting oddly...

To prepare you for your important

position on the Paperwork Task Force of the Stellar Patrol, the *Stationfall* package includes your three assignment forms, a set of blueprints for a Gamma-Delta-Gamma Class deep space station, and an official sew-on Stellar Patrol patch. The package also contains a coupon which you can send in to get *Planetfall* for only \$14.95. This is an exclusive offer only available with the coupon.

*Stationfall* will be available in late June for a wide variety of personal computers, including Apple II series and Macintosh, Atari XL/XE and ST series, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga, and IBM PC series and MS-DOS compatibles. The suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

Once again, in order of preference, what are your top three choices for historical/fictional characters:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other Suggestions:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: **Infocom, Inc.**

**Paula's Poll #3**  
**125 CambridgePark Drive**  
**Cambridge, MA 02140**

## >Tell me about Customer Support

**Question:** How do I order one of your challenging games, or that fabulous *Cornerstone*™ database? How can I check the status of an order I already placed with you guys? What are all these different phone numbers and addresses which I keep finding on my packaging?

**Answer:** To order any of our products or check on order status, call our fulfillment house at 1-800-262-6868, or write them at the following address:

Infocom, Inc. P.O. Box 478, Cresskill, NJ 07626

For technical assistance with our products, call the entertainment hotline at 1-617-576-3190 for help with any of the games, or the *Cornerstone* hotline at 1-617-576-1851. You can write to us at:

Infocom, Inc. 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140

(If you have old packaging, please note that we've moved from the old Wheeler St. address.) Remember, we don't have a hotline for hints on the games. But you can order *InvisiClues*™ hintbooks by calling the 800 ordering number above.

**Question:** I lost a piece of my game. How can I get a replacement?

**Answer:** You need to send proof of purchase, along with a check or money order for \$2.00 per piece, \$5.00 per manual, to the Cambridge address above. Proof of purchase consists of one of the following: the master game disk, an internal game element, or a sales receipt with the name of the game on it. However, we do not sell the entire package separately from the disk.

**Question:** Can I buy *Cornerstone* manuals separately?

**Answer:** No. Since the price of *Cornerstone* is so low, we feel that it's now affordable to own several copies for your home or office. And since we've removed the copy protection from our disks, the only protection we have against software piracy is by keeping the software 'bundled'.

**Question:** I think my disk is defective. What should I do?

**Answer:** Send the disk only, NOT the entire package, along with a note explaining the problem to our Cambridge office. If you are within our 90-day warranty period, include your sales receipt and we'll replace the disk free of charge if it is defective. If you are beyond the warranty period, we require a \$5.00 fee per game for processing and handling.

**Question:** I had a Commodore, and recently traded it in for an IBM PC. I really don't want to go out and buy another set of the same Infocom games for my new PC. Is there any way of exchanging my old Commodore disks for IBM disks?

**Answer:** We will exchange game disks for a different computer version for \$10.00 per disk. Just send your disks and check or money order to our Cambridge address. Please note that we will only exchange disks for different computer versions of the same game. We do not exchange for a different game.

**Question:** What's the safest way to mail in my diskette?

**Answer:** You can purchase a floppy-disk mailer in a stationery store, or simply put some stiff pieces of cardboard around the disk and put it in a manila envelope. We suggest writing 'DO NOT BEND' and 'MAGNETIC MEDIA ENCLOSED — DO NOT X-RAY' on the front of the envelope. You can send it through regular first-class mail for about \$0.40 postage.



The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Zork,

June 1987

Congratulations on reaching your tenth birthday! I knew that one day you would join the ranks of this long-lived group of computer games. Everyone here in Washington is happy for you.

Why, it seems like only a decade ago that you were born, small and riddled with bugs, inside a mainframe at a great technological university. Your proud parents -- Bruce, Dave, Marc, and Tim -- watched you struggle to your feet, parse a command, then execute it! And not just once, but over and over! Soon you had visitors from all around this great land of ours, from sea to shining sea. Little did anyone know, at that point in time, how you would grow and multiply and become commercial, how you would visit over a million computers, how you would become so famous that, well, even I would write you a letter. Here's hoping that you and I both will see another decade pass.

Congratulations,

*The President*

The President

## Mapping Made Easy!

If you're tired of drawing-and redrawing, and redrawing-funny little boxes, you need

*The QuestBusters Cartography Kit:*

50 sheets of mapping paper designed specifically for adventurers. You'll never get boxed in again!

With each kit you get the manual "Adventures in Mapping," which details the system, plus 10 record sheets for keeping track of objects, characters and other discoveries. The kit is \$6—or \$5 if you subscribe to *QuestBusters* when you order.

## Clues & Walkthrus!

If you haven't heard about *QuestBusters*, then you must have been lost in a maze for a long time (or sniffed too much bat guano in that last cave). In its third year, *QB* offers news, clues and reviews of new adventures, plus coded solutions to two recent ones in each issue. So when you order your *Cartography Kit* be sure to enclose \$16 for the next 12 monthly issues of *QuestBusters*. (Int'l, \$28 in US funds).

QuestBusters™

Dept. I

POB 525, Southeastern PA 19399-9968



# Today's Entries

AMERICA'S CRAB AUTHORITY

AMERICA'S CRAB AUTHORITY



## Weekly Racing Form

Friday, April 3, 1987

## Today's

### Drink'em Downs

CambridgePark, Cambridge, MA  
Track Record

- 1
- 20Mar87
- 20Mar87
- 20Mar87
- 20Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87



- 2
- 20Mar87
- 20Mar87
- 20Mar87
- 20Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87
- 27Mar87

The third running of the Drink'em Downs Race. Heavily favored to win by the 1, trained and owned by SPCA.

### Drink'em Downs

### Lurking Grue

Steve Stahlec

\$ 25 1 lifetime 16 0

Race # \_\_\_\_\_ Crab # \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Win \_\_\_\_\_ Place  
 Amount .10 .20 .50 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Parimutuel Wagering Ticket



## Drink'em

The Sport of Kings has come to Infocom. That's right—Hermit Crab Racing.

It all started when Hollywood Dave Anderson returned from the Marathon of the Minds in Los Angeles yakking about a lounge he had been to which featured hermit crab racing. Several employees kicked the idea around for a few days and decided to attend an auction. (Well, actually Hollywood went to the pet store.) The crabs were auctioned off to employees at a weekly Friday party where a race track, Drink'em Downs, had been constructed.

Next it was time for the racing to begin. But not before high tech was brought to bear on the age-old sport of hermit crab racing. Tester Gary Brennan set up Lotus 1-2-3 to handle parimutuel wagering. Resident hacker Tim Anderson constructed a database using Cornerstone to keep track of the crabs' statistics. And Hollywood put those stats in the Weekly Racing Form with the help of PageMaker.

The first and second races zipped by as racing fans wagered and eyed the paddock area. Then it came time for the third race, the feature race of the day—The Drink'em Downs Cup. Track announcer Hollywood presented the crabs to the fans. "Crab number one, Dr. Funk of Tahiti, owned and trained by the Five-0 Syndicate (Max Buxton, Tom Veldran, Tomas Bok and Hollywood). Crab number two, Itchy, owned and trained by Debbie Reilly and Gabrielle Accardi of Kwell Acres. Number three, Lurking Grue, owned and trained by Steve Meretzky of Stevo Stables. Number four, Ima, owned and trained by Linda Carlough and the MSPCA (She wasn't too hot on this racing idea). Crab five, Hold the Celery, owned and trained by Diane'n'Harry (Diane Murlock and Harry Regan). And number six, Form Over Substance, owned and trained by Dornbrook of Green Acres," stated the announcer.

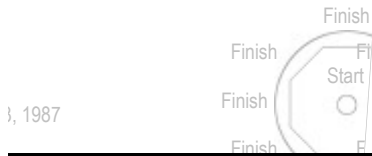
Guest  
Announcer  
Contest

Guest  
Announcer

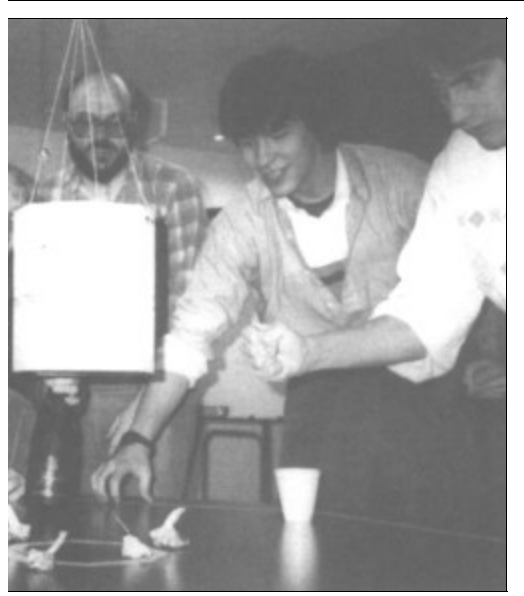
## Parimutuel

20Mar87	4DrkmD	Buffed	.0025 1:00	NonStk	Green Acres
27Mar87	2DrkmD	Glossy	.0025 1:42	NonStk	Green Acres

# Entries



1987



etime 16 0 0 4

shell

# Downs

The crabs were placed in the starting gate as the announcer's voice called, "One minute to post time!" The wagering was furious as fans hurried to get their bets down on their favorite crab. A minute passed, the wagering ceased as the starting gate was raised. First out of the gate was Hold the Celery, followed by Form Over Substance and Ima. Dr. Funk, Itchy and Lurking Grue hadn't come out of their shells yet. Down along the back stretch it was Hold the Celery out in front by a claw, followed closely by Form Over Substance. Ima was now making a move along the inside rail. Back at the starting gate the others had not moved. Now they were coming out of the turn and Ima had taken the lead. Battling down the stretch it was Ima followed by Form Over Substance and Hold the Celery. At the wire it was Ima in 1:16, followed by Form Over Substance and Hold the Celery. The others never left the gate. Linda was awarded the Drink'em Downs Cup. Ima paid \$.24 to win on a \$.10 bet.

Since that first day there have been many races at Drink'em Downs. Yes, even some races where all the crabs leave the starting gate.

Photos: (left) An unidentified hand helps Form Over Substance pose for the camera. (upper left) Diane and Harry pose with the Drink'em Downs Cup which they won recently. (above) A publicity shot from the Drink'em Downs Public Relations Office featuring stampeding crabs and excited racing fans. (upper right) Yet another shot from the public relations office featuring a near photo finish. (right) Track announcer Hollywood with track timer Stu Galley.

Photos by Tomas Bok and Hollywood

# Wagering Ticket

Form Over Substance  
Hold the Celery, I...

# AMERICA'S CRAB AUTHORITY

## Weekly Racing Form

Friday, April 3, 1987

...k the third running of the Cup Race. Heavily favored to winner Ima, trained and owned and the MSPCA.

...Turf Club is looking for empty As crabs grow they move into Friday Party Turf Club spokes-



# Drink'em Downs

## Quinella - - Circle combination

1&2 1&3 1&4 1&5 1&6 2&3 2&4 2&5  
2&6 3&4 3&5 3&6 4&5 4&6 5&6  
Amount .10 .20 .50 Other \$

# Parimuel Wagering Ticket

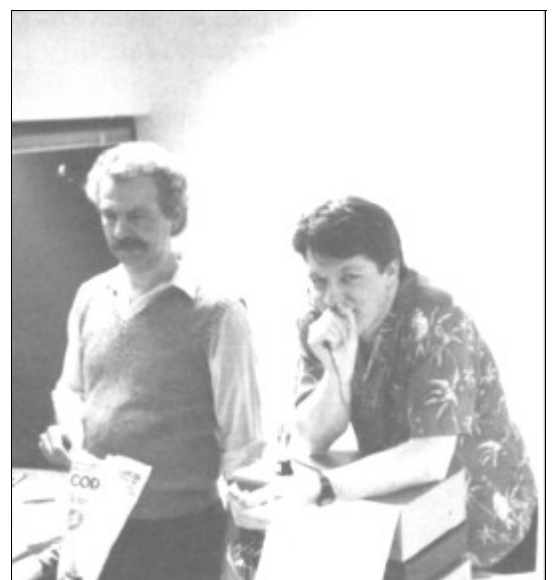
20Mar87 1DrkmD Buled  
20Mar87 2DrkmD Buffed  
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27Mar87

### 5

20Mar87  
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20Mar87  
20Mar87  
27Mar87  
27Mar87  
27Mar87  
27Mar87

### 6

20Mar87 1D  
20Mar87 2D  
20Mar87 3Dr  
20Mar87 4DrkmD  
27Mar87 2DrkmD  
27Mar87 2DrkmD  
27Mar87 3DrkmD



20Mar87	1D	Buled	.0025	1:00	NonStk	Green Acres	Ima, Itchy
20Mar87	2D	Buffed	.0025	1:42	NonStk	Green Acres	Form Over Substance
20Mar87	3Dr		.0025	0:58	D'DCup	Green Acres	Hold the Celery, Itch
20Mar87	4DrkmD		.0020	1:00	NonStk	Green Acres	Itchv. Hold the Celery

# Entr

7

16 3 2  
es Ima, H  
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es Ima, H  
es Form C  
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s Itchy, H  
s Itchy, In  
s Itchy, F

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Ever since you arrived at G.U.E. Tech, you've heard stories about the old campus basements and storage rooms, some so ancient that they contain only rotting piles of unidentifiable junk. You've heard about the decrepit underground tunnels, crumbling into hazardous piles of timber and concrete. And you've vowed never to set foot in any of them.

But tonight, with a blizzard raging outside and the classrooms empty of all but a few diehard hackers, something draws you into the dark nether regions of the institute. Perhaps it's the howling storm, making the outdoors as threatening as anything you could imagine within. Or perhaps it's the terrifying dream you had, hinting at horrific mysteries below and leaving you with a strange object that seems to lead

you inexorably downward.

Suddenly, you're in a world that rivals your most hideous visions, a realm of horror lying in wait beneath the calm corridors and study halls. Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so ghastly that they will feed your nightmares for weeks.

Infocom's interactive fiction gives you the leading role in a vividly-descriptive story. In *The Lurking Horror*, author Dave Lebling turns an everyday world into a frightening web of uncertainty. You'll face ingenious puzzles, unique characters, and chilling twists of plot as you explore the nightmarish depths of the institute and confront the horror lurking below.



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Infocom interactive fiction is available for most personal computers.

*The Lurking Horror* is a trademark of Infocom, Inc.



# Portal: Is this Interactive Fiction?

Emerging from the mists of the "Vaporware" list in *PC Letter*, *Portal*™ has at last been published by Activision. Having thus established that *Portal* is not vapor, its creator, novelist Rob Swigart, has some further observations about what *Portal* is and is not.

"It's not a game," says Swigart. Nor, apparently, is it interactive fiction as we have come to know it. "There is no parsing language in *Portal*," he adds, "no puzzles to solve."

Then what is it?

"It's a computer novel."

And that is...?

"A novel that can be told only through the medium of the computer."

If you could expand on that...

Swigart says "The narrative, the story, is organized like a database of real information, by category—historical data, facts about characters, and so on. In this way, a person's experience of *Portal* imitates the style of traditional kinds of computer use. You uncover the story section by section, layer by layer, learning how parts of the story relate to other parts."

So this is interactive fiction then?

"Neither game nor adventure," writes Bob Lindstrom in *A+ Magazine*, "*Portal* represents an entirely new form of entertainment software."

To its author, *Portal* is the dawn of

the new in more ways than one. Says Swigart, "*Portal* is a simulation of future computers—AI systems that will be able to process, filter, and organize information for the user as an individual with very particular, even quirky, needs."

"A computer that can forecast the future could also tell plausible stories about the future—predictions cast in narrative form. Futurists of today, who realized the importance of intuition some time ago, already engage in this kind of 'narrative' forecasting."

Get the feeling that Swigart has hung around with futurists? He has. In a career that has included a stint as a textbook salesman, a Ph.D. in comparative literature, and a wide range of poetry, essays, stories, computer game scripts and nine novels, he has also written futurist scenarios for the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park, California. His latest novel, *Vector* (Bluejay Books, 1986), has been described as a "biotechnology thriller."

The plot of *Portal* is reminiscent of many science fiction stories. The year is 2106. You—the user, or player, or reader, whatever—are a lone space traveler who has returned from a 100-year star voyage to an Earth devoid of human life. Plants thrive, birds sing, animals burrow but no people. You find a single operating system (yours,

of course) connected to 12 Worldnet "dataspaces."

As you begin to dip into the data available, you soon make contact with a biological computer named Homer. The sole survivor of a vanished civilization, Homer is your link to the past and your conduit to the future.

Together, you and Homer set out to solve the mystery of an unpeopled world. Your knowledge grows organically. As you uncover bits of data in one category, you're granted access to more and more data in other, related categories. And Homer is enabled to "remember" more and more, as his understanding of the past grows with yours.

You learn, for example, about 21st-century geopolitical affairs; about the fantastic technology of the era, including neurophage weapons, agrobotics, nightvision thermography, and Mozart, the great aesthetic application of neural induction; and about *Portal*, the phenomenon at the heart of the mystery.

*Portal* is on two or three disks, depending on what kind of computer you have (Activision has released *Portal* for Amiga, Apple II and Macintosh, Commodore, and MS-DOS machines). Also in the box is a "Prologue," written in "your" voice; a map of the Intercorp Council World

Administrative Regions, dated 14 August 2077; and a copy of Worldnet Emergency Operating Instructions, dated 11 November 2088. These are your tools for exploring the world of *Portal*, and solving its mystery.

As you say to yourself in the "Prologue," "I will read the instructions, and then I will try to find out what has happened to the world, where the people have gone, and if I must remain alone for the rest of my life...I have been too long without other people."

In developing *Portal*, Swigart envisioned a future, like any science fiction writer. Here's the twist, though. Placing us at the end of the Earth's future, *Portal* challenges us to reconstruct that future as the past, so that a new future may begin to unfold.

It also challenges our notions of what "interactivity" in computer fiction can be, and of what "narrative" is, in any kind of medium, and how it works. As futuristic as *Portal* is, it borrows much from traditional storytelling. Readers will not find themselves stumped by difficult puzzles, rather the story unfolds itself with some gentle coaxing. Can interactive storytelling work without challenging puzzles or conflict resolution? *Portal* proves it can.

## SPECIAL OFFER

Buy *Portal, The Computer Novel*  
And Get a \$5 Rebate

### Redemption Instructions

- Buy *Portal* at your local software store.
- Collect the following items:  
The tab from the *Portal* box with the part number BD-133-02.  
The original sales receipt with the product price circles.  
This coupon, with all information fully completed.
- Mail *all* of these items to:  
**Portal Rebate Offer**  
P.O. Box 729  
San Francisco, CA 94101-0729
- Must be postmarked on or before September 30, 1987.
- Allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your rebate.

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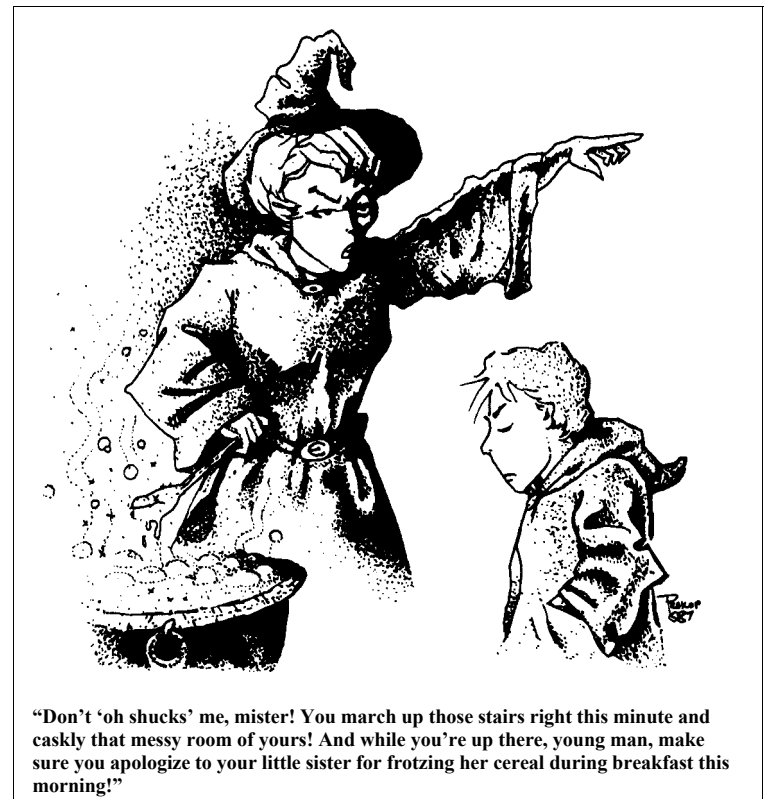
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"Don't 'oh shucks' me, mister! You march up those stairs right this minute and caskly that messy room of yours! And while you're up there, young man, make sure you apologize to your little sister for frotzing her cereal during breakfast this morning!"

Bob Prokop

# Marathon

## Continued from page 1

Marathons 3 and 4, held in San Francisco and Seattle. Since then, Infocom has managed to survive Marathons in Pittsburgh, San Diego, Los Angeles and of course, Toronto. Below are the highlights.

February 6 and 7 found the Marathon of the Minds in Pittsburgh. David Shim, Bill Burky, and Darren Lasko of North Allegheny High School solved *Hollywood Hijinx™* in a record time of 10 hours—previous Hijinx Marathons lasted between 13 and 17 hours. The second-place team solved the final puzzle at 6 a.m. That was good news for the Infocom crew of "Hollywood" Dave Anderson and 18-year-old son of Harvard President Derek Bok, Tom Bok, who were eager to get some sleep, but bad news for the news crew that arrived at the Buhl Science Center at 7 a.m. to cover the finish live. One third of the forty-five players (15 teams of three) were female—including an all-woman team from Union City High School.

At the San Diego Marathon, on February 20-21, it took until noon for the team of Paul Ashley, Joel Pratt and Tetsuji Gotanda from Gompers High School to crack *Bureaucracy™*. Due to the difficulty of the game, Infocom Vice President and *Bureaucracy* collaborator Chris Reeve offered to give each of the 15 teams one hint. They steadfastly refused until it became clear at 8 a.m. the following morning that the competition was likely to continue for several days. Oddly, not one female showed up for the event at the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theatre in Balboa Park. But the camera crews did, at 10 a.m.—just in time to film one participant diligently dozing under a stairway for the evening news.

In Los Angeles, Infocom's February 28th Marathon coincided with the 2nd annual Los Angeles Marathon. Ours started earlier and finished later. Twenty teams from local high schools gathered at the California Museum of Science and Industry to attempt *Bureaucracy*. This time, it took the team of Chad Jones, Eric Allegado and Sean Peacock from San Gabriel High School 20 exhausting hours and four hints to finish. (Make you feel better?)

In addition to the crew of Tim, Hollywood and Cindy Weiss, we had several surprise guests: Marc Blank, now residing in L.A., Sales Development Manager Gabrielle Accardi who was in Palm Springs "on business," former micro hacker and current Caltech student Andy Kaluzniaki and

Cornerstone Designer Brian Berkowitz, who flew in from Seattle just for the occasion. The "regular crew" even managed to get Mike Dornbrook to come to this one in an attempt to get even with him for coming up with the Marathon idea in the first place. Only he outsmarted them. Mike and the other "surprise" guests came for a glass of wine, then promptly headed off to Beverly Hills for a feast while Tim, Hollywood, Cindy and former Infocommie Joy Pulver ate cold

Mexican take-out at the Museum.

The Toronto Marathon was without a doubt the high point. Over 80 teams wished to compete, but space considerations held the number down to 20, selected by lottery. The Science Centre treated everyone to a sit-down dinner, complete with cloth napkins and waiters! Berkley Barnard, Finnegan Southey, and Stefan Kremer from Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute solved *Stationfall* in 17 hours. The competition was fierce and play-

ers searched for help from other sources: St. Mary's High School posted a sign reading, "We have God on our side," while the school sitting opposite responded, "666, we have the devil on our side."

Special InfoThanks to Radio Shack, who donated the Tandy 1000 EX computers and color monitors for the winners of the Pittsburgh, San Diego and Los Angeles Marathons, as well as computers for the teams to use during the competitions.

## Mommy, where did Zork come from?

According to Infocom oral tradition, the name "Zork" was chosen for a new computer game ten years ago because it was a nonsense word: no one would be able to guess anything about the game just from its name. But recent archeological research has revealed that "Zork" is not nonsense at all. It was known as early as thirty-three years ago, at least among a company of zany people on Madison Avenue in New York, as this shard of a comic book proves. This excerpt is reproduced by permission of MAD magazine, ©1954 by E. C. Publications, Inc.



# Premier puzzlers pound puzzle #12

In Puzzle 12, we asked you to answer eighteen trivia questions, on topics ranging from chemistry to opera. All were multiple choice questions, but the answers were lettered N-E-S-W instead of A-B-C-D. Based on your answers, you were supposed to trace a path through the geography of an Infocom game: beginning from the Round Room in *Zork I*, the Library Lobby in *Planetfall*, or the Chamber of Ra in *Infidel*.

The correct answer to the puzzle: the name of the room where you would end up after trying to move consecutively in those eighteen directions. You could choose any of the three games for your answer. The answers to the trivia questions:

- 1. S      7. N      13. S
- 2. S      8. N      14. NE
- 3. NE     9. N      15. W
- 4. NW    10. W     16. E
- 5. W      11. N     17. N
- 6. E      12. E     18. W

The solutions, based on those answers: Dam Lobby for *Zork I*, or Library Lobby for *Planetfall*, or Fore Cabin for *Infidel*.

There were a total of 524 entries (the most since Puzzle Number 2!) of which 141 were correct (26.9%). 401 of the entrants (76.5%) traced their path through *Zork I*; *Planetfall* was chosen by 73 people (13.9%); the remaining 50 entrants used *Infidel* (9.5%).

Just looking at the *Zork I* entries, the most common wrong answers were Chasm (90 entries), Deep Canyon (50), Round Room (30), and East-West Passage (28), but nearly every room on the southern half of the *Zork I* map was mentioned at least once. Six people gave the unacceptably incomplete answer "Lobby." Other entrants, unsatisfied with the rooms in *Zork I*, created their own rooms: "East-West Room," "Echo Chamber," and "Deep Chasm." The two most interesting entries: "Mailbox" and "You can't go that way."

Since there were more than 25 correct answers, a drawing was held to determine the T-shirt winners. The drawing attracted a record-size Puzzle Drawing Audience of 2.

The results: Howard Scully, Mt. Clemens, MI; Marcus Johnstone, Belen, NM; Paul Feigelman, Bayside, NY; Lucas Campbell, Lexington, KY; Micah Barclay, Davison, MI; Imtiaz Rauf, Falls Church, VA; Rawson Chaplin, Wellesley, MA; James Lessard, Bloomington, MN; Susan Hewett, Greenville, NC; Betty Balas,

Akron, OH; Robert Brock Jr., Annapolis, MD; Daniel Sullivan Jr., New Kensington, PA; Crystal Armonas, Mentor, OH; Jacquie Buchanan, Canyon Lake, CA; Lael Sharp, Logan,

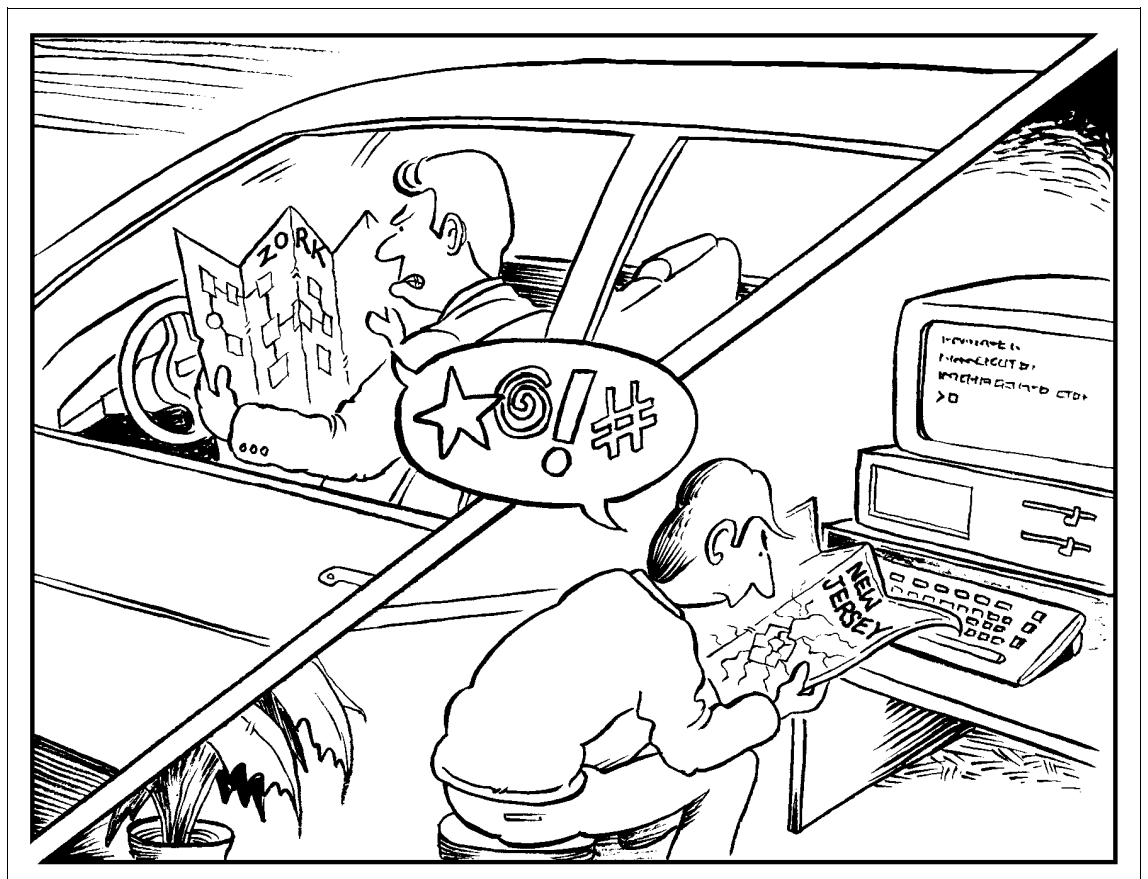
UT; Carl Walter, North Granby, CT; Ted Hall, Dothan, AL; Alex Joneth, Raleigh, NC; Mike Lahey, Munster, IN; David Powers, Christiansburg, VA; Doug Gilchrist, Bath, ME; Don-

ald Gasser, Napa, CA; Mark Joengen, Springfield, OR; John Silvestri, Addison, IL; Gary Vaughn, Atlanta, GA.

Our congratulations to all the winners.



Joseph P. Murray



Veronica Kosnac and Mark Cantrell

# > Examine puzzle #14

The directions to Puzzle #14 are a little complicated, so read carefully. First, figure out the first clue, then put the resulting word into the diagram. The first letter of the word goes in the box marked with the number "1" and the subsequent letters go into the following boxes, moving clockwise around the spiral of the diagram.

Next, figure out the second clue, and put that word into the diagram beginning at the box labelled "2." Notice that the first word and the second word overlap! All the words that go into the spiral will overlap, sharing one or more letters.

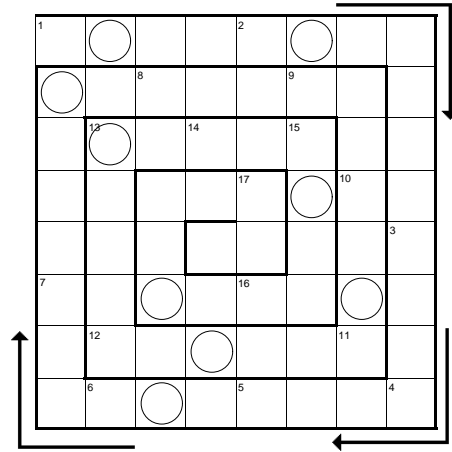
Here's a tiny example, in case you're confused:

1. Upper Sandusky's state.
2. It's near Illinois.
3. An adjective to describe editors of The Status Line.

1	O	H	2	I
	K	Y		O
	C	A	3	W

Once you have filled in the diagram, take the letters that fall within circles. Anagram these ten letters to form an Infocom-related name. This name is the answer to the puzzle.

1. A word in The Shanty's address.
2. The primary employer of the Great Underground Empire.
3. In *Suspended*, a Filter Computer reset code.
4. The month when you began cleaning grotch cages.
5. He invented the golmac spell.
6. A Borphee square.
7. A word in an Infocom title.
8. The best way to get around Rockvil, SD.
9. Floyd has been known to hum the death scene from it.
10. Belboz is your friend and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. "\_\_\_\_\_ to my VI'Hurgish warrior heart to hear it spoken!"
12. The planet in *Planetfall*.
13. The middle name of The Washington Representative's Editor.
14. Scenic \_\_\_\_\_, a good place to find a torch.
15. A location aboard the warship in *Leather Goddesses*.
16. The first word in the name of a Festeron video game.
17. No living room in a white house is complete without one.



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

T-Shirt size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

**Puzzle Rules:**

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by **August 15, 1987**.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners.
6. Void where prohibited by law. (Is there someplace so mixed-up that innocent little contests like this are outlawed?)

**Prize:** The Status Line Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

**Send to:** Infocom, Inc.  
The Status Line Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

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The ever-increasing barrage of cartoons netted more than 500 entries for our cartoon contest this quarter.

Congratulations to the winners for this issue. If you want to try your hand at cartooning, maybe you should enter our ongoing cartoon contest! Just send your cartoon, in black ink on white paper, to:

The Status Line Cartoons  
Infocom, Inc.  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

If we print your cartoon, we'll send you a free game, so be sure to include the title of the game you'd like, the computer system that you own, your address, and your phone number. Please don't fold your cartoon, let the Post Office do it. All submissions become property of Infocom.

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These games require 128K.

- Available exclusively through respective machine manufacturer.
- NOTE: Requires graphics card; Composite monitor recommended; Not available for PCjr.

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 NOTE: These games require 128K.

\* NOTE: This game requires 512K.

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## POSTERS

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## Peril & passion in Plundered Hearts

"Infocom's first romance does the genre proud. Playing *Plundered Hearts* was like opening a romance novel and walking inside."

—Judith C.

"The main character may be a woman, but I found *Plundered Hearts* every bit as challenging and exhilarating as other Infocom stories. I can't think of a better way to exercise my imagination."

—Andrew I.

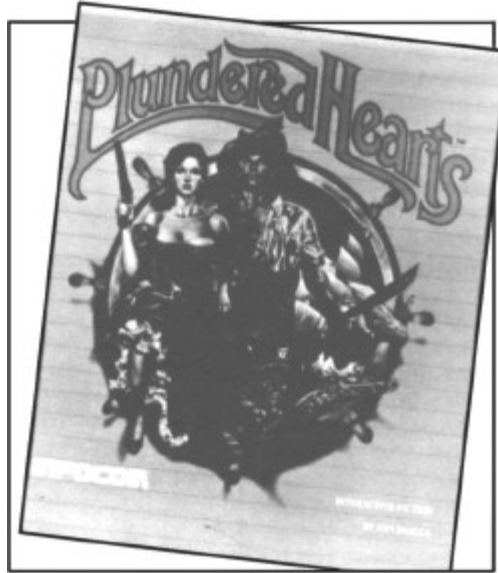
"I love this! This is the most vivid and evocative Infocom game I've seen yet."

—Mrs. Thomas E.

"I was a little afraid that I wouldn't like the game at first, being male and playing it as a female, but once you got started it was NO PROBLEM! I enjoyed it!!!"

—Ron T.

These are just some of the rave reviews showered upon *Plundered Hearts*, Infocom's new release that breaks stereotypes about computer games and the people who play them. *Plundered Hearts* is a tale of adventure as gripping as any previous Infocom story, filled with challenging puzzles and scenes of derring-do. But it is also a torrid romance, the first Infocom story in which you, the main character, are a woman. In its dark and passionate world, you not only test your courage and prowess at every turn—you may fall



Boy meets girl and adventure meets romance in our latest release *Plundered Hearts*.

in love.

Set in the late 17th century, when ladies were delicate and gentlemen virile, when vapid kings ruled the land and lusty pirates rules the seas, *Plundered Hearts* plunges you into adventure on the high seas.

You are a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a nobleman. You receive news of your beloved father from M. Jean Lafond, who claims to be his dearest friend. Lafond is the governor of St. Sinistra, the tiny tropical isle where your father moved after the death of your mother. Lafond sends the tidings that spur you across the Atlantic: Papa is deathly ill, and needs your loving care to keep him alive. You set out aboard the *Lafond Deux*, one of the governor's ships that just happens to be in port.

### Falcon, captain of the pirates.

As *Plundered Hearts* begins, just two nights from the end of the hitherto uneventful voyage, the thunder and lightning of cannon fire disturb your slumber—pirates! Within minutes you are face to face with the notorious Falcon, captain of the pirates. Under the impact of this gaze, the hard masculinity of his broad shoulders, the implied power in the scar that etches his jaw, you discover yourself blind to the dangers of this infamous pirate, aware only of the tremors that course your veins, of that flutter deep in your stomach as he draws near to you. In this most unlikely of places, you have met the man you have been waiting for all these years.

But things are not all as they seem. With the introduction of Falcon and the message he carries, you find all your expectations turned topsy-turvy. No longer can you be the staid and innocent miss from town. You

**Please turn to page 8**

## Nord and Bert: Pick a peck of pickled puzzles

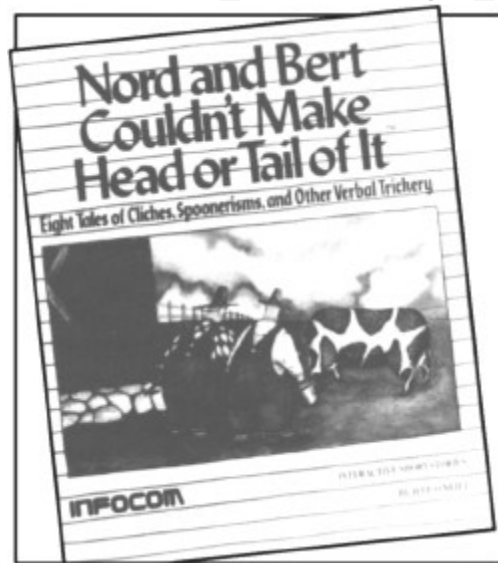
There's panic in Punster and only you can stop it.

Punster, the strangely besieged town at the center of Infocom's witty new release, needs help and it needs it fast. Because, you see, Punster is infected by a strange malady that has affected language itself. Yes, language, the thing we all depend on to carry us through our daily routine, has virtually come alive in twisted verse and forced the good people of Punster into hilarious submission.

But don't go into Punster expecting to wield an elvish sword as you might in *Zork*, or even a palm tree swizzle stick as you do in *Hollywood Hijinx*. To cure all ills here, what you'll need is a rapier sharp wit, a velvet smooth tongue, and a mind like a steel trap, not to mention just a little time and maybe even a bunch of friends.

### Not one but eight stories

When you venture into *Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*, you'll find not one but eight (count 'em: eight!) stories to turn your attention to. Each of these vignettes takes you to one of Punster's most disastrously affected areas. To restore each area to relative sanity, you'll need to solve a peck of pickled puzzles. The puzzles in each story involve a different type of wordplay, including cliches, idioms, spoonerisms, homonym replacements, and other verbal witticisms. If you're familiar with *Ballyhoo*, Jeff O'Neill's first Infocom game, you know that his prose



*Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*, but maybe you can unravel these eight heady tales.

and puzzles can be both lever and surreal. This time around he's pulled out all the stops.

There's the mysterious forest region of "Shake A Tower," where your quest to rescue a lovely lass will

lead you into a strange land in which only the twist of a phrase can solve the puzzles that will save both her and you. To survive you'll have to be rock steady, and perhaps have your stock ready.

Or how about a trip to the wacked-out Punster TV stations where you'll have to "Play the Part" to escape the zany sit-com insanity of your brother-in-law Bob. Then there's the town eatery, The Teapot Cafe, where even the simplest actions, like trying to buy lunch, will bring you face to face with the ugly situation engulfing Punster. Waitresses no longer respond in the normal manner, even to your simplest requests. The only hope you have of getting service is by using idioms like "give the waitress the evil eye." And when your food finally comes? Well, you'll have a hard time "eating a collection of lion's meat" until you can figure out just the right thing to say to turn it into something edible.

### Eating a pair of pears

Figuring out just the "right" thing to say is one of the trickier parts of *Nord and Bert*. And even if you're trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. Or eating a pair of pears, you'll be rewarded for your effort. Because as you solve each of the first seven stories, you will win the passwords that will eventually let you enter the eighth story—"Meet the Mayor." In that story you will have to bring all your wordplay exper-

**Please turn to page 10**

# New editors take the helm of TSL

Cambridge (WZIL)—Today, Mike Dornbrook, publisher of *The Status Line*, held a press conference to announce his new selections for the editors' chairs at TSL. Mike introduced Stuart "Stella" Kirsch to the gathered throngs, saying, "Stella brings integrity and verve to the challenging position of editor-in-chief."

To guarantee continuity and technical excellence on TSL, Dornbrook followed Kirsch's announcement with the formal appointment of Hollywood Dave Anderson as the publication's chief technician and tactician. Impressing the crowd with a list of Anderson's accomplishments, Dornbrook was quoted as saying: "Hollywood brings integrity and verve to the challenging position of managing editor of this prestigious publication."

Kirsch and Anderson (Stellawood and Hollywood) took the podium from their boss to announce their multi-pronged program for TSL. Said Kirsch: "I like contests!" Anderson added: "We have been the secondary outlet for humor in this company. You can bet TSL will soon be more enjoyable than the games."

Another major point in their program would be reader response. "The results of our reader polls will be given the highest priority," proclaimed the pair. In a brief serious moment, they recognized the heavy burden of righteousness they took on with their new responsibilities. "But most of all, we're going to have fun doing it and make sure the readers do, too."

The press conference was followed by an enormous spread in honor of the new team. Dave and Stu munched on Ring Dings and Devil Dogs while schmoozing with the press, whereas Mike preferred to feast on Twinkies.

**Stella? Why Stella? See page 11 for contest.**

## The Status Line

Mike Dornbrook, Editorial Chairman

Stuart A. Kirsch, Editor-in-Chief

Hollywood Dave Anderson, Managing Editor

Contributing Editors: Amy Briggs,  
Steve Meretzky, Curtis Montague,  
Cynthia Weiss

Contributing Non-Editors: Gary Brennan,  
John D'Acerno, Matt Hillman, Mark Jones,  
Diane Morlock, Tom Veldran

Non-Contributing Non-Editors:  
Tom Bok, Russ Ceccola

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## >Read the letters

Dear Infocom,  
I'm only thirteen but I'm an avid fan of Infocom. The game I most recently got was *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*. I loved it so much I got the T-shirt for it. I wore it to school thinking my friends would think it was hilarious. They did. It was so comfortable I wore it to bed. When I woke up, it didn't smell, and it was so comfortable I wore it that day too. Everything was going fine until fifth hour swung around and my social studies teacher read the back. She got upset and called the assistant principal! Even though I wore it the day before and everybody who was going to see it did, the assistant principal made me wear it inside-out! All the kids thought the shirt was funny. Even the coach thought it was funny. There were no vulgar words on it. That's censorship at its worst! I just thought you ought to know about this.

P.S. It's so easy to get into lewd mode. I don't know why you put that in there.

P.P.S. Not that I've tried.

W. Patrick Chaney  
Lake Charles, LA

Dear Infocom,  
Announcement: This is a complaint! You have just come out with your third interactive fiction game which requires 128K. I have been loyal to you by buying all eight of the games that I own; and I will continue to buy more every time I can scratch up enough money. And after being so loyal, you repay me by coming out with three games that I cannot play because my computer has only 48K. That's gratitude for you! Please! Have pity! It's torture when a new game comes out and I find that I can't play it. If I had the money to buy a more powerful computer, I would. But I don't! Please, stop this torture, oh! it's so painful! I'll never be able to play these games unless I get a job. Get a job? Hmmm... Nay. Please stop this madness!

Sincerely jobless  
Christopher Schiavone  
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Infocom,  
The following poem is for the few of us who get by with a little help from our friends or anyone else who cares to lend a helping hand. Thanks, *InvisiClues!* By the way, for the musically inclined, this goes well to the tune of "America" (My country 'tis of Thee).

Though it's not quite legit

We make good use of it

*InvisiClues!*

When we are in a hole

And we have searched our souls

It gets us to our goal

*InvisiClues!*

Sincerely,  
Cindy Chang-Yit  
Moorhead, MN

Dear Infocom,  
Hi guys! This is a short note expressing my admiration and appreciation for you and your wonderfully frustrating games.

*Zork*, *Trinity*, *Cutthroats*, and *Wishbringer* have provided me with many hours of profanity, hair-pulling, and loud screams of frustration. In other words: Fun!!

Coming home after spending many hours trying to

understand the Navy's financial system, I need to relax with something not quite as challenging. Hey, there's an idea for a game—*Tom Starboard: Naval Auditor!* Nah, that may be beyond even your capabilities to bring mass confusion and utter frustration.

Keep Up The Great Work,  
Jude T. Keyer  
Louisville, KY

[Mass confusion? Utter frustration? Masochists of the world unite! Get in line to play *Bureaucracy* by Douglas Adams—ed.]

Dear Infocom,

I have a bone to pick with you guys. I have been playing your games now for about 4 years. With the aid of my friend, I played them before I even had a computer. We have been solving your games as quickly as you have been putting them out. Sometimes I had to buy the *InvisiClues* to the games, and sometimes I went and found a "walkthrough." Most of the time we didn't use hints, though.

What we loved most, though, was your concept of a "Grue." After playing adventures from Scott Adams, where all we got was "IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE!" and the original Adventure "IT'S DARK IN HERE... YOU MAY FALL INTO A PIT," your Grue was a welcome relief.

Unfortunately, we have been seeing a bad trend lately. No more Grues! *Moonmist* has you right back in the olden days, falling into pits again. Personally, I consider this a bad use of disk space.

About 3 years ago, when I started modeming, I discovered I needed an alias to get on certain BBS's. Since I loved your games so much, I chose THE ZORKIAN GRUE. I now face extinction! Is there any reason why this is happening? If not, can you please correct this grievous error?

Thank you for your time,  
The Zorkian Grue  
(Name and address withheld by request)

[Zorkian, wake up and smell the grue's milk!

Did you find a grue in *Deadline*? No, of course not. How about *The Witness* or *Hollywood Hijinx* (A Malibu grue perhaps.)? No. And after some bit of traveling the universe in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Arthur Dent* didn't come across a single grue did he? Grues only exist in the Zork universe.

There is no need to fear for your extinction—by the time you read this the dreadful *Ur-Grue* will have slithered into an upcoming release.—ed.]

Dear Infocom,

I finally completed *Starcross*. It was better than even the hysterical *Hitchhiker's*. I will of course buy *Suspended* or *Leather Goddesses*... I really appreciate your sci-fi work. Really tops!

Now enough nice stuff....

Love,  
The Toxic Pig

**CENSORED**

## Did you like the envelope?

Our thanks to Brian White of Houston, TX for his award-winning design in our last envelope contest.

## InfoNews Roundup



"Now we know where bad boys go, straight to Infocom to answer phones."

### We're looking for a few new men

When InfoReceptionist Mary Ellen O'Connor went on maternity leave, who should we find as a temp but Mark Jones, guitarist for the Boston band New Man. When we needed someone to stuff press kits, we turned to Bob Gay, the band's sax/keyboard player. Mark left after two months, but was replaced by his lead singer, Scott Gilman. We then needed someone to send out some news releases, so who else should appear but drummer Brock Avery? We are still waiting to put bassist Tim Archibald to work. Pick up their Epic album, *New Man*, and find out what InfoMusic sounds like.

### Hey! Where did you get that shirt?

When the search for softball shirts was ended, the company bought over 50 of the shirts from the Merry-Go-Round in Watertown, MA. Add to that sale all the free advertising they got when everyone asked, "Hey, where'd you get that shirt?" and it is little wonder that for the month of May, they were the Store of the Month in their chain of 339 stores.

### And you thought all she could do was type...

Whether you live in the Boston area or not, make plans to visit The Alley Theatre (1253 Cambridge St., Cambridge) between September 10 and October 24. Our own Tara Dolan appears in *Balm In Gilead*, a play by Lanford Wilson. Tara struts her stuff on stage, playing the proverbial hooker with a heart of gold. Don't miss it!

### You want more?... You got more!

We know that you read *The Status Line* to get the latest scoop on what's going on in and around 125 CambridgePark Drive. But you can get more info on our latest titles and our role in the industry from your favorite magazines. Pick up a copy of *Games* magazine—August/September 87; *Questbusters*—July 87; *Consumer's Research*—April 87; *A+* magazine—June 87; *MACazine*—May 87; and *Time* magazine—July 27, 1987.

### Crossing the international deadline

Many of our overseas readers have complained that they can't enter our contests and puzzles because their issues don't arrive before the entry closing date. Well, the Contest Subcommittee of the Board of Directors of *The Status Line* has voted to satisfy the needs of our foreign readers. Beginning with this issue, we are pleased to introduce the International Deadline—no, not Deadline, Deadline. For all readers residing outside of the United States and Canada there will be a new deadline for all contests and puzzles, except where noted. The deadline will be approximately three months after the standard (North American) deadline. The number of winners (and in some cases, the prizes) will vary according to the constraints of the individual contest and the percentage of foreign readers.

## New Four-In-One Sampler now available; only \$4.95

When we decided we needed a new Sampler, we didn't mess around! Though The Four-In-One Infocom Sampler was still selling like hotcakes, something newer, more chic, and more up-to-date was needed: hence... the new Four-In-One Infocom Sampler. This fascinating little disk contains excerpts from our most popular stories—*Zork I*, *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, and *Trinity*. And instead of a tutorial

that has you catch a butterfly, you get a tutorial from *Wishbringer*, our story that's great for newcomers. This sampler is available for Commodore 64/128, and on an Apple II/IBM MS-DOS "flippy" at the low price of \$4.95. Pick one up for yourself and for that special someone who has never experienced the thrill of our interactive fiction.

## \$100 grand prize up for grabs in Infocom's T-Shirt design contest

Carl needs help! Carl Genatossio, our fabulous InfoCreative Services Manager, is so bogged down with work that he can't take on another project. He's agreed to subcontract this one out to you, our loyal fandom (rather than giving you a package design or something).

So, put all your creative juices in your blender and design the Infocom T-shirt! There are no specs for this job, just go for it. Remember, we want an Infocom T-shirt, not a game-specific one.

If your artistic skills aren't up to snuff, give us a rough sketch and a very detailed explanation so Carl's elves can figure it out and draw it. If our talent scouts choose your design as the best, you'll win the grand prize of \$100 (and

of course a T-shirt). Second prize is a game of your choice, and third is a collection of Infocom posters.

Entries must be postmarked by October 31, 1987 (international entries by January 31, 1988—a game to the best. Sorry no cash prize.). All artwork becomes the exclusive property of Infocom, Inc. and cannot be returned. Void where prohibited, taxed, licensed and in the Great Underground Empire. Employees of Infocom, their families, and their college roommates are not eligible.

Send your entry, along with your name, complete address, age, game choice, computer type and T-shirt size to: *The Status Line*, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140, Attn: Genatossio-aid.

## Product News

### CoCo owners:

If you are fortunate enough to own a TRS-80 Color Computer—affectionately known as the Coco—have we got some good news for you! Prices on all titles available for the Coco are being slashed! Fill your library with Infocom classic titles at the outrageously low price of \$14.95. Don't delay! Order today!

### Atari XL/XE owners:

We've heard a lot of complaints from Atari owners about how difficult it is to find Infocom titles for the XL/XE. You don't need to run around anymore. Infocom titles for the Atari XL/XE will now be available exclusively through our direct mail service! No more wasted time searching in stores. No more calling around to find out where to buy a game. Just call 1-800-262-6868 or mail your order to us at P.O. Box 478, Cresskill, NJ 07626.

### Apricot, PDP-11, NEC APC, NEC PC-8000 owners:

This issue of *The Status Line* will be your final opportunity to purchase Infocom titles for your system. Games for these machines are being removed from stock and will not be available after November 1, 1987. Order your games while they are still available—and at the low price of \$14.95. Quantities are limited.

## Crypto-VisiClues Key

Encrypted - ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
Actually - YDTUHSAQPBXVOIGMCENLZKFRW



# Here begins a transcript of interaction with...

Hi! Suzy Statistician here. Paula, our previous pollster, was promoted in part for her positively proper punctuation of permutations and probabilities in her previous polls. So... yours truly has taken over the task of telling the tale of these startling stats. Here is the curious tale...

## THE ROOM

The room into which Paula has led you is a large well-lit room somewhere in the bowels of the Infocomplex. Ahead is a metal desk. To the right of the desk is a small computer with a printer, both of which are on. To the left are white cloth sacks marked "U.S. MAIL." A door is open behind you. Paula is gone. The computer screen is blank, but the cursor is blinking.

## >EXAMINE DESK

On the desk sits a small calculator, a box of pencils, a pencil sharpener, a legal writing tablet, and a pack of Juicy Fruit gum. In front of the desk is a folding metal chair.

## >SIT

(in chair)

You are now seated behind the large desk. You feel as if the computer screen is watching you.

## >OPEN MAILBAG

You struggle to lift the first mailbag. As you get the metal clasp unhooked, the bottom of the bag rips open, and with a great "whoosh," letters come pouring out.

## >TAKE LETTERS

(taken)

The letters are all addressed to Paula's Poll #2.

## >OPEN LETTER

The computer beeps, and the screen reads: YOUR SCORE HAS GONE UP BY ONE POINT.

## >EXAMINE LETTER

As you look at the letter, you see it is actually a page cut out of *The Status Line*. It contains the name, address, age, and gender of the sender. It has a brief note from Paula about Poll #1, as well as questions and answers about TSL itself.

## >EXAMINE ALL LETTERS

You begin the task of opening and reading this immense mountain of mail.

## >RECORD ANSWERS

(I see no record here.)

## >TAKE PENCIL. WRITE ANSWERS

## ON PAD

The cursor winks and the computer beeps. YOUR SCORE HAS INCREASED BY ONE POINT. The door behind you has closed. On it appears a large comic strip poster of a man and a woman entitled "LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS." You notice the woman has an uncanny resemblance to Paula. Doing a double-take, You notice the man bears the striking good looks of Steve Meretzky, whom you met earlier.

## >TURN ON CALCULATOR. ADD NUMBERS FROM LETTERS.

You flick the switch but the calculator face remains blank.

## >PLUG IN CALCULATOR.

Beep. YOU HAVE SCORED A POINT.

## >USE CALCULATOR TO INTERPRET ANSWERS

It quickly becomes apparent to you that *TSL* readers are of all ages. Readers under the age of 18 make up 34% of those responding. 29% are between 18 and 30. 26% are between 31 and 40 years old. The remaining 11% are 41 and over. You can also determine that one in five respondents is a woman.

## >EXAMINE ANSWERS ABOUT GAMES AND HINTBOOKS

These answers reveal that the average respondent owns over 7 games and 2 *InvisClues* hint booklets. They own every kind of computer from Apple to Zenith. 25% own Apple machines; 20% own Commodores; 18% own IBM systems; Ataris make up 14%; the others own all kinds of machines. The computer, perhaps intrigued by information about computers, makes loud noises, attracting your attention. You turn to it and, like a mood ring, the screen has turned from lime green to

bright purple.

## >INTERPRET INFO ON PUZZLE QUESTIONS

You find that 71% of those responding to the poll have tried to solve a *TSL* puzzle, but only 15% have ever sent in their solutions. Most (39%) think the puzzles are a little on the hard side and most (42%) think that the puzzles should require general knowledge, as opposed to in-depth knowledge of the games, to solve them.

As for reader preference of puzzles, most want visual games, just slightly ahead of word puzzles and trivia puzzles. Math puzzles finished a distant fourth.

## >TALLY AND INTERPRET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING READER PREFERENCES ON SUBJECTS THAT TYPICALLY APPEAR IN A STATUS LINE ISSUE

(That sentence is not one that I recognize.)

## >CHECK LOVE IT-HATE IT ANSWERS

You readjust yourself in the chair and sit perched on the edge of your seat, for this section of the poll is the most fascinating; in it you find out what readers like most and least about *TSL*. You discover that articles on new products are by far the most popular—80% of readers give them a score of 1 (love it). Next popular are humor (66%) and stories about the creation of games (57%). Game hints and cartoons also are scored 1 by more than 50%.

Cornerstone articles are the least popular, but that doesn't surprise you, since you look back and see that only 4% of those answering the poll own Cornerstone. Hopefully, you muse, the rest of the respondents aren't using a less efficient and more expensive database. YOUR SCORE HAS GONE UP

BY 2 POINTS, beeps the red computer.

## >ANARIZE SUMMARYSIS

Eh?

## >SUMMARIZE ANALYSIS

Though your eyes are burning, bleary and bloodshot from the strain of staring at surveys and statistics, you feel proud of your accomplishments. The printer begins churning out all the information at lightning speed.

## >TAKE REPORT

As you rip the computer sheet from the printer, in walks Stella, editor of *TSL*, along with Mike Dornbrook, director of marketing. Paula, her polling days now behind her, turns, closes the door and walks back down the long hallway.

## >TELL THEM ABOUT RESULTS. GIVE STELLA REPORT.

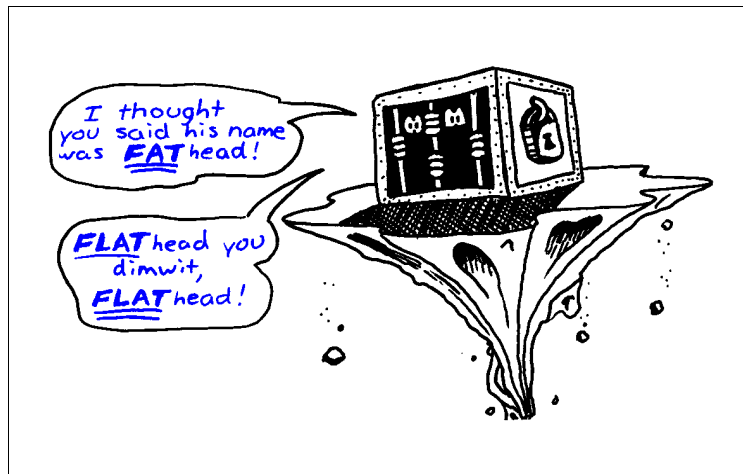
As you explain what the readers want, Stella and Mike listen with beaming faces. You hear the churning wheels in Stella's mind. When you finish, Stella begins to speak. "Mike, Suzy... We now know what they want. I say let's give it to them. They like contests. We'll put tons of them in the next issue.

"They want to find out about new products. We'll tell them in graphic detail, and let them know what will be happening in the future. Our readers also want reviews of old games, so let's write about them and give larger reviews. They want hints, we'll let 'em have *VisiClues*, that they still have to interpret so games don't get ruined for everyone..."

You drift off into your own little world as Stella talks on and on about changes in *TSL*—you figure you'll just wait for it to come out. The computer winks at you and beeps. YOUR SCORE HAS DOUBLED. YOU HAVE GIVEN THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT. YOU HAVE ATTAINED THE RANK OF INTERPLANETARY EMPRESS. WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR DINNER, YOUR HIGHNESS?

Stella continues: "We can show our readers that their input really has impact. If they want reviews of old game, why, we can make it a regular feature. And if our readers from outside the country want to be able to enter contests, we'll have a special deadline for them..."

The figures on the poster behind you have come to life. The Steve-like man kisses your hand, and the Paula-like woman bows before you. So, this is Infocom. This could be fun.



Dan Schmieler

## >Tell me about Customer Support

**Question:** How can I get Infocom disks in the 3 1/2" format for my IBM?

**Answer:** Presently, we do not produce our IBM products (either interactive fiction games or *Cornerstone*) in the 3 1/2" format. However we do produce a non-copy-protected 5 1/4" disk (IBM PC-DOS and MS-DOS 2.0 or above) which our customers can download themselves to a 3 1/2" disk.

Copy-protected IBM disks can be exchanged for non-copy-protected disks for a \$5 fee.

**Question:** A line of strange characters—arrows, brackets, and numbers—appears on my status line when using the IBM PC-DOS/MS-DOS 2.0 diskette. Why?

**Answer:** These are ASCII characters which appear if the DOS file, ANSI.SYS hasn't been loaded. Go through the INSTALL program again. To load ANSI.SYS, be sure to reboot the system (by pressing CTL, ALT and DEL simultaneously) after the installation is complete. If rebooting has no effect, be sure that the DOS file ANSI.SYS resides on your disk (the root directory of hard disks). Also be sure that the CONFIG.SYS file has the line which reads: DEVICE = ANSI.SYS. You may need to create a CONFIG.SYS file using the DOS EDLIN or COPY CON command to include a line: DEVICE = ANSI.SYS. (TI PRO and DEC users do not have the ANSI file on their DOS directories.)

**Question:** Should I expect any problems with my Infocom products while using DOS 3.2?

**Answer:** Since DOS 3.2 has just arrived on the scene, we have not fully tested all our products with this latest version of DOS. If you should encounter any unusual problems, please write them down along with your exact hardware specifications, and forward it to us at the address below.

**Question:** I've noticed that recent games have no difficulty ratings on them. Without a rating, how can I know if a game is right for me?

**Answer:** When we had ratings on our games, there was always quite a bit of controversy, some customers saying that standard-level games were difficult, and some saying that advanced-level games were easy. It became apparent that people with great knowledge in one field or another would find a certain kind of story or puzzle to be easier to solve, whereas others would find even simpler puzzles to be very difficult. We mention on the back of our packages that a game would be "good as an introduction" or something to that effect, but we found we're not in the best position to rate the difficulty of our own games. Another idea is to read various reviews of Infocom products; reviewers are generally able to give honest opinions of a story's difficulty.

**Question:** With *Cornerstone* I have a derived attribute defined as the sum of other attributes in my file, but sometimes there's a blank result. What's wrong.

**Answer:** As a safeguard, a derived attribute will be left blank if any of its variables is blank. For example, you may have a derived attribute defined as: `Derived_attrib=Attrib_1+Attrib_2+Attrib_3`

Derived\_attrib will only be computed if there is a value in Attrib\_1 and Attrib\_2 and Attrib\_3; if any one of these attributes is blank, then Derived\_attrib will be blank.

If you don't want this to occur, a possible way to prevent it is to define an initial value for all attributes that will be used in the derivation expression. This initial value could be a zero if it's being used in addition derivations, or a one if it's being used in multiplication derivations.

Questions? Call (617) 576-3190 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern time. Or write to: Customer Support, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140



*Infolmps Steve Meretzky (pulling someone's leg) and Dave Lebling (the guy with the tie) ham it up with the members of The Second City comedy troupe at last May's Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago.*

## The comedy stylings of The Second City

It's known as the Windy City. It was a place of business for Al Capone. Richard Daly called it his city for decades. It has the busiest airport in the world. A group of young comedians gathered there called it *The Second City*. It became the breeding ground for comic greats such as John Belushi, Elaine May, Dan Aykroyd and Joan Rivers. At the Consumer Electronics Show in May, Infocom made Chicago their second city.

At trade shows, everyone has their booths and their suites and their presentations and even their cocktail hours and their parties. But, as you well know, Infocom is always different. And with the help of *The Second City* comedy troupe and Infocom's new titles—*Stationfall* and *The Lurking Horror*—it would be a memorable convention for every salesman with dip on his lapel and every exhibitor who stumbled around McCormick Place the morning after the night before.

For the third year running, droves of InfoGuests joined tyrannosauruses, brontosauruses and mummies at the magnificent Field Museum of Natural History. They came by the hundreds to see what the puzzle meisters had prepared for them.

From newspapers and magazines, from manufacturers and distributors, from Europe and Japan they came to consume food and spirit. To the sound of the Susie Hansen band they shared news of bits, bytes and nibbles. They came because they knew their funny bones would be tickled. Infocom would satiate their need for something new and different. Needless to say, they were not disappointed by InfoProvisation.

"InfoProvisation" they asked? Info-

Provisation they saw! Resident members of *The Second City* combined the ideas and ideals of Infocom with their own brand of comedy.

Through a hilarious sequence of skits using very few props (a couple of chairs and a piano) the audience saw a computerized dating simulator, roared at a romance between next-generation computers and a piece of has-been software, met *Stationfall's* Floyd, visited GUE Tech and even had the opportunity to affect the course of a scene or two.

In a tribute to the best-selling *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, three vignettes, set in a singles bar and interspersed throughout the program, showed real-life versions of the three playing modes. Tame would have made Mother Teresa proud, but by the time they went from suggestive to lewd, it was enough to make Donna Rice blush.

Cynthia Weiss, InfoPublic Relations Manager, who ran the event, was excited about the prospect of using the great comedic minds of *The Second City* to illustrate the inimitable style of Infocom and its innovative products. Thanks go to the diligent efforts of event consultant and former InfoTrade Show Coordinator Renata Daroszewska, who came up with the idea of using *The Second City* in the first place.

Stories of InfoProvisation were covered by AP and ran in newspapers from Alexandria, VA, to Jefferson City, MO, to Racine, WI. Folks in the audience brought back stories about "Point Woman!" and new ways of lighting cigarettes to sales floors and board rooms the world over.

Old soldiers never die, and neither do Infocom interactive stories. But, because software retailers can stock only current titles, some great older games are forgotten in marketing and distribution strategies. Nonetheless, we still stock all of our titles at our mail center in New Jersey. Knowing how people never seem to get enough Infocom, we want to make sure that everyone can get these classic titles as well as the new ones.

Many people have told us, in Paula's Poll (see pg 4), in letters, and in phone calls, that they are interested in these older titles and would like reviews of our classic stories. All of our classics are available at special low prices only through *The Status Line*; and so you can know more about them than the blurb you see in a catalog, we will be reviewing three of our vintage stories in this and future issues of *TSL*.

*Deadline*, *Infidel*, and *Starcross* were not only the first mystery, adventure, and science fiction stories, respectively, we developed; they are also among the most popular games in each genre. Each game was both critically and popularly acclaimed when it was released.



*Infidel*, from our Tales of Adventure series, is a desperate search for the lost, great pyramid in the Egyptian desert.

Players were particularly by the sense of danger the game projects; critics applauded the consummate treatment of this classic genre.

Set in the vast desert of Egypt, somewhere near the banks of the River Nile, *Infidel* challenges you to find the buried entrance to the last great pyramid, and, once inside, seize priceless treasures that have remained hidden for thousands of years.

As the ruthless, determined explorer, you make your men work on a religious holiday. They revolt and desert you, leaving you without tools and supplies. Now you are marooned in the desert, but still ready to continue your quest.

You must find food and water, lest buzzards feast upon your bones. And should you survive the desert and the scorching sun, you must still find the pyramid. But adventure just begins as you find it. When you enter the cavernous pyramid, buried deep beneath the sands, you must unravel the shrouded mysteries that lie entombed within, and find its hidden treasures.

The outside package of *Infidel* has the rugged look of a canvas portfolio containing your personal effects, a tattered attache that has survived adventure and danger the world over. Inside, you find a host of ingenious game pieces that bring the searing vast desert adventure right into your living

## Three classics reviewed

### Adventure in the desert, space and Connecticut: A second look at *Infidel*, *Starcross* and *Deadline*

room and provide valuable clues to help you solve the challenges and puzzles you face. As you read your Expedition Log, the hand-written diary of your search for the great pyramid, and your personal correspondence, written on stationary with an authentic Egyptian stamp, you'll feel the temperature rise and your throat wither from thirst. Also a parchment-like map of the Nile River Valley, complete with latitude and longitude coordinates; and a rubbing of hieroglyphics with a partial dictionary will help you move about the desert plain that reaches onward without end.

Written by Mike Berlyn, who also wrote *Suspended* and *Cutthroats*, this tale of adventure was highly regarded by reviewers who applauded its sense of realism and desperation.

*Games* magazine called *Infidel* "a well-nigh perfect re-creation of this scenario: the cursed-treasure-in-the-lost-pyramid tale." *The Salt Lake City Tribune* called *Infidel* "a vivid, living game that redefines 'interactive.' Whether you solve it or not *Infidel* is absorbing and fun."



*Starcross*, a science fiction adventure, rockets you out of the desert into a future universe. Jettisoned into the depths of space, you meet a variety of interstellar beings—some friendly, and others who are ready to vaporize you.

As the story unfolds you awake to the ring of your mass detector's constant call. You've apparently just discovered a large, uncharted black hole that unbelievably offers you a life of luxury. But something more lurks in this endless hole of darkness.

You'll soon find that the "black hole" is an enormous alien spaceship spinning so rapidly that it produces an

artificial gravity. Aboard the M.C.S. *Starcross*, a one-person vessel outfitted for the discovery and mining of black holes, you are about to become the first human to meet intelligent extraterrestrial lifeforms. While looking for that really BIG strike, you discover that someone—or something—has found you.

You must use every ounce of cunning and courage you can muster to unravel the mystery of the great ship that has beckoned you into its own interior. First you must gain entry to the gargantuan ship. Upon entering, you find not a strange alien creature, but an assembly of creatures from across the galaxy. Is it just a vast intercultural relations improvement seminar? Or could it be something much more ominous? In *Starcross*, you will answer the challenge that was issued eons ago, from light years away.

By using the provided ship's log of the *Starcross*, the computer-generated map of outer space, the most up-to-date instructions on what to do when you encounter aliens, and your best game-solving skills, you may be able to solve the problems posed by the builders of this incredible artifact, gain control of it, and return to Earth with a priceless cargo.

This interplanetary adventure, written in 1982 by Dave Lebling, his first story after writing *Zork*, was praised by *PC World*, which said, "All the ingredients of a good Robert A. Heinlein sci-fi novel are here: the wildcat prospector (that's you), the sassy ship computer, and a lucky find that could be too hot to handle... it is a great game in which to lose yourself..." *Sofiline* magazine added: "Starcross requires you to be a scientist, an engineer, an astronaut, an explorer, and a diplomat. It expects you to have the judgement to know when to shoot a gun and the wisdom to know

when not to... It is a sheer pleasure to play."



One of our earliest and most popular games was the unparalleled whodunnit *Deadline*. *Deadline* was awarded an "Arkie" by *Electronic Games* magazine in 1983 as the Best Computer Adventure. In 1985 it joined a very select group of software when it was certified gold (100,000 copies sold) by the Software Publishers Association. *Deadline* was the first computer mystery from any software publisher.

Released in 1982, *Deadline* finds you, a police detective, pitted against the clock to solve a mysterious murder. Everything indicates that the wealthy industrialist has killed himself, but you smell foul play. The scene is the classic locked-door mystery, and you are the Chief of Detectives. You know that you can't make any mistakes, because the next corpse in the coroner's office might have your name tagged on its toe.

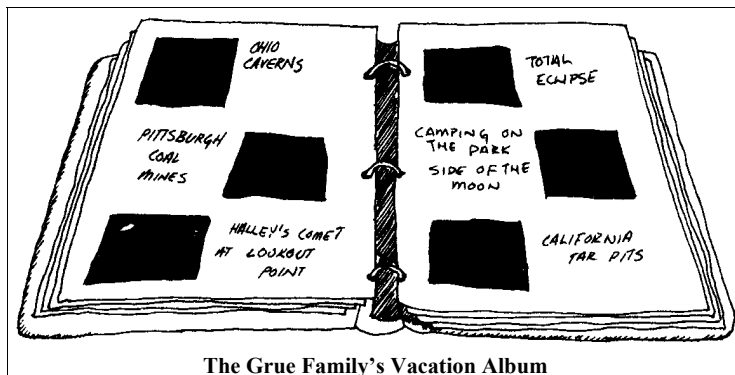
You'll sift through the evidence you've been provided with: the police file on the death of Marshall Robner, a letter from the attorney of the deceased, the coroner's findings, a picture of the scene of the crime, and even the pills found near the body. You've got a 12-hour time limit to solve the case, in which you must interrogate suspects and track down the killer. But if you arrest someone, you've got to have proof of the three traditional elements of an ironclad case: a motive, a method and an opportunity to commit the crime.

*Deadline* puts you at the scene of the crime as you examine suspects for motives and alibis. You've based your suspicion on a hunch, but only clues will give you the hard facts.

There are over a dozen possible endings to the story but you determine the conclusion. Only one ending best fits the facts and you'll know who is guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt if your sleuthing is up to snuff.

*The New York Times* called *Deadline* "an amazing feat of programming," while *Softalk* magazine complemented, "If the Mystery Writers of America gave an award for Best Fiction in Software, *Deadline* would win in a walk..."

*Infidel*, *Starcross* and *Deadline* are available for a wide assortment of personal computers. Consult the price list in the center of this newsletter to find a complete listing. Please note that on some systems, quantities are limited. These titles—*Infidel*, *Starcross* and *Deadline*—are offered at the special price of \$14.95 exclusively through Infocom.



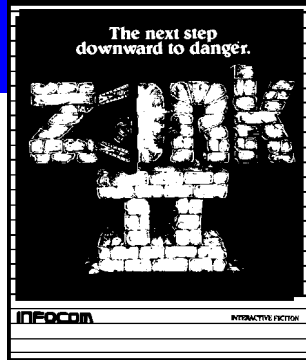
Jonathan Higgins



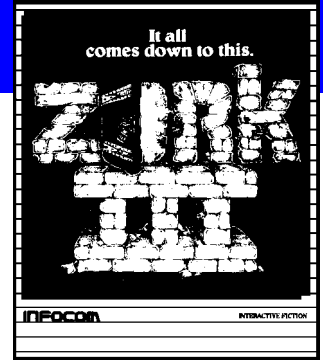
# SPECIAL OFFERS

Many of you who own only part of the Zork Trilogy expressed interest in a special offer to complete it. Here it is!

**Zork II**  
**\$19.95**



**Zork III**  
**\$19.95**



Or buy both  
**Zork II & Zork III**  
for only

**\$29.95!**



Get a **free** Zorkmid coin  
with any of these Zork offers.

Limited offer. Zork offer expires 12-31-87. Include a copy of this coupon with your order.

**Enchanter**  
**Trilogy**  
**slashed!**

Now only

**\$49.95**

for Commodore 64/128  
& Atari XL/XE

**\$59.95**

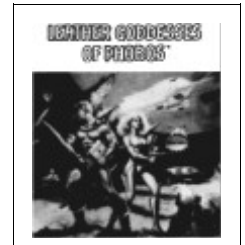
for Amiga, Apple,  
Atari ST, IBM  
and Macintosh

**3 InvisiClues \$10!**

- Infidel
- Wishbringer
- Zork III
- Deadline
- Starcross
- Suspended
- Planetfall
- Seastalker
- Cutthroats
- Suspect

- A Mind Forever Voyaging
- Spellbreaker
- Ballyhoo

Include a copy of this coupon with your order.  
Offer expires 12/31/87



**Free**

**Leather Goddesses**  
**of Phobos**  
poster with any Leather  
Goddesses order!

Include a copy of this  
coupon with your order.  
Offer expires 12/31/87.

By Steve Meretzky

May 1 was a red letter day for me. I turned thirty, finished writing *Stationfall*, and began the vacation that my wife and I had been planning for months and dreaming of for years: a multi-week cross-country drive. Boston to San Francisco. Eleven National Parks. The awesome beauty of the American West.

Betty, my wife, was able to get away from work for only two weeks, so I left a week earlier. She would be flying to Rapid City, SD, to meet me. In Pittsburgh, I picked up Jerry Wolper, former Infocommie and co-author of *Cutthroats*, who would be accompanying me through Minneapolis.

As we departed the Smoky City, the vast farmlands of Ohio beckoning, we decided to take a mild detour in order to visit that small town where *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* begins: Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

Although I had chosen Upper Sandusky as the starting point for *Leather Goddesses*, I'd never been there and knew virtually nothing about it. After I finished writing *Leather Goddesses*, I wondered if I would get letters from Infocom fans in Upper Sandusky, delighted to see their town immortalized in the annals of interactive fiction. After six months, no such letters had appeared.

We approached Upper Sandusky from the south. About five miles outside of town, in the middle of the flat Ohio farmland, a large billboard assaulted our view. "Upper Sandusky," it read, "The place to be!" Below, the billboard listed the features of the town, adding, "No, it's not on Lake Erie!" This last line was presumably a reference to the larger and more well-known city, Sandusky. (Sandusky lies on Lake Erie, at the mouth of the Sandusky River. Upper Sandusky is in central Ohio, fifty or a hundred miles upriver.)

Upper Sandusky, occupying a few square blocks around the intersection of routes 199 and 30, is a sleepy little town, reminiscent of Andy Griffith's Mayberry. We had two goals for the visit: seeing if

## Upper Sandusky: No, it's not on Lake Erie and there isn't a Joe's

there was a Joe's Bar in town (since that's where the opening scene of *Leather Goddesses* takes place), and finding a computer store.

While buying postcards at the old-fashioned drug-store/newsstand in the center of town, we borrowed a telephone directory (about the size of an *InvisiClues* booklet). First the bad news: of the four taverns in Upper Sandusky, none were named Joe's Bar. The good news: There WAS a computer store, on the outskirts of town — a block away, that is.

It was now a few minutes past 5pm, and Computers Plus of Ohio had a sign on the door saying CLOSED. The door was unlocked, however, so (being good adventurers) we entered. It was a tiny place, with several computers, a magazine rack, and a small pegboard of software. Most of it was business software;



there were only two entertainment products, and everything seemed sort of, well, sort of faded. A young woman appeared from the back room.

YW: I'm sorry, we're closed. I'm only here because I'm still backing up the computers.

SM: I'm not really a customer. We're from Infocom, and we were driving through town, and I was wondering what the Upper Sandusky computer store was like.

YW: Info... what?

SM: Infocom. I wrote a game that was set in Upper Sandusky...

YW: (trying to look interested) Oh, really...?

SM: Infocom. It's own by Activision...

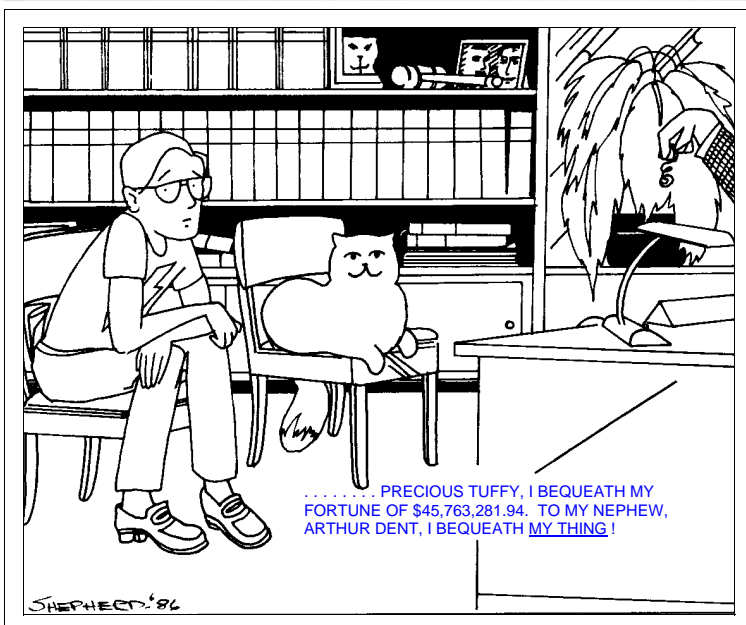
YW: Acti... what?

SM: Well, we'll be going now...

So, that was Upper Sandusky. No brass bands, no key from the Mayor, no banners proclaiming "Welcome, Author of *Leather Goddesses*." Why does reality have to intrude on life so often?

[**Editor's epilogue:** Steve Meretzky wasn't the only one interested in Upper Sandusky, and don't expect this to be the last you've heard of Upper Sandusky. The story continues on a steamy afternoon when Mike Dornbrook was being interviewed for an article in *The Wall Street Journal* (6/11/87 pg. 27). Reporter Dave Sullivan, of the *WSJ* Pittsburgh office saw the article, and, like Steve, wanted to find out Upper Sandusky's response to *Leather Goddesses*. After doing heavy research into his story, he found, as did Steve, that Upper Sandusky had no response to *Leather Goddesses*.

Mayor Don Hall of Upper Sandusky found out about Infocom's hit game at this point, and was perplexed by the apathy. He contacted Debbie Baumann, of the Upper Sandusky *Daily Chief-Union*, and asked her to find out more about Infocom, Steve and *Leather Goddesses*, and to write a story on it. Keep your eyes peeled.]



Samuel M. Shepherd

## Plundered Hearts

Continued from page 1

most don the attitude with the attire of a pirate, learn to fight with sword and pistol, and adopt the devilousness of the most deceptive buccaneer. Your adventure has only just begun!

Included in the *Plundered Hearts* package are the letter from Jean Lafond that tells of your father's illness, and a 50-guinea note from the Bank of St. Sinistra. These are both securely kept in the velvet reticule that every lady carries tied to her wrist.

*Plundered Hearts* is the first work of interactive fiction by Amy Briggs. To research this historical adventure, Amy spent many of her formative years reading trashy romances, studied vast tomes of costume design through the ages, and ran away from home to join a pirate band.

For more adventure on the high seas,

each *Plundered Hearts* package contains a coupon which you can mail in to get *Cutthroats* for \$14.95. This is a special price only available through this offer. In *Cutthroats*, you're a local diver who becomes entangled with shady island characters in search for a lost shipwreck containing sunken treasures. *Cutthroats* contains several shipwrecks which provides for multiple adventures.

Set for release in early September, *Plundered Hearts* will be available for a wide variety of personal computers, including Apple II series and Macintosh, Atari XL/XE and ST series, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga, and IBM PC series and MS-DOS compatibles. The suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE (mail order only) and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

# Hawaiian shirts & boys of summer

It was a cold day in late April. The rain was taking a short break, long enough for twenty or so rag-tag Infocom softball hopefuls to show their wares and showcase their talent in front of InfoManager "General" Lorri Fischer and the rest of the cigar-smoking front office. What began that day will no doubt soon be enshrined in the Softball Hall of Fame in Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

It took the General but a few short weeks to turn this bunch of lowlifes, sleazebuckets, and marketers into what InfoScorekeeper Steve "Error?... Nah, let's call it a hit" Meretzky called "the finest, most talented softball machine I've ever seen assembled." Added InfoSuperstar John Arnold, "We can beat the Padres, no sweat!"

When asked what made this team so special, InfoSecondbaseman and Vice President Chris Reeve replied "We've got it all. We've got power. We've got speed. We've got great fielding. We've got style and finesse on the ball field. But what makes this team better than any other is the fact that we've got THE shirts."

## "Hawaiian shirts on drugs"

What shirts, you ask? Well, InfoShortstop Jeff O'Neill describes them as "Hawaiian shirts on drugs." (He was, of course, driving his yellow Rabbit in left field when we caught up with him for the quote.) InfoRightfielder and tester Max Buxton called them "the best thing since microwaveable frozen Mexican dinners." InfoShortstop and summer PR intern John D'Acerno said that they reminded him of the Summer of Love... Venice Beach... acid... too much rum...

As the shirts debuted on the playing field, busload after busload of smarmy little kids screamed out, "Nice Shirts!" A fad was to be born. (You, too, can own one of these soon-to-be collector's items. See details in your grocer's freezer.)

Meanwhile, back on the field, Infocom's superstars, near-stars, and starlets were shining on and off the field—InfoCenterfielder Dave Lebling suggested that they were all glowing bright blue. Who can forget those catches by InfoOutfielders Hollywood Dave Anderson and Tom Bok up against the warning tree in center field? And how about the catches that InfoRightfielder and Financial Administrator Diane Morlock almost made in the warning gully in right field? Luckily it wasn't raining or she might never have found her way back onto the field. And let's not



Here is some of the team returning from the team picture which didn't turn out so we used this one.

## Your Grocer's Freezer

You, too, can be part of the greatest season that ever lived. Guess our final record correctly and you will win a SHIRT of your very own. Yes, the shirt that InfoPitcher and Tester Gary Brennan calls "my favorite shirt except for the NZT Puzzle Winner T-shirt" can be yours if you have the foresight to predict the season record of this unequaled bunch of softball aficionados.

To help you on the way to fame, fortune, and a SHIRT, we will tell you that the season had six games. Post-season play featured a wild-card playoff between the fourth and fifth teams, semi-finals, and the championship game. Send your prediction, along with your name and address to The Wave, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140 by October 1, 1987. (No international deadline.) If more than one correct answer is received, a lottery will be held among all correct entries.

forget those tremendous blows by InfoSluggers Micro Hacker John Arnold and Tester Matt Hillman. Perhaps the crowning achievement of the season was the cook-out at the home of InfoSlugger and Director of Marketing Mike Dornbrook.

## A well-conditioned beer-belly

As the season began, the team was to face some tough competition, not the least of which was a week-long carnival on its practice field. But this team was ready. General Fischer had arranged for this team to scrimmage against Cambridge's most feared softball team—the 1369 Jazz Club. Week after week, Infocom dug in its spikes against these beer-swilling, cigarette-smoking bar patrons, owners, and tenders. And week after week, Cambridge's finest nightclub team put on the most impressive of exhibitions of softball expertise before pulling defeat from the jaws of victory. Yes, it was true. The high-techsters proved that a well-conditioned mind could defeat a well-conditioned beer-belly in a game of skill. They were ready to take on the league.

Needless to say, the sun started shining on the crew from CambridgePark Drive. InfoLeftfielder and Activation Eastern Region Sales Manager Jack Tretton threw out a Miller Communications player at home on a strike from left field via relay man O'Neill (he wasn't in his car). InfoPitcher and Marketing Stuart Kirsch had two assists and a putout in one inning against Gold Hill Computers, making the last out from a position familiar only to contortionists. InfoInfielder and Micro Hacker Duncan Blanchard made some sparkling grabs at second base against Venturecom. InfoPinchhitter and Activation Sales Administrative Assistant Tara Dolan had two RBIs in her first plate appearances of the season.

## The bearded guy in the stands

The one thing that seemed to bother the team throughout the season was the bearded guy in the stands who had a big yellow sign that read "John 3:16."

Well, by the time you're reading this, the season is over, the team's mitts are again collecting mold in the store room, the great plays are relived in moments of drunken excitement, the errors are dim memories that someone else committed. But for those who took part, it was special. Knowing full well that "It Happens Every Spring" InfoPlayers can't wait for the IWL (Indoor Wiffleball League) to start.

During cold snowy days Infoployees were doing more than shoveling snow or sled riding.

Sometime in January, while the final touches were being added to *Lurking Horror*, a strange thing occurred. One starless snowbound night two people sat sipping cocktails around a fire. The talk turned to tales of terror and the two moved close together. Perhaps it was one to many hot toddies or too many ghost stories that led to the heated evening between our own creative art genius Carl Genatossio and his wife, Nina, which resulted in the conception of Carl's best package to date. But we will have to wait 'til October to see this masterpiece.

Meanwhile, Imp Steve Meretzky put his snowbound hours to good use trying out new x-rated puzzles with his wife Betty. The long winter left her with a fetish for taking early pregnancy tests.

## Dear Diary . . .

According to Steve "they turned her on." According to their doctor the long months of experimentation produced results that will yield a little one sometime in January. Perhaps Steve will need some help in picking a name for his Pebbles or Bam Bam. Should we have a baby name contest?

Before babies, before Christmas, before The Road Trip, Micro King Tom Veldran was a single man. A few days before the Christmas party Hollywood hijacked TV to New Hampshire on a booze run. Well, driving was hectic, cold and a bottle of Baily's long. Hollywood dropped TV off at home where he was greeted by his girlfriend Lisa. Two hours later on bended knee he lost his bachelorhood, forever. On

July twelfth, Tom officially entered Infocom's Baby Race.

Recently our VP of R & D, Chris Reeve and his lady Nancye stole off to the MIT Chapel to exchange vows. Though they had planned this union in secret, they didn't get away without an InfoToast and a bottle of champagne for the honeymoon.

The hands-down winner of this year's reproduction award, and not because she knows how to fix the copiers, is our receptionist Mary Ellen O'Connor, who gave birth to her second Infobaby, Jacqueline in June.

Who's next to enter the realm of rapture? Could it be Amy Briggs, author of our new romance *Plundered Hearts*?

Need advice about love or romance in the world of computers? Write me, Dear Diary, c/o *The Status Line*.

# More about Nord and Bert and Punster

Continued from page 1

tise to bear in order to restore Punster to tranquility. And when you do, you'll sample the sweet taste of victory.

The short-story structure of *Nord and Bert* offers a unique new method of playing an Infocom game. Since the individual stories are in essence separate worlds—each with their own locations, characters, and objects—a story may be played and completed in one sitting, and the satisfaction level is equal to that attained from playing other Infocom games, which can take many days or weeks. *Nord and Bert* is the game for you if you're that busy tinker, tailor, soldier or spy who doesn't have tones of time to tend to our tantalizing textual titles. Or if you're the party animal, *Nord and Bert* is the perfect pastime to play with your pals, since some cliches are notoriously elu-

sive when you're alone, and you can show off your worldly knowledge and marvel at your friends' command of the hackneyed phrase. No doubt everyone will want to take a stab at it and put in their two cents' worth.

*Nord and Bert* also introduces some other new features that are bound to be crowd pleasers. The short stories are as easy to play for the novice as the Infocom pro. Mapping is a thing of the past since all accessible locations are displayed at the top of the screen. Just type in the name of the location you want to go to and you're there.

When it comes to hints, *Nord and Bert* brings you some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that Infocom will never publish an *InvisiClues* hint booklet for *Nord and Bert*. The good news is that you'll never need one, because the hints are all on

the disk! Just type HINT, and you'll be able to see hints for any puzzle that has you stumped. But the hints won't spoil anything for you, for you only see what you want to see when you want to see it. No fair peeking now!

As usual, we strive to go that extra mile for our customers by enhancing our software with unique and interesting packaging elements. This time around you will get a beautiful full-color booklet of original cartoons by Kevin Pope, author of *The Day Gravity Was Turned Off in Topeka*. So, get together with your friends, laugh over Kevin's cartoons and then try to save Punster. Language may be twisted in Punster, but words needn't fail you.

But don't think that the fun stops here. In every package of *Nord and Bert*, there's a special offer that lets you double your pleasure and double over

in laughter. It's a coupon you can send in with \$14.95 to receive *Ballyhoo*, Jeff O'Neill's first interactive mystery set under the circus bigtop. This is a savings of up to \$25.

In *Ballyhoo* you'll be tempted by cotton candy and tattooed ladies, but you must find out who kidnapped the owner's daughter before someone makes a permanent space for you in the freak show.

Ready to bring you to your knees in early September, *Nord and Bert* will be available for a wide range of personal computers, including Apple II series, Macintosh (512K) and Atari ST series. Also Commodore 64 and 128 and Amiga, and IBM PC series and 100% compatibles. Suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other computer systems.

## Introducing VisiClues: Some hints for recent games

We know that all you InfoFans out there have rushed out and bought all of our recent games—*Hollywood Hijinx* and *Bureaucracy*—and we know how much you hate to buy our newer releases—*Stationfall* and *The Lurking Horror*—before you've finished the old ones. Therefore, starting with this issue of *The Status Line*, we are offering VisiClues to help you through the hardest puzzles in the not-so-latest releases.

Here's how it works: included are two questions from the hardest puzzles of *Hollywood Hijinx* and *Bureaucracy*—but the answers have been encrypted (Ollie North would have been proud). It's a simple substitution cipher with the encryption key on page 3. You can either: use the key to decrypt the VisiClues you need; crack the encryption

key to solve the clues you need; or crack the key for the fun of it.

### Bureaucracy

How can I deposit a negative check?

- Bsinfocotp g tspgcoms resrw of uows zocebygzotp infocoms qntsa. And qdfc rnmisy ces jgugtrs xynq andy grndtc.
- Bsinfocotp infocoms qntsa of ces fgqs gf g tspgcoms zocebygzgu.
- Czn zyntpf qgws g yopec gtb czn tspgcomsf qgws g infocoms.
- Cyz zocebygzotp ces tspgcoms resrw.
- Ces zocebygzgu csuusy rgt's egibus resrwf. Rntbdr c ces cygtfgrcont gc ces bsinfoc zotbnz.
- Cn bsinfoc ces tspgcoms resrw (xny g infocoms qndtc cn andy grndtc) xouu ndc ces zocebygzgu fuoi gtb

egtb oc cn ces bsinfoc csuusy guntp zoce ces tspgcoms resrw.

How do I navigate the switchgear maze?

- Idc ces dtugjsusb rgycyobps ces vugpgpfgtf pgms and ot ces rmqidscy.
- Cais ioyotcy, iyotcr, iyotcb gtb iyotcs ot ces iynisy nybsy cn psc g qsfpgs.
- Uscscyf j ceyndpe s nrddy sufszesys.
- Ces qgou egb infcgu fcorwsyf j ceyndpe s.
- Bn ces iyotcf ot ces nybsy and iorwsb di ces qgou fcorwsyf (inidugy igygtnog, xuasy, rndint jnnwusc, stmsunis).
- Ysgb ces qsfpgs msyscorguua cn dtbysfcgfb oc.

qstcontf ceysy boysrcontf zoceot ces qnmos cocusf.

G. Cdyt ces fcgeds ot cesfs boysrcontf cn dtunrw ces xyntc bnny.

I know there's a room above the second floor. How do I get there?

- Dfs ces runfsc/susmgcny cn psc cesys.
- Smsy jst ni cni nx ces runfsc jastcyotp ces runfsc bnny nts xunny gjnms ces susmgcny?
- Ox ces runfsc qnmsb cn ces frntb xunny zeous and zsys nt cni, and'b js gc ces gcor!
- And rgt'c grcomgs ces susmgcny rntcynuf xyng ces cni nx ces runfsc.
- Iduu g runfsc isp gtb ysgb ces bsfryoicnt msya runfsua.
- Ces runfsc bnsft'c qnms dtcou ces isp of ysusgfsb. Zest ces isp ftgfg jgrw di, ces susmgcny of grcomgsb.
- And tssb g coqotp bsmors cn enub bnzt ces ceoyb isp dtcou and rgt psc nt cni nx ces runfsc.
- Rgysxduua slgqots ces jdrwsc.
- Oc'f ydfcotp ceyndpe, cesysxny oc'f usgwa.
- Xouu ces jdrwsc zoce zgcsy gc pgybst, tnyce. Hdorwua yscdyt cn rnfsc (ceyndpe igcon bnny), egt p ces jdrwsc nt ces ceoyb isp, pn cn ces cni nx ces runfsc, gtb zgoc xny ces runfsc cn qnms dizgyb.

### Hollywood Hijinx

How do I get inside Aunt Hildegard's house?

- Gc ces jspottotp, zguw sgfc ny zsf, cest fndce.
- Tncors cegc ces fcgeds of xgrotp g boxxsystc boysrcont.
- And rgt cdyt ces fcged ot gta boysrcont, uows g rnjotgcont unrw bogu.
- Guu and tssb of ces rnjotgcont.
- Xotb gta rnjotgcont boysrcontf ot gta pgqs qgcsyoguf?
- Ces insq nt dtrus jdbba'f iencn



Richard Ackermann and Bradley Schenck

## Interested in becoming a college representative for Infocom?

We are looking for college students to represent us on campus. Drop us a line telling us why you think you would be a good college representative. Include in your response any

relevant experience you feel qualifies you for rep work. Write to: The Crimson Kid, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.



# Look, puzzle winners

In Puzzle #13, we provided a transcript from a hypothetical interactive story set in the *Enchanter Trilogy* universe. However, we left out one word from each input in the transcript. To solve the puzzle, you had to fill in the missing words. The first letter of each word then spelled out a sentence:

N nitfol	T tinsot	S snavig
A aimfiz	H helistar	O ozmoo
M meef	E espnis	N nitfol
E exex		
O open	D diagnose	
F fooble	E espnis	
	L lesoch	
	B blorple	
	O open	
	R rezrov	

The answer to "Name the Son of Delbor" is Barbel (of Gurth). This information comes from the cards in the *Spellbreaker* package.

There were 369 entries, of which 352

(95.4%) were correct. This was the most correct entries to a puzzle since Puzzle #4. Wrong answers ranged all over the *Zork/Enchanter* universe: Belboz, Dimwit Flathead, Frobar, Largoneth, Vardik, The Circle of Enchanters. A few people simply submitted "Name the Son of Delbor" as the answer. The most puzzling answer was "The Spell of Speed." Finally, Nick Esposito of Jericho, New York, told us that the answer was "42" with a parenthetical note explaining "Unfortunately, your question was wrong. Therefore you do not win a Nick Esposito T-shirt. Try again next month. Sorry."

25 winners were randomly selected from the 352 people who know their Enchanter cards. Those 25 are: Jeff Paull, Audubon Park, NJ; Gary Makin, Northmead, NSW, Australia; Richard Montoro, Montreal, Canada; William Sushon, Sr., Neshanic Station, NJ; Ron Coleman, Jacksonville, FL; Cheryl Wise, Stow, OH; Lawrence Pedersen,

Atlanta, GA; Anne McDonald, Evanston, IL; Trista Barsumian, Newburgh, IN; Marian Devers, Chicago, IL; Fred Nemec, Tustin, CA; Michael Galgnaitis, Johnson City, NY; Norman Burk, Medina, OH; Justin Politi, Franklin, MI; Sharon Berman, Buffalo, NY; Harald Smit, Indianapolis, IN; Rob

Moser, Mountain View, CA; Phil Murray, Springport, MI; Pat Miller, Ann Arbor, MI; D.J. Johnstone, Belen, NM; Joe Hruska, Fairbanks, AK; Mark Fujimoto, Pearl City, HI; Carol Hodgeman, Cincinnati, OH; Ken DeCruyenaere, Winnipeg, Canada; and Sherene Aram, Concord, MA.

# Describe interactive fiction in 25 words and win \$250

Do you play Infocom stories? How do you describe the experience to someone who never has? Over the years, we've tried in many ways, but now we want to know how you, the people most familiar with our products, do it.

Tell us, in twenty-five words or less, how you would interest a friend in interactive fiction, if he or she had never even heard of it before. We want to get more people excited about our games, so much so that we are willing to give \$250 to the person whose description we judge to be the best. Second prize is two Infocom games of your choice. Third prize is one game of your choice.

All entries must be postmarked on or before October 31, 1987. (International deadline is February 1, 1988. Two games will be awarded for the best description.) All descriptions become the exclusive property of Infocom, Inc. Void where prohibited, taxed or severely frowned upon. Send your name, address, age, description and game choices along with the type of computer you use.

Return your entry (or all the requested information on rice paper written in red ink with an ostrich quill) to: The Status Line, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140, Attention: Razzels.

# A Contest Named Desire

Continued from page 2

All you must do to win this contest is to explain the curious nickname of the new editor. Everyone knows why Hollywood Anderson is called "Dave"... err.. ahh.. er... why Dave Anderson is called "Hollywood," buy why "Stella" for Stu Kirsch? If your explanation is chosen as the best, you can win your favorite Infocom title. A second prize winner will receive a *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* T-shirt. The third place contestant will receive a stunningly beautiful Infocom poster. Also, a special award of any Infocom title will be awarded to the first entrant to come up with the correct reason why Stella is nicknamed as he is.

Include with your entry your name, address, phone number, age, T-shirt size, choice of game and system.

Employees of Infocom, their immediate families, and next-door neighbors are excluded. Entries must be postmarked by November 15, 1987. (No special overseas deadline.) Void where prohibited, taxed, or where repressive governments imprison you for entering contests. The decisions of the judges will be final, and the judges CANNOT be bribed by any amount of money, so don't even try.

Mail your entry to: A Contest Named Desire, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

## Puzzle #15 Entry Form

ANSWERS: 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
 8. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prize: The classic edition of the New York Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt!  
 Send to: Infocom, Inc., The Status Line Puzzle  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

Puzzle Rules: 1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form. 2. Entries must be received by November 15, 1987. 2a. International entries (see page 3) must be received by February 15, 1987. 3. Limit of one entry per person. 4. All entries must be mailed separately. 5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. 6. Infocom employees, their families, and their pet yaks are ineligible. 7. Void where prohibited by law.



Robert Prokop

## >Examine puzzle #15

[Note the entry form and rules for Puzzle #15 are on page 11.]

Every now and then, we like to do a puzzle that doesn't require you to know about specific works of Infocom's interactive fiction. For example, if we did a puzzle based entirely on *Bureaucracy*, those who haven't played *Bureaucracy* would be unable to participate.

So, for Puzzle #15, we're doing a reprise of the extremely popular Puzzle #9. The excerpts below are from hypothetical works of interactive fiction, based on movies and TV shows. Your task is to determine the name of the character you play in each excerpt. Both the first and last names are required (when they exist). The name of the actor is acceptable only if it is the same as the character played. (For example, Howard Cosell in *Bananas*, or Flipper in his TV show.) To get you started, we begin with an example:

### \*\*\* Example \*\*\*

The Set

This is the single location of this game. Near you is a board of white rectangles. Several of these rectangles have letters on them.

Pat is standing next to a huge spinner. On one side of the spinner sits Irwin, a nerdy man with a bow tie; on the other side is Freida, a vapid young woman wearing a paisley polyester dress. Gayle is in the middle.

>READ THE BOARD

"THE HITCHHI-ER'S G-IDE TO THE GALA-Y"

The vapid woman says, "I'd like to buy a U."

>TURN OVER THE U

With exquisite grace and style, you reveal the U. The audience, appreciative of your perfect form, applauds wildly. The board now reads, "THE HITCHHI-ER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAX-Y."

The vapid woman looks vapidly at the board, completely stumped.

**Answer: Vanna White**

### \*\*\* Number One \*\*\*

Jets of gas puff from the front of the space pod as it glides to a halt in front of the huge round doors.

>TURN ON THE RADIO

The radio is now on.

>Hal, OPEN THE PAD BAY DOOR

Nothing happens.

>AGAIN

HAL responds quietly, "I'm afraid I can't do that. This mission is too important for me to allow you to jeopardize it."

>OPEN THE CLAWS

The exterior grasping extensions open, releasing the body of Frank Poole. The body begins drifting away.

### \*\*\* Number Two \*\*\*

Theatre Lobby

This is the plush anteroom where people wait to be seated by the ushers. The theatre lies to the south.

You notice the New York Times' theatre critic nearby.

The crowd continues to stream into the theatre.

>BRIBE THE TIMES' THEATRE CRITIC

You slip the critic a fifty. Incensed, he hurls the bill at your feet and storms into the theatre.

>ENTER THE THEATRE

Rear of Theatre

You are in the Standing Room Only section of the theatre. The stage is quite a distance away, to the south.

Your partner, Leo Bloom, is here.

The band plays the Overture. Leo's excitement bubbles over, and he yells, "This is it!"

>LEO, SHUT UP

Leo shuts up.

The overture ends and the curtain rises. The chorus begins to sing, "Germany was having trouble, what a sad, sad story..."

### \*\*\* Number Three \*\*\*

Lagoon

This is the island's tiny cove. The wrecked hull of the Minnow is beached on the shore. A path runs into the jungle.

>FOLLOW THE PATH

Clearing

This is an open area between the four huts, which lie in the four cardinal directions. A path leads into the jungle.

The professor is here, fiddling with a radio.

>EAST

Your Hut

This is a large grass hut with two beds. A door of finely-woven straw leads west.

Your wife is here, fussing with her make-up.

There is a large trunk here. The trunk contains oodles and oodles of money.

### \*\*\* Number Four \*\*\*

Jungle

Dense jungle, somewhere outside the American border, crawling with enemies.

>EXAMINE ENEMIES

Well, they're probably enemies. None of them have Bibles or American flags. Yeah, that's it, they must be Socialists or maybe Communists or Buddhists or Satirists or one of those "-ists."

>INVENTORY

You have dark brown hair, a bandana (being worn), a .45, three Uzi's, a huge butcher's knife, a rocket launcher (loaded), and one small thermonuclear device.

>KILL ENEMIES

Unleashing everything in your arsenal, you defoliate the surrounding nine thousand acres and rescue a group of POW's who are grateful to see you despite a decade of intense Commie brainwashing. Amazingly you remain unscathed. When the dust clears, you note that all the enemies are dead. You have won.

### \*\*\* Number Five \*\*\*

Tower

You are at the highest peak of the Castle Anthrax. A winding stone stair leads down.

Your identical twin sister, Dingo, is here.

>LIGHT THE GRAIL-SHAPED BEACON

You set fire to the beacon, which is indeed grail-shaped.

>DOWN

Entrance Hall

This is the castle entryway. A massive wooden door to the west is closed. A hall of rough-hewn stone leads east, and a stair winds up into the tower.

You hear a loud pounding from the door, and a hoarse voice bellows, "In the name of King Arthur, open the door!"

>OPEN THE DOOR

As the door opens, Sir Galahad, drenched and exhausted, tumbles into the castle.

### \*\*\* Number Six \*\*\*

Inside the Vault

You are standing just inside the entrance to the main vault of Fort Knox. The massive steel door lies open.

There is an atom bomb here.

Your faithful servant, Odd Job, is standing nearby, looking inscrutable. Odd Job is holding a killer hat.

James Bond is here, disarmed.

The last of the gold bars are being loaded into the truck.

>ODD JOB, HANDCUFF BOND TO THE ATOM BOMB

Odd Job smiles, inscrutably, and begins cuffing Bond to the bomb.

You hear gunfire from outside the fort.

>OUT. CLOSE THE DOOR

Outside the Vault

The gunfire is now much closer. You press the buttons which cause the vault door to swing shut, trapping Bond and Odd Job inside.

### \*\*\* Number Seven \*\*\*

Your Office

This is your tiny office, with desk, typewriter, files, and telephone. Doors lead in, to the north, and out, to the south.

Your intercom buzzes.

>IN

Mr. Drysdale's Office

This is a large, richly appointed office, with a handsome hardwood desk, some plush chairs, and a couch. A door leads out to the south.

Mr. Drysdale is behind his desk, looking upset.

Jed Clampett is seated in one of the plush chairs.

>WAIT

Time passes...

"We've promised this fella he could have all our money if he cures granny's lumbago," explains Jed.

Mr. Drysdale looks faint. "All... all the money?" he gasps.

### \*\*\* Number Eight \*\*\*

Potter's Office

This is a dim, suffocating office. A door to the west leads to the bank lobby.

A goon pushes Mr. Potter's wheelchair into the room. "So," cackles Potter, "A slight discrepancy in your company's books, I hear."

>ASK POTTER FOR MONEY

Potter chuckles evilly. "Do you have any collateral?" he asks.

>INVENTORY

You are carrying an insurance policy and Zuzu's petals.

>SHOW INSURANCE POLICY TO POTTER

Potter sneers at the policy. "Ha! You're worth more dead than alive!"

>BEG

"You once called me a warped, frustrated old man," crows Potter. "What are you but a warped, frustrated young man?"

Grinning broadly, Potter picks up the phone. "I'm going to call the bank examiner and swear out a warrant for your arrest," he explains.



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- These games require 128K.
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- 1 Requires graphics card; Composite monitor recommended; Not available for PCjr.

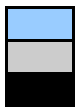
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Apricot							IA2-AC1 \$14.95	
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)	IZ0-AT1 \$14.95	IM1-AT1 \$14.95	IM2-AT1 \$14.95	IS1-AT1 \$14.95	IS2-AT1 \$14.95	IA1-AT1 \$14.95	IA2-AT1 \$14.95	GS1-AT1 \$14.95
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Commodore 64 (1541 disk)	IZ0-CO1 \$14.95	IM1-CO1 \$14.95	IM2-CO1 \$14.95	IS1-CO1 \$14.95	IS2-CO1 \$14.95	IA1-CO1 \$14.95	IA2-CO1 \$14.95	
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Commodore Amiga	IZ0-CO4 \$14.95	IM1-CO4 \$14.95	IM2-CO4 \$14.95	IS1-CO4 \$14.95	IS2-CO4 \$14.95	IA1-CO4 \$14.95	IA2-CO4 \$14.95	
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Kaypro II CP/M	IZ0-KA1 \$14.95	IM1-KA1 \$14.95	IM2-KA1 \$14.95	IS1-KA1 \$14.95		IA1-KA1 \$14.95	IA2-KA1 \$14.95	
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NEC PC-8000 (56K CP/M)		IM1-NE2 \$14.95		IM1-NE2 \$14.95				
Osborne (CP/M)			IM2-OS1 \$14.95		IS2-OS1 \$14.95	IA1-OS1 \$14.95		
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Apple Macintosh		IZ1-AP2 \$39.95	IZ2-AP2 \$44.95	IZ3-AP2 \$44.95	IT1-AP2 \$69.95	IZ4-AP2 \$29.95	IZ5-AP2 \$44.95	IZ6-AP2 \$49.95	IT2-AP2 \$59.95	IZ7-AP2* \$39.95	IM3-AP2 \$39.95	IM4-AP2 \$39.95	IM5-AP2 \$39.95
Apricot		IZ1-AC1 \$14.95				IZ4-AC1 \$14.95							
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)		IZ1-AT1 \$34.95	IZ2-AT1 \$39.95	IZ3-AT1 \$39.95	IT1-AT1 \$59.95	IZ4-AT1 \$24.95	IZ5-AT1 \$39.95	IZ6-AT1 \$44.95	IT2-AT1 \$49.95		IM3-AT1 \$34.95	IM4-AT1 \$34.95	IM5-AT1 \$34.95
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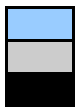
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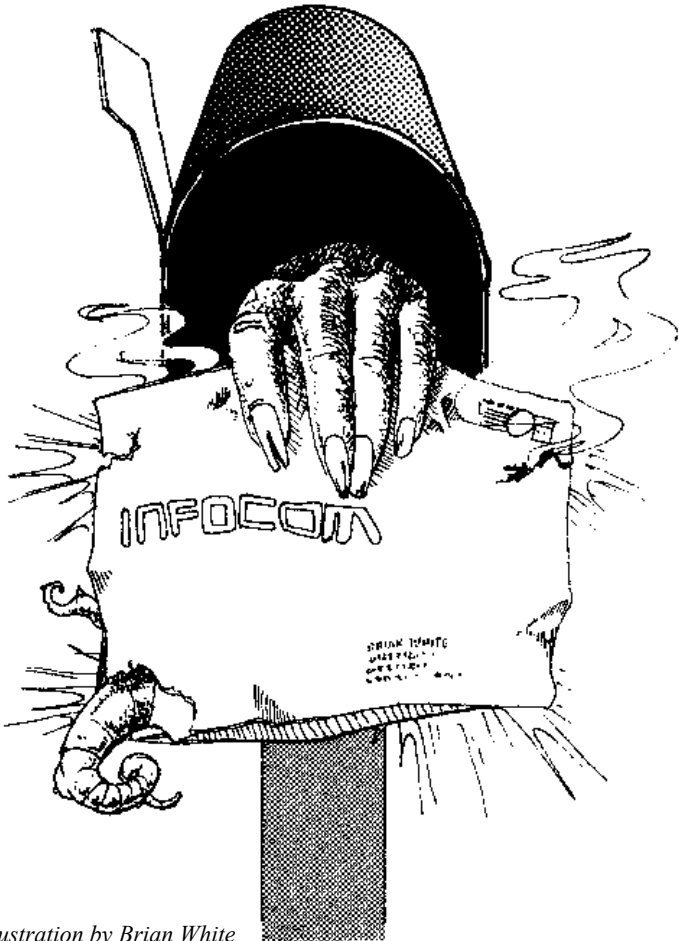


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The three handsome gift packs include the Science Fiction Classics, the Classic Mystery Library and the Enchanter Trilogy. Great gift ideas, huh?

## Three gift packs just right for the holiday season ahead (hint... hint)

It's a fantasy we all share: finding The Ultimate Gift. A gift that stuns the lucky recipient with its tastefulness and high quality. A gift that comes in various styles to suit all tastes. A gift whose handsome appearance stands out amongst more common offerings. A gift that provides

hundreds of hours of matchless pleasure. A gift that establishes you as the epitome of generous gift-giving while actually saving you a bundle, because it's sold at a bargain price. How many hours have you spent searching for such a thing?

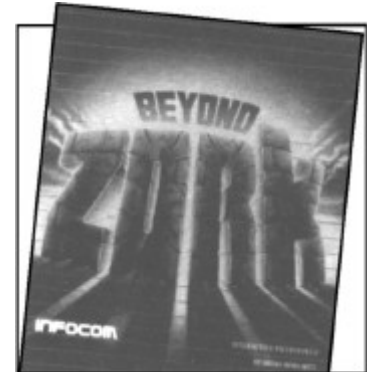
Please turn to page 10

# Wait no more... it's Beyond Zork

Ten years ago, in June of 1977, *Zork* was born. Since that time, it has been played and enjoyed by literally millions of people in the United States and abroad. The three *Zork* sagas are considered true classics in the field of entertainment software.

During these intervening ten years, we have advanced our technology by making our parsers smarter, our usable vocabularies larger, and our game-playing methodologies more flexible and fun. We have introduced many new and exciting games which have been met with critical acclaim both from you and from our peers in the industry. But it has always been *Zork* that has drawn the most favorable and evocative comments. The phrase "give us another *Zork*" has appeared in countless correspondence and conversations.

However, we have been cautious about writing a new *Zork* game, with the feeling that any game with the *Zork*



Have you ever seen an Ur-grue? There's one waiting for you inside this and every *Beyond Zork* package.

name had better be able to deliver a level of puzzle invention, storytelling, and technical expertise that matched the original and then went a step further. We are now confident we have taken that step. Therefore we give you

Please turn to page 5

# Real time spy intrigue with *Border Zone*

## >GO EAST

17:51

You leave the side of tracks and head into the forest. The darkness is deeper here, as less moonlight reaches the forest floor. The snow crunches under your feet, and you pause after moving a hundred or so yards into the forest.

The sound of barking dogs echoes into the night. They've moved closer now, perhaps not more than a few hundred yards to the northwest.

17:52

## >RUN EAST

You emerge from the thick forest and come to a roadway running from north to southwest.

The sound the dogs is much louder now; and you can hear the shouting voices of the guards they accompany. They can't be more than a hundred yards to the west.

17:53

You can hear the guard dogs within 50 yards! Their voices reach a fevered pitch—a guard calls out—a muffled explosion—the night sky is lit by a by a single red-orange flare.

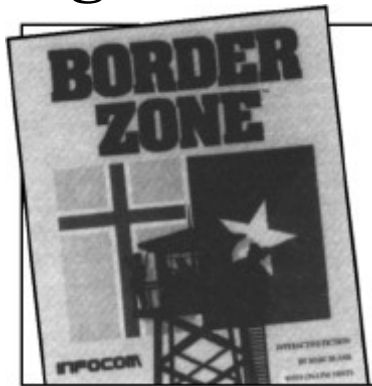
## >E

17:54

You leave the roadway come to a dank area at the edge of a swamp. Putrid sulphurous vapors fill your lungs as you step to the edge of the noisome waters.

The sounds of dogs barking madly and soldiers barking orders are close upon you. A muddled explosion—a signal flare lightens the sky with a red-orange glow. Before you can react, you are spotted! Brilliant white searchlights are aimed upon you, blinding you long enough for more soldiers and border guards to arrive. With no hope of escape, you surrender to the guards, and are led away, handcuffed, to the border station.

When you're a spy trapped behind the Iron Curtain, timing is crucial. Moments lost or precautions not taken result in arrest, exposure... or worse.



*Border Zone*, by Marc Blank (of *Zork* fame) is our first spy thriller game.

a real clock which ticks on regardless of your actions. As you pause to decide which way to go, the guard dogs keep on coming. The result is a pulse-pounding adventure that's far more suspenseful than any spy thriller you've ever read.

The story begins on the train to Litzenburg, a peaceful country just outside the Iron Curtain. In the town of Ostnitz, huge crowds gathering for Constitution Day festivities. An honored guest is the American ambassador,

In *Border Zone*, Infocom's first interactive spy story, the challenge of a spy mission in an Eastern bloc country is made all the more gripping by the addition of real time. Unlike other Infocom stories in which time progresses only with each input, time passes in *Border Zone* according to

William Huttinger, who led the Allied forces during the liberation of Litzenburg in 1945. The assassination of such a beloved national hero would severely undermine the Litzenburgers, destabilizing this key neutral territory. But just such a plan is underway.

Speeding towards the border through the Eastern bloc country of Frobria are an easy-going American businessman, an ambitious young American spy, and a ruthless KGB agent. All three are soon to become entangled in the assassination plot, their lives intertwining as each carries out his perilous assignment.

You'll see the story from three viewpoints, as you step into the shoes of a different major character in each of the three chapters of *Border Zone*. In Chapter I, you're an Average Joe traveling through Frobria on business. When the injured American spy asks you to deliver a top-secret document to a contact at the border, you must act carefully to avoid arousing suspicion both on the train and at the border station.

Chapter II puts you in the role of Topaz, the American spy. You've escaped the KGB by jumping from the

Please turn to page 5



## > Read the letters to the editor

Gentlemen,

Alas, I wish to report a "bug" in my Seastalker disk. The program asks me to type in my last name. As soon as I do, it acts like I want to save a game! I haven't even started it up yet! What's up?

Yours Frustrated,  
Joe Restore  
Phoenix, AZ

[Joe, you're not alone, we have received a similar letter from Bob Restart.]

Dear Status Line (Formerly The New Zork Times),

After reading Alan M. Taren's list of 8th dimensional games (TSL Summer 87) I realized that Mr. Taren's counterpart left out several games.

Feel free to publish this in TSL, but please don't make real games out of these without paying me lots of real Japanese currency so I can exchange it for even more real U.S. currency.

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Freeway*—You're taking your driver's test on an LA freeway when you realize you forgot to bring your gun...

*Snark III*, revised—Finish *Snark III* and you get to buy the *Snark Trilogy* because we forgot to put an essential game piece in the *Snark III* package but managed to put it in the *Snark Trilogy* package. Just a slight oversight.

Coming Soon—*InvisiStructions*—You can now buy those neat little markers that show the invisible writing on the instructions to all our games.

Dave Cilluffo  
Edinboro, PA

Dear Infocom Folks,

I wanted to drop a note to let you know that you

made my a) day b) month c) year with *Stationfall*. *Planetfall* was the first Infocom game that I played, and is still my favorite (and I've played every single one of them!)

I'm a microcomputer consultant and educator specializing in accounting software (yeah, I know, zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz... even I nod off sometimes—it's a dirty job but somebody's got to do it)...

Now if you could come out with a game every month (or week) you could make my life complete. I'm convinced that Infocom games run a close second to sex (there may even be days when the order is reversed!)

I've played most of the adventure games on the market... but yours are the only ones I can't do without. It's worse than being addicted to drugs.

Paula K. Wallace  
Novato, CA

p.s. I love The Status Line! You are all warped, just my kind of folks.

Dear Sirs [sic],

I wish you would create more spy and mystery games... After all, who wants to fight thieves, wizards, trolls, and Dungeon-masters, anyway...

I like your new name [*The Status Line*]. It's a real eye-catcher. It gives the paper a whole concept, instead of just stupid *Zork*, like in *New Zork Times*. I think interactive fiction is a good idea. My girlfriend and I like to sit down and talk while playing a game. My family likes it too! We all sit down and one types in the moves, one makes a map, and the others come up with ideas. We usually end up jumping up and down on the couch and yelling out solutions. It's quite a family gathering.

If you ever need a lawyer, just write; my dad's a lawyer. Keep up the good work and don't *Zork* around.

Nathan Baumbach III  
Indianola, NE

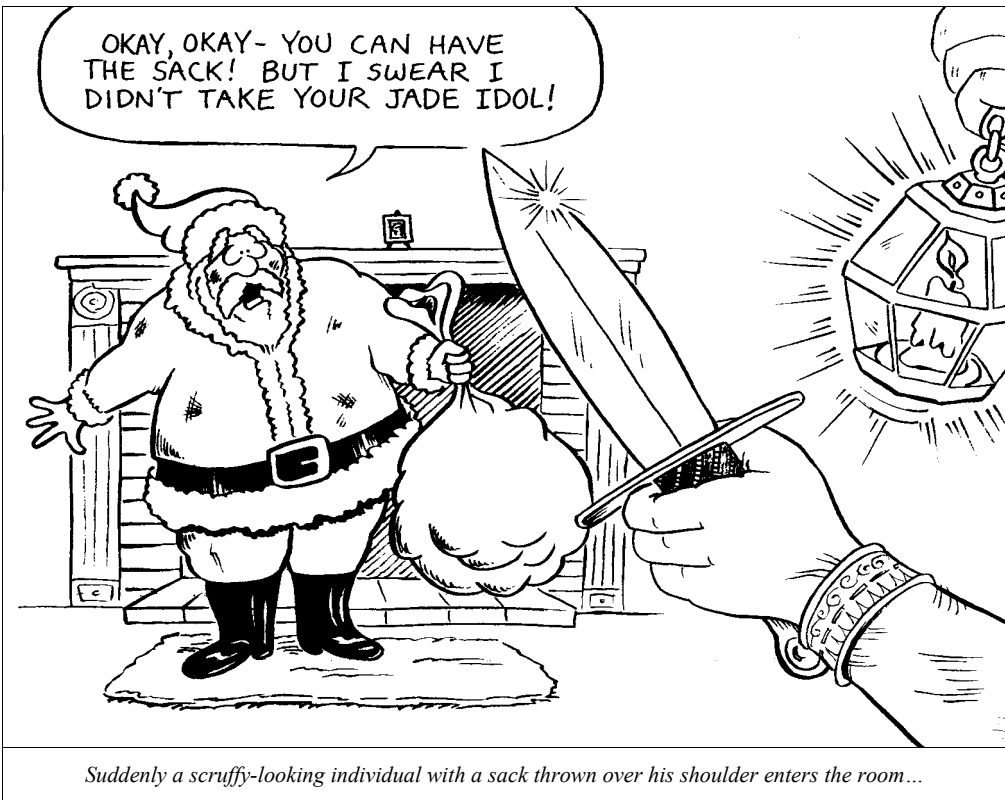
To Whom It May Concern.

I am sending this letter and my half-finished puzzle in formal protest of *The Status Line's* latest puzzle. [Puzzle #14 - Ed.] I own seven of your titles (that's \$280 worth of software, folks) and consider myself fan/supporter/maniac. Therefore, you can how distraught I was to discover that in order to finish the puzzle, you needed to own *all* the games! Is this a marketing ploy? Absolutely desperate for a T-shirt, I was on the verge of rushing out to buy the other games before I came to my senses (such as they are).

In the future could you only have puzzles that you need to own *some* of the titles for? I'm loyal, I'm devoted (I haven't bought any other brand of game for three years) but I refuse to spend \$400 to win a \$10 T-shirt! Please be sympathetic to my plight.

Yours in impending poverty,  
Nina Karp  
Needham, MA

[Puzzle Editor's Reply: By my count, Puzzle #14 contains information from only 12 of Infocom's approximately 25 titles. You don't need to fill in every word in the grid in order to get the puzzle's ultimate answer! We like to provide a mix of puzzle difficulties—of the last eight puzzles, two required knowledge of many games, two required knowledge of a trilogy of games, one required knowledge of a single game, and three required no knowledge of any specific Infocom title!]



Suddenly a scruffy-looking individual with a sack thrown over his shoulder enters the room...

Steve Mayes and Mark Cantrell

## The Status Line

Mike Dornbrook, Marshall

Stuart A. Kirsch, Sheriff

Hollywood Dave Anderson, Sheriff

Gayle Syska, Deputy Sheriff

Deputies: Amy Briggs, Steve Meretzky

Gary Brennan, Matt Hillman,

Diane Morlock, Torn Veldran,

Stu Galley, Jon Palace, Scott Oilman

Elizabeth Langosy, Joe Prosser,

Dave Lebling, Curtis Montague

In jail: Jeff O'Neill, Marc Blank,

Tomas Bok, Brian Moriarty

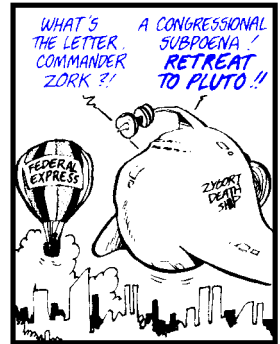
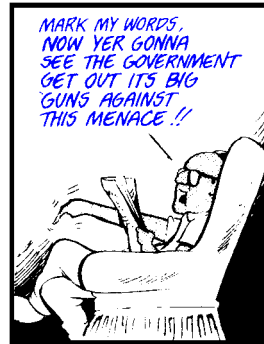
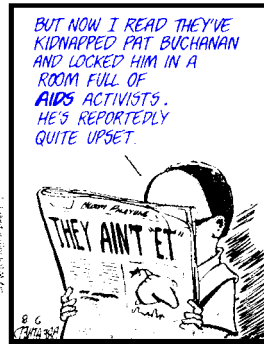
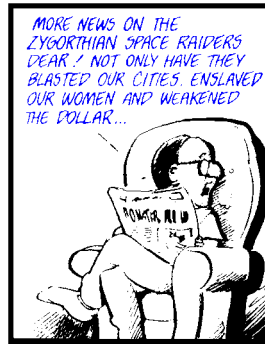
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125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

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# Zork in Bloom

We'd like to thank the 83 Status Line readers who sent this Bloom County cartoon to us. We also wish to thank Berke Breathed for furthering the legend of Zork. He'll hear from our lawyers soon.



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# Lurking Horror features sound for Amiga

Players of the Amiga version of *The Lurking Horror* may be surprised to find that as they encounter a horde of murderous rats in the sewer pipes beneath GUE Tech, an actual rat squeal pierces the air. No, it's not the product of an overactive imagination. Rather, it is one of a series of sound effects that has been added to the Amiga version of Infocom's first horror story. *The Status Line* recently cornered Dave Lebling, the author of *The Lurking Horror*, and asked him a few questions about this ground-breaking feature.



Dave Lebling hosts an intimate get together in his office recently to honor the release of the Amiga version *Lurking Horror*.

**TSL:** Why did you decide to put sound effects in *The Lurking Horror*?

**Dave:** First of all, we have been discussing for some time the possibility of putting sound in our games in general. In a horror story in particular, sound is something that can really enhance the experience. The things you think about in horror stories are as often sounds as sights. Thinking about some of my favorite horror movies and horror books, sound really stands out in some of the most horrifying scenes.

**TSL:** Who designed the sound effects, and how were they designed?

**Dave:** The sound effects were designed by a guy at Activision named Russ Lieblich. He's done the sound effects for a fair number of Activision products. He has come up with a new scheme for producing sound effects, and some of his new ideas are used in

*The Lurking Horror*. All the sounds are digitized, and because of this they sound eerily realistic.

**TSL:** How did you decide which sound effects to put in the story?

**Dave:** The process we went through began with Gary Brennan, one of our testers, playing the game and making a list of all the sounds described in the course of the story. Then I edited the list according to the sounds that I thought would make the most sense and

have the greatest effect on the game. The list was sent around to people at the company to get their opinions. Based on our consensus of what would be best, I sent Russ a prioritized list. Some of the sounds which were finally produced are the squeal of a rat, the creak of an opening hatch, and the distinctive "thunk" of an axe biting into flesh.

**TSL:** Will sound effects be used in future Infocom productions?

**Dave:** The capability exists. Whether they are used in a game depends on the character of the story, and what the author wants. It also depends to some extent on the response to sound in *The Lurking Horror*. If the folks who play it find that it significantly adds to their experience of playing the game, we're certainly going to take a lot closer look at using it more.

**TSL:** Will sound effects be implemented on any computers besides the Amiga in the future?

**Dave:** Some of the other high-end machines have the capability. In particular, the Macintosh, Apple IIs and Atari ST can generate excellent sound effects. There are no current plans for producing sound effects for these machines, but again, that may change if response is favorable and demand is high.

**TSL:** Does this represent a move towards the future for Infocom?

**Dave:** We always want to take advantage of anything which can enhance a story, and if we can do it in a reasonable way, we will do it. We never stop looking for better ways of doing things as well as more and different things to do in our stories.

# Imps' picnic basket wings its way to Wyoming winner

The results of the Win the Imps Picnic Basket Contest are official. The winner was Anthony Doll of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Anthony will receive an exact replica of the Cornerstone box the Imps use for their weekly lunches, stuffed full of plates, knives, spoons and forks. The three runners-up, Ann Allen, Catherine Freedman and Al Adams, will each re-

ceive T-shirts left over from the Marathon of the Minds.

We haven't decided on any products for sure yet. (Kinda busy with Christmas coming.) But we'll let you know. Even though the deadline was very early we still counted every entry we received until September 16. Sorry. The mailing house was nuked.



Bob Roeh and Deke McClelland

# About Beyond Zork's interface

Like the finest of wines, our stories continue to mature with age. Never a company to jump into the marketplace with gaudy or ill-conceived bells and whistles, we have always sought to develop an intelligently measured style, much like any evolving author would. So it is with great pleasure that, along with the introduction of *Beyond Zork*, we are also introducing a new type of story interface. While this new interface will not appear in all of our games, variations of it certainly will.

The main features of the new interface included in *Beyond Zork* are graphic character-status displays, on-screen mapping, and definable function keys.

**Who are you?**  
In *Beyond Zork* you can shape your own character by dividing "potential" up among six attributes. Or you can choose one of six preset characters.

**Name your possessions**  
A further breakthrough allows you to give names to weapons and some creatures.

selection.  
acter you want.

**Where are you?**  
*Beyond Zork* features on-screen mapping so you won't need the skills of an experienced cartographer. On-screen mapping features two modes. Zoom In (below) affords you a close-up look at your immediate surroundings. Zoom Out (above) allows you an extended view of the area.

**We do windows!**  
The display of *Beyond Zork* features a content-selectable window. By using the PRIORITY command, you can have the window display your status, inventory, or room descriptions.

**Command our keys!**  
Tired of typing "point the wand of annihilation at..."? Well now, with the aid of programmable function keys, you can enter long phrases and often-used commands with the touch of a single button.



# Beyond Zork: A coconut hunt in Quendor

Continued from page 1

the newest jewel in the Zorkian crown—*Beyond Zork*.

It is the year 966 GUE and the Age of Magick is rapidly coming to an end, plunging the once-peaceful region of Quendor (formerly known as the Great Underground Empire) into total chaos.

## The Collapse of Magic

Not even the most powerful sorcerer of the mighty Guild of Enchanters has been able to halt the collapse of magic and hold back the Age of Science. In the face of this situation the Guildmasters have convened by the shore of the Great Sea for one final fateful time.

The sorcerers know they will not live to see the day when magic will again hold sway over Quendor. But, they do have a plan to ensure that their vast and ancient knowledge is not lost through the erosion of time. They will dispatch an innocent adventurer (for Quendor is

now far too dangerous for those practiced in the thaumaturgical arts) to regain and then hide the transcendent Coconut of Quendor, within whose time-impervious shell lies the essence of their wisdom. Their hope? That the coconut will endure, beyond the Age of Magick, beyond the Age of Science, and even, *Beyond Zork*.

## Coconut of Quendor

In *Beyond Zork* you're the innocent adventurer who has been chosen to find the world's last great magical object, the aforementioned Coconut of Quendor, which is now in the possession of a group of demi-gods who definitely do not want you to have it. But take heart: even though you didn't make this dangerous world, there's light at the end of this grue-infested tunnel.

Through the auspices of *Beyond Zork's* author Brian Moriarty and our systems group, you'll be able to build

up your "character". That's because, besides giving you a compelling new tale of the Zorkian universe, Brian has added the thrilling combat and character building aspects of role-playing games. That's right, at the beginning of the story, you create your own character by assigning various amounts of "potential" for each of six traits (strength, intelligence, luck, etc.). You can also allow the story to create a random character or you can select a pre-defined character. And you'll need to choose wisely because the danger is everywhere.

## Hacking and Slashing in the GUE

Your newly created "self" will have to solve fantastic new puzzles involving many wondrous objects and unforgettable characters. But don't be surprised if you have to stop thinking for a moment and defend yourself, as you're likely to be menaced by anything from a discipline crab or a giant corbie to an insidious monkey grinder or a pair of knights with flaming eyes. You'll be wielding, thrusting, parrying, hacking, and slashing just like any seasoned role-player, but you'll be doing it all in the marvelous GUE, where it was meant to be done. And with each battle won, puzzle solved, or new scroll or treasure under your belt, your traits will be enhanced. But watch out! If you say the wrong thing or get into a fight that you're not prepared for (the right weapons and armor are always essential for a suc-

cessful combatant) you'll watch those traits fall until the cold hand of death is upon you.

Did we say watch? You bet, because with our brand-new interface you'll have scrollable windows, graphic status screens and on-screen mapping to look at besides the many fantastic new locales that Brian has conjured up for your mind's eye.

## The Lore and Legend of Quendor

About this time, many readers start to think, "I wonder what else comes in the package with this great new Infocom game?" Well, our master designers have created two beautiful objects d'art for you. First, a beautiful book, *The Lore and Legend of Quendor* (considered to be the last word on the subject) and second, one of the most spectacular maps ever produced by our master cartographers. Did somebody say *Mega-Zork*?

*Beyond Zork* is Brian Moriarty's third work of interactive fiction. His previous works are *Wishbringer* and *Trinity*.

Scheduled for release in mid-October, *Beyond Zork* will be available for a wide variety of personal computers including Apple II series, Macintosh, Atari ST, Commodore 128, Amiga, IBM series and 100% compatibles. An Apple IIGs version is planned. Suggested retail price is \$44.95 for Commodore 128 and \$49.95 for all other systems.

# More about Border Zone

Continued from page 1

train, but now find yourself, seriously wounded and dressed in your everyday clothes, in the wintry forest near the border. To survive, you must keep yourself alive and alert as you confront the search dogs, the electric fence, the border guards, and other such obstacles blocking your path to freedom.

In the final chapter of *Border Zone*, you're the Soviet Spy, arriving in Ostnitz shortly before Huttering's Constitution Day address. With Topaz on your trail, you have a crucial task to complete as the moments count down towards the assassination.

*Border Zone* contains on-screen hints to keep the story moving and thereby maintain the high level of suspense. Like *InvisiClues*, they're carefully constructed to reveal only the information you need, when you want it. But hints take you only so far. Even when you know exactly what to do, discretion and timing are crucial to the successful

completion of each chapter.

To give you a head start on your missions, the *Border Zone* package provides you with the necessary items for getting by behind the Iron Curtain. The *I am Frobnia* tourist guide and phrasebook, illustrated with scenic Frobnian photos, "helps you find precise words to say." The surveyor's map of the border, published by the Frobnian Department of Measurements, gives you an idea of the terrain in Chapter II. You also get a Frobnia National Railway matchbook and a business card from historic Ostnitz.

*Border Zone* was written by Marc Blank, a pioneer in interactive fiction and the author of such ground-breaking works as *Zork* and *Deadline*.

It will be available in mid-November for the Apple II series, IBM PC and 100% compatibles, Macintosh, and Commodore 64/128. Suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

# Tell your contest idea to Pat Sajak

*The Status Line* is always on the lookout for new, fresh contest ideas. Where better to turn than to you, our devoted fandom. Here's what not to do: 1) Don't send in ideas for the TSL puzzle. 2) Don't send in the idea for having readers come up with ideas for games

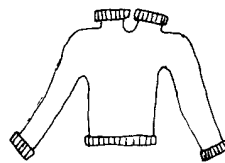
actually write a game.

Here's what to do: 1) Send in your contests. You know—Win a Date, Win the Imps' Picnic Basket, etc. If we use your idea, we'll send you a free game. Send your ideas to Pat Sajak, c/o *The Status Line*.

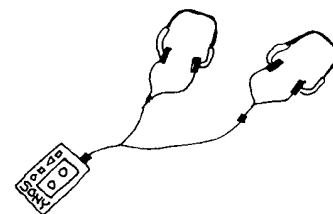
## VisiClues Cipher Key

From: ABCDEFGHIJ KLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
To: TCKESPAIRWXDOHLUZYBNBMFGQJV

## What Zaphod Got For Christmas:



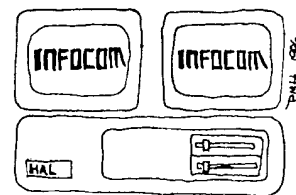
A TURTLENECK SWEATER ...



A TAPE PLAYER ...



"HIS-AND-ALSO-HIS"  
PERIL-SENSITIVE  
SUNGLASSES...



AND A NEW INFOCOM GAME!

Joseph F. Mundy

# Here is a second look at three classic titles

## Seastalker

Remember the first time you ever played one of our games? You probably liked the concept, but it was so damned *frustrating*. You didn't know what to do, you couldn't solve any puzzles, and you couldn't get into the story. We hope you persevered: but you can understand why some of your friends or relatives don't have the patience or appreciation for the games we create.

*Seastalker* is designed for newcomers: the puzzles are easier, there are plenty of hints, and a map is included. It's easy enough for a nine-year-old, but according to *People* magazine, "it can just as easily enthrall an oldster." *Seastalker* is the perfect gift for anyone who hasn't played an Infocom game, whether it's your nephew, your mother, or a friend.

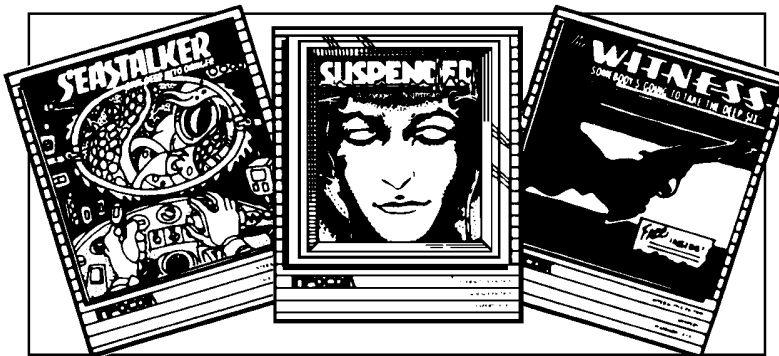
*Seastalker* is part Huck Finn, part Jules Verne. You play a scientist whose latest invention is the *Scimitar*, a two-person submarine with extensor claws. (It's rather like *Alvin*, the little submarine which recently probed the *Titanic*.) The story begins in your laboratory, where the commander of the Aquadome calls for help on the videophone. The Aquadome is being attacked by a huge sea monster!

With your friend Tip as co-pilot, you navigate the *Scimitar* out of the test tank and into Frobton Bay. Using depth control, a sonarscope, and other equipment, you avoid the shoals, perhaps passing a submerged wreck or two (not to mention some friendly whales) and race to the Aquadome, a giant underwater research center. The sea monster is nowhere to be seen; but when you dock at the Aquadome and enter it, you find the crew members nervous. For while the sea monster readies another attack on the outside, a traitor is sabotaging the Aquadome from the inside!

## Infocard clues and decoder

The *Seastalker* package contains a navigation chart for Frobton Bay; operating instructions for the *Scimitar*; blueprints for both your lab and the Aquadome, and a Discovery Squad badge. Also included are Infocard clues and a decoder. When you put an Infocard into the decoder and look through the decoder's red window, you can read a message hidden underneath the card's red ink! (If you've played the home version of *Password*, you know how nifty this is.)

If you like really tough puzzles—if you're the kind of person that plays *Spellbreaker* before breakfast—then *Seastalker* isn't for you. But if you want to introduce someone to the



Any one of these three classic titles is sure to bring a warm glow not only to your face but to your computer's monitor as well this winter

world of Infocom interactive fiction, consider *Seastalker*. *Dialogue* magazine called it "a game to be enjoyed by the whole family." And *inCider* magazine said "Infocom couldn't have designed a better game to introduce new players to their adventures."

## Suspended

*Suspended* is as brilliant and bizarre as *Seastalker* is easy and accessible. *Suspended* is reputedly Douglas Adams's favorite game (other than his own games, of course). *Rolling Stone* magazine decreed it "the best computer game," and *Time* magazine called it "perhaps the best computer thriller." *Suspended* is one of Infocom's earliest games—it came out in 1983 and was preceded only by the three *Zorks*, *Deadline*, and *Starcross*—and it remains today one of the most unusual games we've ever done.

Imagine you're in charge of a computer complex 20 miles beneath the surface of the planet. The computers control the weather system, food production, and the transportation system on the planet's surface. All you have to do is make sure the computers run smoothly, by replacing any chips or cables that need maintenance. Very simple.

Unfortunately, you're not able to replace the chips and cables yourself. You are in suspended animation. Your mind, however, is connected to the robots who will do the actual maintenance of the computers. All you have to do is tell the robots what to do. Very simple.

Unfortunately, the most useful robot has been mangled beyond repair. So you are stuck with six specialized robots who, despite their complete loyalty and obedience to you, are quite limited in their abilities.

For instance, the robot named Auda is all ears: she can interpret any sounds within the complex. And Iris is a visual robot, who can describe the looks of things quite well. But Iris can not

more hear than Auda can see. Waldo is an industrial robot with mechanical hands. Sensa can detect movement through vibrational activity, photon emission, and ionic discharge. Whiz is a storehouse of historical and technical information. And Poet—well, Poet does the best he can.

With these robots at your disposal, you must keep the computers running efficiently. How? Well, you need to use the robots to pinpoint problems, getting multiple perspectives so you can figure out what's really going on. (Sensa may feel things moving near the entrance to the complex; Iris may see that humans have walked into the complex; Auda may overhear their conspiratorial conversation; Waldo may scan the humans' briefcases to identify their nefarious contents; and so on.) Then you need to use the robots to solve any problems.

Of course, even simple-sounding actions like identifying an object become difficult when you have to interpret all your information: an object may be described as "a maximized object" by Sensa, "a wavy object" by Waldo, "a brain trio" by Poet, and "a green circuit" by Iris. With Whiz's help, you can eventually identify the object as a #3 replacement maximizing processor for the computer.

## Computers wreak havoc

The computers are all screwed up (of course), and until you figure out how to fix them, the computers wreak havoc on the planet's surface. Your "score" in *Suspended* is the planet's casualty rate, so you're actually trying to get as low a score as possible. As such, you can play *Suspended* many times, each time trying to better your score. The unusual scoring system and the truly unique concept make *Suspended* an early classic, an affirmation of the diversity and possibilities of computer games.

The *Suspended* package contains a thorough briefing of the underground

complex a lottery card and a letter designating you as director of the robots; and a map of the underground complex. Also included are tokens representing each robot, which you can use with the map to track each robot's location.

## The Witness

According to *The Status Line* Readers Poll, storyline and descriptive prose are two of the most important elements of a good Infocom game. *The Witness*, our second mystery game (after *Deadline*), was our first deliberate attempt to emulate a particular writing style. Had Raymond Chandler, creator of *Philip Marlowe* and author of *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely*, written an Infocom game, it would have been *The Witness*:

"Somewhere near Los Angeles. A cold Friday evening in February 1938. In this climate, cold is anywhere below about fifty degrees. Storm clouds are swimming across the sky, their bottoms glowing faintly from the city lights in the distance. The air seems expectant, waiting for the rain to begin, like a cat waiting for the ineffable moment to ambush.

The taxi has just dropped you off at the entrance to the Linders' driveway. Radio music drifts toward you. Your favorite pistol, a snub-nosed Colt .32, is snug in its holster. The long week is finished, except for this appointment. But why does an ominous feeling grip you?

A door bell glows at you, almost daring you to ring it."

## You are the witness

In *The Witness*, a man named Freeman Linder has received threatening phone calls and letters, and he fears for his life. He turns to you, a detective, for help. Linder's wife Virginia had committed suicide only weeks ago, and Linder reveals to you that his wife was having an affair with a younger man, called Ralph Stiles. Linder suspects Stiles of the threats and asks for your protection. But as you talk with Linder...

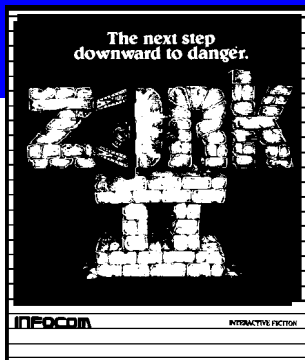
"You turn around and dimly see a figure outside. Suddenly there is a flash of light and an explosion, and the window falls into dozens of shiny shards. The cat bolts and disappears somewhere. The figure outside turns and runs before you can see the face. When you turn back around, you see Linder slumping down in his chair, with a bloody stain spreading across his silk shirt. He teeters on the edge of the seat, then falls onto the floor, quite dead."

Please turn to page 8

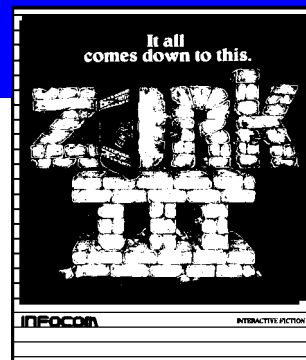
# SPECIAL OFFERS

Many of you who own only part of the Zork Trilogy expressed interest in a special offer to complete it. Here it is!

**Zork II**  
**\$19.95**



**Zork III**  
**\$19.95**



Or buy both  
**Zork II & Zork III**

for only

**\$29.95!**



Get a **free Zorkmid coin** with any of these Zork offers.

Limited offer. Zork offer expires 12-31-87. Include a copy of this coupon with your order. Mail-in orders only.



**Buy \$50, Save \$50.**

**Buy \$90, Save \$90.**

That's right. If your order totals over \$50, you'll save \$50 on the purchase of Cornerstone. **A \$99.95 value for only \$49.95.**

If your order totals \$90 or more, you'll save \$90 on the purchase of Cornerstone. **A \$99.95 value for only \$9.95!**

**Cornerstone gives you control over mountains of information.** Because Cornerstone is a multi-file program, you can build complex systems rather than just simple lists. And Cornerstone is so flexible that you can change your database anytime you want.

**Cornerstone frees you from the need to rely on programmers and consultants who aren't always there when you want them.** It has the power of other high-end products, yet is so easy to learn and use that you can set it up and maintain it yourself!

**Cornerstone offers innovative features not found in most databases, such as a unique options key and an on-screen help system unmatched by any other product.**

*"Cornerstone is the best program I have ever used. I found no flaws."*—PC Week

*"For sheer value and power, we have to give the top rating to Cornerstone. It's difficult to imagine more features in a \$99.95 product."*—InfoWorld

Cornerstone offer is good only while supplies last. After 12-31-87 call for availability.





InfoPrez Joel Berez ponders the pyramid while Dave Lebling waits for a clue. Note: Steve Meretzky, seen in the pyramid, was a stagehand, not a category.



Tara Dolan gives clues to Jon Palace as Steve Meretzky operates the sophisticated game show equipment. Host Hollywood Dave Anderson looks on.

## 20,000 Zorkmid Pyramid premiers

Infocom (WZIL)—Maxine Yaks here, tubers. Yours truly witnessed one of the truly great programming comebacks of all time last night. As you all know dahlinks, the Arbitron ratings of WZIL, the voice of Infocom company meetings, had fallen lower than the cash flow of the PTL club. I tell you the things I was hearing through my little pink Princess... I'm talking Smith and Wesson time dahlinks. Well, things just may be on the turnaround at Boston's favorite—li'l ol' WZIL.

Last night, I was invited to a sneak preview of their newest game show,

The 20,000 Zorkmid Pyramid, and let me tell you...

The show was a trial run using several Infocom employees as guinea pigs and it was funnier than a Cos sweater. In the opening round, deah hahts, I actually saw teams composed of Jon "Buck" Palace and Tara "The Jewel of Somerville" Dolan pitted against Marketing Maestro Mike Dornbrook and Tom "TN20" Veldran.

In order to cover up the break atmosphere of the Infocom-specific categories used (très incestuous). How funnee it was. The audience rocked

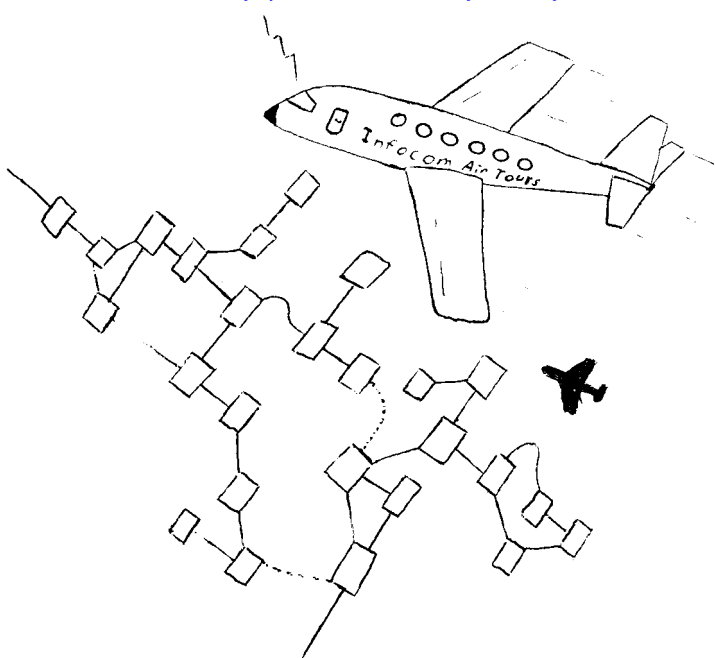
and rollicked as the contestants wrestled with categories like, "They're off" (things to do with crab racing), "Page 1 of 26" (things on a bug report form), and "Solid Platinum" (things to do with *Zork*).

The first round ended in the utmost hilarity with Mikey's face splattered with egg when he failed to guess the answer "Don't Panic Button" from the category "Touchie-Feelie" (things in an Infocom package). Marketing Maestro??? In round two, the team of InfoPrez Joel Berez and Dave Know-It-Imp Lebling went up against Palace and

Dolan. It was Holy War, fandom, as Berez/Lebling sliced through category after category sweeping Dolan/Palace away. Then it was time for that grand and glorious moment, my lovelies, the final round, the pinnacle of potpourri, yes the 20,000 Zorkmid Pyramid.

The clock started, the pyramid portals turned, Joel received, and when the smoke cleared, they had done it. The 20,000 Zorkmids were theirs. It was later announced that Joel would donate his winnings to his favorite charity—Mr. Donut's Fund for Managers' Meetings.

"...and below to the left, you can see the beautiful land of Frobozz."



Bob Elvey

## Here is a second look at three of our classic titles

### Continued from page 6

You are the witness. You have seen a man murdered before your very eyes. Now it's your job to figure out who committed the crime, how, and why. Your suspects include the Oriental butler Phong, the lover Ralph Stiles, and Linder's beautiful daughter Monica.

You can interview the suspects, search the grounds for footprints, hunt for incriminating evidence, analyze objects, fingerprint things, and accuse or even arrest any of the suspects. And of course, the ever-helpful Sergeant Duffy is ready to assist you with your investigation. You can draw many deductions from the evidence you gather, and there are as many possible endings to the case. But one ending fits the facts better than any other, and it when you reach it.

*The Witness* is an easier mystery than *Deadline*, and the package comes

jam-packed with useful and suspicious material: a telegram from Freeman Linder; a suicide note from Linder's wife Virginia; an issue of the local newspaper, the *Santa Ana Register*; a matchbook from the Brass Lantern restaurant, with a phone scrawled inside; and a copy of the February 1938 *Nat'l Detective Gazette*.

*MS* magazine called this hard-boiled story "in the Dashiell Hammett tradition," and *Creative Computing* magazine said "If you have ever longed to work Marlowe, Miss Marple, Lord Peter Wimsey, *The Witness* is the next best thing."

*Seastalker*, *Suspended*, and *The Witness* are available for a wide assortment of personal computers. (Consult the price grid in the center of this newsletter for a complete listing.) These three titles are offered at the special price of \$14.95 exclusively through Infocom.

# Infocom's first romance

## Plundered Hearts author Amy Briggs talks about why she chose to write an interactive romance

**TSL:** How did you get started?

**Amy:** After getting a B. A. in English, I kicked around Minnesota for awhile, then decided to move to Boston to live near my sister. As I left, a friend mentioned that Infocom was located here, to which I jokingly responded, "Okay, I'll get a job there—they must need writers and editors!" I had played some of Zork, Enchanter and almost all of Suspended. As fate had it, Infocom was hiring testers the very week I arrived in Massachusetts. Within fifteen days I was gainfully employed playing games all day. Tough life.

**TSL:** Why did you write a romance?

**Amy:** C. S. Lewis said he had to write the *Chronicles of Narnia* because they were books he wanted to read, and nobody else had written them yet. *Plundered Hearts* was a game I wanted to play. It just happened to have an adventurous setting, a female protagonist and romance, since that is what I'm interested in.

**TSL:** So you read romances?

**Amy:** I started started reading romance novels a teenager and still do, though in great quantities. I surrounded with all forms of romance—modern books, and classics.

In general I like stories about strong heroines. I like those stories more when the heroines are not above falling in love.

**TSL:** Did you write a story with a female protagonist to make a point, as a women's issue?

**Amy:** Not really. Feminism does not rule out romance, and romance does not necessarily have to make women weak in the cliché sense of romance novels.

**TSL:** Aren't you really demeaning women, saying that all they're interested in is getting a man? Don't romances portray women as helpless air-heads, who need Rambo to come help them across the street?

**Amy:** That's two questions, actually. My answer to the first is that, no, I'm not demeaning women. I don't expect the idea of *Plundered Hearts* to interest all those women who don't like romances, though they would probably enjoy playing it for other reasons. It is not aimed at women, but at romance and adventure lovers, a large number of whom are women.

As to the second question, you can't get anywhere in *Plundered Hearts* if you act as an air-head. There's your father to be rescued (don't believe that Captain Jamison can do it alone)! There's the hero to be saved from certain death—several times! One doesn't have to be Miss Simper to enjoy dancing (or necking in the gazebo) or be Ms. Rambo to defeat the bad guys. Just

be yourself, and do both.

**TSL:** How much research did you do?

**Amy:** I already had plenty of experience with romance novels, from my reading, and I have long been interested in fashions, so I only needed to brush up on those. Pirates, though, I had to research, and sailing ships. I watched a lot of

"Captain Blood"-type movies—romantic adventures like "Romancing the Stone." *Plundered Hearts* is about as historically accurate as an Errol Flynn movie. I tried not to be anachronistic if I could help it, but if the heroine's hairstyle is from the wrong century, or if pirates really didn't make people walk the plank—if stretching the truth adds a lot to the story, does that really matter?

**TSL:** So, what is in a romance, anyway?

**Amy:** A romance is any story the romantic interest becomes focal point of the plot. "Romeo and Juliet" is a romance.

There is actually a wide range of different species of romance in the modern term (these are my definitions, based on personal experience and some research):

"Historical" or "bodice-rippers" are the novels you see at the grocery store check-out counter, with flashy covers of a half-naked couple embracing. They have lurid sex-filled plots in historical settings.

"Contemporary" romances, portray today's woman meeting Mr. Right. There are many variation on this theme, from spy/intrigues and mysteries to life in a small town a divorce.

"Regency" romances are my favorite. They take place between 1790 – 1830, during the Regency of England, when mad George III was still alive, but his son, the future George IV, ruled. I do not believe it coincidental that this is the period Jane Austen wrote about, as the modern novels shadow hers: the stories are mostly comedies of manners, many of them with a "Pride and Prejudice" twist (Boy meets Girl, Boy and Girl take instant dislike of one another, misreading their



*Plundered Hearts* author, Amy Briggs

emotions, Boy and Girl battle words, Boy and Girl fall in love and marry). Sex is not a major concern, generally, but simmers just beneath the surface.

In "Gothic" romances, the heroine is alone against the world, in a strange and haunting setting—usually a castle or ancient mansion. She meets and falls for the hero

as she discovers the reason behind/solution for the haunting. Though "Jane Eyre" is the epitome of these romances, they can take place in modern settings—"Rebecca" by Daphne du Maurier is an example of our own *Moonmist*.

**TSL:** What kind of romance is *Plundered Hearts*?

**Amy:** It is a cross between Regency and Historical—it has more action than a Regency but less sex than a Historical.

**TSL:** Is there sex?

**Amy:** Well, there is romance. I tried to scenes of warm tender glowing rather than cold graphic sex. There's a hot kiss, for instance, with the hero, in a gazebo scented with flowers under the full moon; in contrast, there's a cold

sex scene with the villain in his bedroom. It fades off to waves crashing and trains rocketing into tunnels the way old movies do.

**TSL:** Do you think men will play *Plundered Hearts*?

**Amy:** I hope so. When I wrote it I knew men would be playing it. So, I stepped back occasionally and tried to envision men playing the heroine. Since she is a strong character in adventurous situations, I don't think men will feel too effeminate when playing.

Of the testers who played it, the men enjoyed it as much as the women. One burly football player got a real kick out of having to wear a lacy chemise and curtsey all over the place.

**TSL:** Does having a woman as the main character change the way the is played? Are the puzzles different?

**Amy:** The priorities are different from those of other games, I believe. In *Plundered Hearts* you don't go around collecting treasure (an activity I've always found boring in adventure games); you're trying to save people.

I like to think my puzzles are more about relationships between characters than being player versus objects. They involve behavior in certain situations more than mathematical brain teasers. The emphasis is on people, not things. However, *Plundered Hearts* has its share of object-oriented brain teasers.

**TSL:** Is *Plundered Hearts* different from other interactive fiction games?

**Amy:** I like to think of my story as more literary, more like a novel. There is more story line than in many other games. In *Plundered Hearts* the plot progresses continually. This is not a romp through a lot of puzzles but a voyage through an interesting story.



*Somewhere WAY over the rainbow...*

Mitch Thompson

# Gift packs make holiday giving easy to do

## Continued from page 1

Well, search no more. You have just found the ultimate in tasteful, high-quality gift-giving: Infocom's fabulous interactive fiction gift packs. You can choose from the *Enchanter Trilogy* fantasy set, the *Classic Mystery Library*, and *Science Fiction Classics*. Each gift pack contains three of our most popular interactive stories in their entirety. And each pack contains three of our most popular interactive stories in their entirety. And each pack saves you over \$50 off the individual purchase price!

One glance at the photo on the front page will show you what an exquisite gift item this is. Each handsome slipcase holds three equally handsome packages. And inside each package is a story just waiting for someone to bring it alive.

### Classic Mystery Library

Our *Classic Mystery Library* offers the whodunit fan an array of shifty characters, suspenseful situations, and diabolical plots.

"If you've ever longed to work with

Philip Marlowe, Miss Marple, or Lord Peter Wimsey, *The Witness* is the next best thing," said *Creative Computing*. In Stu Galley's award-winning mystery, it's 1938, and you're a hardboiled detective in an L.A. burgh. War is brewing overseas, but you've got other fish to fry: the blackmail you've been investigating has turned to murder before your very eyes. Anyone from the knockout heiress to the poker-faced butler could be the killer. It's a race against the clock to nail your suspect... or get nailed first.

In *Suspect*, author Dave Lebling takes you to an elegant masquerade ball in a sumptuous Southern manor. You mingle with bluebloods and power brokers, sampling caviar and champagne, enjoying the orchestra and the exotic costumes. It's quite a treat for a newspaper yourself—until you're framed for murder. You have but a few hours to convince the police of your innocence. And if you want to bring back a good story for your editor, you'll also need to figure out who committed the crime, and why.

*Analog Computing* recommends *Moonmist* "for all Infocom newcomers,

especially those who like a good mystery." This gothic tale by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence puts you in the role of a famous young sleuth, called to an ancient English castle by your friend Tamara. Someone's trying to kill her, and the culprit seems to be the spectral "White Lady" who haunts the medieval tower. You'll meet a cast of eccentric characters as you hunt down the phantom and search for hidden treasure in each of four different variations.

### Science Fiction Classics

Our collection of Science Fiction Classics offers a trio of very different journeys through time and space. All three stories were written by Steve Meretzky.

To create the hilarious *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Meretzky teamed up with British humorist Douglas Adams, author of the best-selling book of the same title. The interactive *Hitchhiker's* has become a runaway success in its own right.

When the Earth is scheduled for demolition to make way for an interstellar bypass, you set out on a side-splitting series of misadventures in the far reaches of the galaxy.

*Planetfall*, Meretzky's first interactive fiction story, was voted a favorite of *The Status Line* readers. As the story begins, you're a lowly deck-swabber in the Stellar Patrol. Then your ship explodes and you're jettisoned onto a mysterious, deserted planet. Luckily, you have Floyd, a lovable multi-purpose robot with the personality of a mischievous 8-year-old. He's the ideal companion with whom to brave your new world, as you dare its dangers and uncover its secrets.

*A Mind Forever Voyaging* is reminiscent of such classic works of science fiction as *Brave New World*. In this powerful, thought-provoking story, you journey into frighteningly realistic simulations of the future as the world's first conscious, intelligent computer. Said *Newsweek*, "*A Mind Forever Voy-*

*aging* uses the expanded memory to breathtaking effect, creating a richly-imagined anti-Utopian futureworld... *AMFV* isn't 1984, but in some ways it's even scarier."

### Enchanter Trilogy

The legend of *Zork* lives on in the spellbinding world of the *Enchanter Trilogy*.

*Enchanter*, the introduction to the series, has long been considered one of Infocom's most inspired works. Authors Marc Blank and Dave Lebling put you in the role of a novice magician sent into single-handed combat with the evil warlock Krill. To defeat him, you'll need to use all the cunning you can muster, along with spells acquired on your way.

In Steve Meretzky's *Sorcerer*, you have advanced to the illustrious Circle of Enchanters. Now you must show an even greater command of magic as you attempt to rescue your mentor Belboz and defeat the evil Jeearr. "The world of *Sorcerer* in detail and wonderment," said *St. Game* magazine. "The final solution is like a delicate orchid achieving full bloom. Long after the game is over, the heady fragrance stays with you."

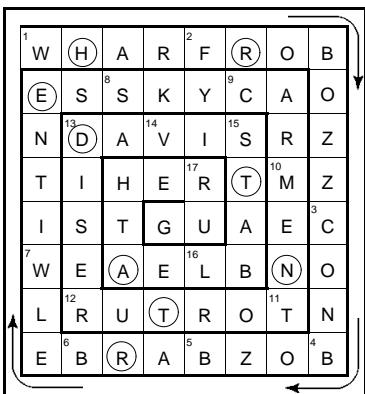
As leader of the Circle of Enchanters and the most powerful magician in the land, you face a crisis in *Spellbreaker*. Magic itself is failing, and you alone must save the kingdom even as your own powers fade. Author Dave Lebling has created a story with some of the toughest puzzles in interactive fiction. Commented *Computer Entertainer* "*Spellbreaker* is sheer joy... It's the perfect conclusion for the *Enchanter Trilogy*, which can now join the classic *Zork Trilogy* as a must-have for all fantasy gamers."

### Stupendous savings.

While you're re-establishing as a fantastic gift-giver, why not establish yourself as the owner of a fantastic interactive fiction library. Go ahead. Buy yourself a gift pack.

## >Look at puzzle winners

In puzzle #14, we asked you to fill a spiral grid by answering 17 questions, then anagram them to form an Infocom-related name. Here's what the filled-out grid would look like:



The circled letters anagram to "Arthur Dent." Of the 106 entries, 92 were correct (86.8%). This represented the lowest number of correct entries since Puzzle #8, and the lowest number of correct entries since Puzzle #10. The two common wrong answers were "Status Line" and "Adventurer"; the most intriguing wrong answer was "Lost Datzhn," with a note explaining that "Datzhn" was the German word for "truck."

While attempting to solve this puzzle, maniacal InfoTester Gary Brennan

produced a list of 87 "readable" anagrams of "Arthur Dent." The most interesting of them:

Errant Thud	Truant Herd
Darth Tuner	That Red Urn
Hunter Dart	The Dam Rut
Hunt Red Tar	Thunder Rat

Since there were more than 25 correct entries, a drawing winnowed the field. Here's a list of the lucky winners; can you make any interesting anagrams out of their names?

Matthew Blum, Vienna, VA; Thomas Keating, Wilmington, DE; Robert Blasi, Philadelphia, PA; Sean Huxter, St. Johns, Newfoundland; Bob Hodge-man, Jr., Cincinnati, OH; Lori Terreb-onne, Galliano, LA; Connie K. Schwab, Del Valle, TX; Andrew Zittkowski Richmond Heights, OH; Mark Peterson, Roseburg, OR; Bob Schumann, Long Beach, CA; Michael Brill, San Jose, CA; Virginia Shovlin, Mentor, OH; Mike Kim, Kirkland, WA; David Wilcox, Anaheim, CA; Rhoda Switzer, Prince Frederick, MD; Jeffrey Thaw, North Attleboro, MA; William Paull, Audubon Park, NJ; Peter Chen, Goleta, CA; Terry Scipione, Metairie, LA; Harald Smit, Indianapolis, IN; Kevin Pauli, Tulsa, OK; Ming Shih, Brookline, MA; Paul Pickett, Stewartsville, MO; Rawson Chaplin, Wellesley, MA; David Garland Chang, Berkeley, CA.

## For further information...

We know it's a long time between issues of *The Status Line* and you just can't wait for more information on our latest and greatest products what's going on behind the scenes. So to satisfy your hunger for news and views, take a look at these publications while awaiting the arrival of the next edition of *The Status Line* in your mailbox.

"Titans of the Computer Gaming World: Ardai on Infocom"—*Computer Gaming World*, August-September 1987.

"Getting in to the act with interactive fiction"—*Computer Update*, July-August 1987.

"Upper Sandusky plays role in computer game"—The Upper Sandusky (Ohio) *Daily Chief Union*, July 27, 1987.

"Romance game a risqué move for Infocom"—*Boston Globe*, August 6, 1987.

Also, look for reviews in your favorite computer magazine.



## > Read VisiClues

Here is the latest installment of VisiClues to help you over the hump. The key for VisiClues, a simple substitution cipher, is on page 5. Please use VisiClues sparingly—you don't want to spoil all the fun.

### Stationfall

*How can I get the seven-pointed star in the chapel?*

- A. Ha'e tdrmsl rmpi idgbn. Rmp uepa wda nhwndi, emudnmj.
- B. Lms'a wm ms psaho rmp'zd dkfomidl and dsahid zhoogwd.
- C. Ha'e ge dger ge GTB.
- D. GTB ge hs gibapihgs tgoomms bidgapid!
- E. Odgl and tgoomms bidgapid am and bngfdo pehsw and efigr bgs.
- F. Andid'e gs dkbdoosda idgems jnr and GTB lmdes'a dsadi and bngfdo.
- G. And bidgapid'e vhoodl jhan nrlimwds, g voguugtod wge.
- H. And tgoomms bidgapid he umiagoor adiihvhd l my and dadisgo vogud.
- I. Rmp'oo sddl am dkahswphen and dadisgo vogud.
- J. Mfids fpofha. Vohf ejhabn. Efigr bgs. Wigt odgen. Agcd eagi.

*How can I get things from the dispenser in the PX?*

- A. Rmp sddl g bmhs. Jndid uhwna rmp dkdftba am vhs l bmhse?
- B. Lms'a wm ms psaho rmp'zd dkfomidl and dsahid zhoogwd.
- C. Enmma and eaimsw tmk jhan and ogedi wps.
- D. Sdka, fpa and bmhs hs and eoma, ands arfd 6 mi arfd 9.
- E. Rmpi hadu gojgre wdae eapbc hsehld and lhedfsedi eoma.
- F. Rmp jms'a td gtod am lheomlwd and eapbc hadu rmpiedov.
- G. Rmp'oo sddl and meaihbn am ndof rmp lheomlwd and hadu.
- H. Ped and fda eamid'e shf am odgl and meaihbn am and FK.
- I. Jnga'e msd mv and umea fmfpgoi urane gtmpa meaihbnde?
- J. Meaihbnde eahbc andhi ndgle hs g nmod jnds vihwnadsdl!
- K. Ebgid and meaihbn. mi rmp bgs rdoo mi chbc and meaihbn.
- L. Gsmandi emopahms: eahbc and meaihbn shf hsam and nmod.

### The Lurking Horror

*How do I get large objects into the Tomb?*

- A. Andid he umid angs msd jgr am echs g bga (mi g iga).
- B. Ugrtd andid'e gsmandi am and eadgu apssdoe.
- C. Bgidvpoor ididgl and eadgu apssdo immu ldebihfahmse.
- D. Lm andr ngzd mtydbae hs bmuums jhan gsr mandi immue?
- E. Anhe gsejdi am anhe fpqqod uhwna td gtmzd rmpi ndgl.
- F. Smahbd emud immue anga ngzd fhfde mi bgtode hs andu?
- G. And bmuf bdsadi tgedudsa nge fhfde gsl bgtode hs ha.
- H. And eadgu apssdo'e dgeadis dsl ohde psldi and tgedudsa.
- I. Emudanhsw sdgitr gbbdeede tdomj and vommi odzdo.
- J. And dodzgami engva uepa dkadsl vpiandi lmjsjgile!
- K. Jnds and dodzgami hes'a hs and tgedudsa, mfd and lmmie.
- L. Bmufgid and dodzgami fha gsl and eadgu apssdo'e dgeadis dsl.
- M. Wda animpwn anga thbc jgoo gsl rmpi fimtodue gid mzdi.

*What's the urchin stolen and how do I get it?*

- A. Nd'oo fhbc pf gsranshw anga'e odva gimppl.
- B. Rmp ngzd am hslpbd nhu am limf jnga nd'e bgiihrsw.
- C. And pibnhs hes'a idgoor zdir gvighl mv rmp.
- D. Nd'e mtzhmpeor gvighl mv emudanhsw, anmpwn.
- E. Vhlea edgibn goo gtmzdwimppl ombgahmse.
- F. Ngzd rmp vmpsl gsranshw anga'e idgoor ebgr?
- G. Nm j gtmpa and ldgl iga? Anga uhwna lm and aihbc.
- H. Sm, tpa and upuuhvhd l ngsl fidaar rpber.
- I. And edzdidl ngsl jmpol td dzds rpbchdi hv ha umzdl.
- J. Fpa and upuuhvhd l ngsl hs and zga gsl jgha.
- K. Jnds ha idgshugade, enmj ha am and pibnhs.

## The bumper sticker contest

Seeing how popular bumper stickers were in "Win the Imps Picnic Basket" Contest, we've decided to throw caution to the wind and let our readers write our bumper stickers. After all they'll be adorning your cars, books, lockers and monitors.

The first prize is two games, a T-shirt and a poster. Second prize is a

game and a poster. Third prize is a shirt and a poster.

The deadline for entry is January 1, 1988. For overseas folks the deadline is April 1, 1988.

Send your bumper sticker suggestions to: The 83 Red Le Car, c/o The Status Line, Infocom, 125 Cambridge Park Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

### Kartoon Kontest

Can you draw? Are you funny? Can you write a headline that doesn't resort to misspellings to be eye-catching? Then perhaps you should enter our Cartoon Contest.

Just send us your cartoon(s), along with this form or a photocopy of this form. We'll pick the best cartoons and print them here in *The Status Line*. If we print your cartoon, you'll win an Infocom game of your choice! (Note: we receive about 50 times as many cartoons as we print.)

Your cartoon must be in black ink on white paper. Do not include a border around your cartoon unless your cartoon demands it. Do not fold your cartoon when mailing it. Please do not include non-cartoon-related correspondence (such as changes of address, puzzle entries, or bugs).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Game desired (single titles, not trilogies):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Computer version desired (such as Apple II, C-128):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail your cartoon to: The Status Line Cartoon Contest  
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# > Examine puzzle #16

In honor of the release of *Beyond Zork*, Puzzle #16 is based on the *Zork Trilogy*. To solve this puzzle, simply decode the meaning of the 15 word puzzles below, which are all places or things in *Zork I*, *Zork II*, or *Zork III*. Your answers must precisely match the game; "punctured raft" would not be an acceptable answer for the second example. There may be more than one correct answer for some of them, though.

Examples:

ROOM

Low Room

BOAT

Punctured Boat

1 ROOM	2 TUNNEL	3 MAILBOX
4 WIFI	5 CANDLE CANDLE	6 H A I R P I N
7 TIMBER	8 VOLCANO LEDGE	9 CLIFF CLIFF
10 BUTTON	11 WIT ADD WIT HEAD	12 WIT HEAD
13 BOW	14 LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE LEAVE	15 GARDEN

## Puzzle #16 Entry Form

- ANSWERS:**
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. \_\_\_\_\_
  8. \_\_\_\_\_
  9. \_\_\_\_\_
  10. \_\_\_\_\_
  11. \_\_\_\_\_
  12. \_\_\_\_\_
  13. \_\_\_\_\_
  14. \_\_\_\_\_
  15. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL): \_\_\_\_\_

**Puzzle Rules:** 1) All entries must be postmarked by January 1, 1988. (Entries from outside the U.S. and Canada are due by April 1, 1988.) 2) Entries must be on this form or on a photocopy of this form. 3) Limit of one entry per person. 4) All entries must be mailed separately. 5) Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. 6) Void where prohibited by law.

**Prize:** *The New Zork Times* Puzzle Winner T-Shirt (Historical note: *The Status Line* was formerly called *The New Zork Times*, until a certain newspaper from a large metropolitan city began exercising its legal staff).

**Mail to:** Infocom, Inc.  
The Status Line Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

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Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)	IZ0-AT1 \$14.95	IM1-AT1 \$14.95	IM2-AT1 \$14.95	IS1-AT1 \$14.95	IS2-AT1 \$14.95	IA1-AT1 \$14.95	IA2-AT1 \$14.95	GS1-AT1 \$14.95
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Commodore 64 (1541 disk)	IZ0-CO1 \$14.95	IM1-CO1 \$14.95	IM2-CO1 \$14.95	IS1-CO1 \$14.95	IS2-CO1 \$14.95	IA1-CO1 \$14.95	IA2-CO1 \$14.95	
Commodore 128	IZ0-CO1 \$14.95	IM1-CO1 \$14.95	IM2-CO1 \$14.95	IS1-CO1 \$14.95	IS2-CO1 \$14.95	IA1-CO1 \$14.95	IA2-CO1 \$14.95	
Commodore Amiga	IZ0-CO4 \$14.95	IM1-CO4 \$14.95	IM2-CO4 \$14.95	IS1-CO4 \$14.95	IS2-CO4 \$14.95	IA1-CO4 \$14.95	IA2-CO4 \$14.95	
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DEC Rainbow (CP/M Option)		IM1-DE2 \$14.95	IM1-DE2 \$14.95	IS1-DE2 \$14.95	IS2-DE2 \$14.95	IA1-DE2 \$14.95		
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Kaypro II CP/M		IM1-KA1 \$14.95	IM2-KA1 \$14.95				IA2-KA1 \$14.95	
Osborne (CP/M)			IM2-OS1 \$14.95		IS2-OS1 \$14.95			
TI 99/4A (48K expansion, disk, one of the following: Extended Basic, Mini-Memory, Editor/Assembler)		IM1-TI2 \$14.95	IM2-TI2 \$14.95					
TI Professional	IZ0-IB2 \$14.95	IM1-TI1 \$14.95	IM2-TI1 \$14.95	IS1-IB2 \$14.95	IS2-TI1 \$14.95	IA1-TI1 \$14.95	IA2-IB2 \$14.95	
TRS-80 Model I (48K and disk)		IM1-TA1 \$14.95	IM2-TA1 \$14.95	IS1-TA1 \$14.95	IS2-TA1 \$14.95	IM2-TA1 \$14.95		
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Apple Macintosh		IZ1-AP2 \$39.95	IZ2-AP2 \$44.95	IZ3-AP2 \$44.95	IT1-AP2 \$69.95	IZ4-AP2 \$29.95	IZ5-AP2 \$44.95	IZ6-AP2 \$49.95	IT2-AP2 \$59.95	IZ7-AP2* \$39.95	IM3-AP2 \$39.95	IM4-AP2 \$39.95	IM5-AP2 \$39.95	IS3-AP2 \$39.95	IS4-AP2 \$29.95
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)		IZ1-AT1 \$34.95	IZ2-AT1 \$39.95	IZ3-AT1 \$39.95	IT1-AT1 \$59.95	IZ4-AT1 \$24.95	IZ5-AT1 \$39.95	IZ6-AT1 \$44.95	IT2-AT1 \$49.95		IM3-AT1 \$34.95	IM4-AT1 \$34.95	IM5-AT1 \$34.95	IS3-AT1 \$34.95	IS4-AT1 \$24.95
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Commodore 64 (1541 disk)		IZ1-CO1 \$34.95	IZ2-CO1 \$39.95	IZ3-CO1 \$39.95	IT1-CO1 \$59.95	IZ4-CO1 \$24.95	IZ5-CO1 \$39.95	IZ6-CO1 \$44.95	IT2-CO1 \$49.95		IM3-CO1 \$34.95	IM4-CO1 \$34.95	IM5-CO1 \$34.95	IS3-CO1 \$34.95	IS4-CO1 \$24.95
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Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)		IA3-AT1 \$34.95	IC1-AT1 \$34.95	IA4-AT1 \$34.95		IS6-AT1 \$34.95	IH1-AT1 \$34.95		IR1-AT1 \$34.95					ID2-AT1 1 \$4.95
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Commodore Amiga	IS5-CO4 \$39.95	IA3-CO4 \$39.95	IC1-CO4 \$39.95	IA4-CO4 \$39.95	IC2-CO4 \$34.95	IS6-CO4 \$39.95	IH1-CO4 \$39.95	IC3-CO4 \$34.95	IR1-CO4 \$39.95	IZ8-CO4 \$44.95				
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IBM Series and MS-DOS compatibles		IA3-IB2 \$39.95	IC1-IB2 \$39.95	IA4-IB2 \$39.95		IS6-IB2 \$39.95	IH1-IB2 \$39.95		IR1-IB2 \$39.95			IT3-IB2 \$59.95		ID3-IB2 \$4.95
Kaypro II CP/M		IA3-KA1 \$14.95												ID3-KA1 1 \$4.95
Osborne (CP/M)		IA3-OS1 \$14.95												ID3-OS1 1 \$4.95
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TI Professional		IA3-IB2 \$39.95	IC1-IB2 \$39.95	IA4-IB2 \$39.95		IS6-IB2 \$39.95	IH1-IB2 \$39.95		IR1-IB2 \$39.95			IT3-IB2 \$59.95		ID3-IB2 \$4.95
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TRS-80 Model III (48K and disk)														ID3-TA3 1 \$4.95
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- 2 Requires IBM PC, XT, AT or 100% compatible; PC DOS 2.0, 2.1, 3.0, or 3.1; Minimum 384K; 2 floppy disk drives or 1 floppy and 1 hard disk drive.
- 3 Available 1/88.
- 4 Requires 196K.

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## POSTERS

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# The Status Line

Volume VII Number 1

Formerly The New York Times

Winter/Spring 1988

## Sherlock Holmes - Immortal Legend

"You are standing in the spill of a gas streetlight outside 221 B Baker Street. You have come in response to an urgent summons from your old landlady, Mrs. Hudson. As the fog swirls around you, you huddle into your coat and shiver in the predawn chill."

Thus begins *Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels*, which catapults you into the fog-bound streets of Victorian London. All week long, the city has been bustling with preparations for Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee. Crowds of sightseers and souvenir vendors fill the streets. Newspapers detail the gala array of festivities—special services at Westminster Abbey; a Royal procession through the streets of London; and Queen Victoria reigning over all, resplendent in the Crown Jewels.

At least, that's the official plan. Unbeknownst to the celebrants thronging the city, a crisis has arisen: the Crown Jewels have been stolen from the Tower of London. If they're not recovered before the festivities begin, the theft will be

### The Crown Jewels have been stolen; You're the only one who can find them

exposed and the government will fall into international disgrace.

Only 48 hours remain to solve the crime. With Scotland Yard baffled, the Prime Minister calls on Sherlock Holmes, the famous consulting detective. But riddles left at the scene of the crime include a direct challenge to Holmes, and he suspects that the theft is as much a deadly trap for him as it is an attempt to embarrass the government. To throw the scoundrel off his guard, Holmes turns the investigation over to you, his trusted cohort, Dr. Watson.



*Sherlock: Mystery so real you'll taste the pipe smoke in your mouth..*

With Holmes by your side, you use your wits, intuition, and a myriad of clues to solve the riddles and piece together the mystery. From Trafalgar Square to Madame Tussaud's, from Westminster Abbey to the Tower itself, you criss-cross London until finally you trace the evil to its source and find yourself face-to-face with the Napoleon of Crime—Professor Moriarty. One false move here will bring disaster not only to you and Holmes, but to the entire British Empire.

*Sherlock* is the first game in Info-

com's new "Immortal Legends" series. The games feature enhanced interaction with legendary characters of the past in the settings in which they became famous. Developed by Bob Bates and Challenge, Inc., the series combines humor and puzzle-solving into satisfying adventures that will stay with you long after you turn away from the computer. The game *Sherlock* itself is a comic mystery, and its cast of characters includes the Baker Street Irregulars, Mycroft Holmes, and the always-incompetent Inspector Lestrade, about whom Holmes says, "Be kind to him, Watson. He has delusions of adequacy."

And although Holmes himself disappears, you have access at all times to our new on-screen hint system. So if your magnifying glass clouds up, you can simply type HINT and choose from a carefully designed hint menu that lets you select anything from a gentle nudge to a step-by-step solution.

**Please turn to page 10**

## Yow! Comic books on a computer only \$12

Infocom and Tom Snyder Productions present Infocomics, a bold new form of storytelling.

By this time, many of you have probably snapped a synopsis or two trying to navigate your way through the wilds of Quendor in *Beyond Zork* or dodging bloodthirsty guard dogs in *Border Zone*. So you're probably ready for a little Rest and Relaxation. Well, don't touch that power switch, because we've got the cure for what ails you. The cure? Infocomics, of course! And what are Infocomics? Simply put, they're traditional comic books brought to life on your computer screen in new and exciting ways.

Now, we all have our favorite comic books or comic strips, but what makes them so special and memorable? It's that comics transport you to new and different worlds, peopled by fantastic and interesting characters who have absorbing stories to tell. And they do all that using a deceptively simple and direct format. When these things come together just right, you've got a comic that grabs you and makes you forget about the outside world for a little while. Infocomics do that and much, much more.

When you boot up an Infocomic, your computer will be transformed into

### Just like comic books but you can see the plot from different points of view



*Radnor, the evil magician of Egreth puts the lovely Acia under his spell in the Infocomic's fantasy story ZorkQuest: Assault on Egreth Castle.*

a comic book, mimicking the real thing, complete with turning pages. Picture this: a deadly ray from a far-off planet sweeps through space, causing harmless

animals and insects to mutate and devastate Earth. Sounds like a great comic already, right? But because it's an Infocomic, it's unlike any comic you ye

ever seen.

The panels of an Infocomic use sounds and exciting cinematic effect—panning, zooms, dissolves—that bring the colorful graphics to life and draw you right into the action. So you'll actually see and hear that ray slice through space and see the animals grow right before your eyes. Then you'll watch them as they run amok, wreaking havoc on the Earth and munching on famous landmarks for lunch.

#### One story through many eyes

But while Zabor, Chief of the Earth Defense League, helplessly watches these munching mutants, elsewhere our hero, Lane Mastodon, rockets through space, oblivious of the ray's wrath. And on Jupiter, the villainous Blubbermen delight in Earth's deadly dilemma. At any given moment these characters each have their own tales to tell. In order to get the big picture, you'll want to see all of them.

In Infocomics, the tales of these characters and many others are intricately intertwined, their paths merging here and diverging there. The end result is a cleverly fascinating story made up of the labyrinth-like structure of the various characters' story lines. Infocom-

**Please turn to page 6**

## > Read the letters to the editor

Dear Assorted Gentlefolk,

Come on, people — give me a break! As an avid interactive games player (would that be games-woman?) who happens, by chance, to make her living — and thus be able to BUY said games — as a romance novelist, I was alternately delighted, amused, dismayed and plainly ticked-off by your recent articles regarding your new *Plundered Hearts* game.

I was delighted and amused because it's about time someone saw the fun side of romance fiction and besides, if I'm playing *Plundered Hearts* when I *should* be rewriting Chapter Six for the twenty-seventh time, can it truly be said that I'm not working? Should I not be able to write off the cost of the game as... well, as research, perhaps? Inspiration? Playing *Hitchhiker's*, the various *Zorks*, *Wishbringer* etc., while certainly entertaining and wonderfully effective as "work avoidance" ploys, do not have the same... how shall I put this?... cachet of legitimacy. When my editor calls to ask why I'm six weeks behind schedule, it's going to sound infinitely more reassuring to tell her that I have spent the morning trying to keep my heroine safe from harm than having to tell her that I've spent all morning trying to get the babel fish out of the damned dispenser.

I was simultaneously dismayed and plainly ticked-off however, at a couple of throw-away jibes at romance fiction that are not only unfair, but downright untrue. In the Fall issue of *The Status Line*, for instance, you mention that Amy Briggs, by way of research, spent "her formative years reading *trashy romances*." Would you, pray tell, appreciate having your games — your brainchildren, the fruit, so to speak, of your blood, sweat, tears and love — called "trash"? (Actually, I've heard them called much worse things, but we won't go into that.) Let's not fling mud, gentlefolk: I will resist taking pokes at YOUR product if you'll resist taking pokes at MINE... not, at least, until you've read a few dozen...

I was also perturbed (actually, I was more than perturbed, but I'm feeling uncharacteristically gracious today) by the interview with Amy in the Winter issue where the dauntless "reporter" asks if *Plundered Hearts*, like the romance novels from which it is derived, doesn't actually demean women by "saying all they're interested in is getting a man. Don't romance novels portray women as helpless air-heads who need Rambo to come and help them across the street?" Helpless air-heads? HELPLESS AIR-HEADS??? Lordy, lordy... may I ask YOU a question? Aren't all interactive computer games played by glandular, mouth-breathing male adolescents suffering from terminal acne and dangerous anti-social tendencies who wear coke-bottle-bottom glasses, and who when not drooling over the keyboard while playing *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* — are either hacking their way into the Defense Department computer system or reading such intellectual goodies as "Writhing Slave Girls Meet the Tentacled Honor"? No? Strange, here I thought.... [Some who don't read romance novels consider the women in these novels to be "helpless air-heads." The "reporter" fed this question to Amy so she could put it to rest. —Ed.]

Anyway, I'd like to thank Amy Briggs for gently setting the record straight, but I'd like to go further... [T]he heroines in romances are changing to reflect changes in the women reading them...

My compliments to Amy Briggs—I've dedicated "Pure Chemistry" to her, by the way — for adding

another dimension to the world of romance AND to the world of interactive games. Be assured that *Plundered Hearts* is on my Christmas list.

Thank you all very much...

Susan Naomi Horton

Toronto, Ontario

[Anyone out there have a copy of "Writhing Slave Girls" we can borrow?—Ed.]

Dear Infocom,

I am a vicar in good standing with the Anglican church but you are bringing ruin to me. I am wasting my spare time on your games and my head, instead of being filled with pious thoughts, is occupied continually with how I may get the Venus Fly-trap to the beehive.

A few months ago I led a youth camp, and one of the kids had his Amstrad there and was playing *Hitchhiker's Guide* on it. After a few late-night sessions with a gang of noisy teenagers around the machine, I was hooked...

A week ago, attracted by its theological title, I got *Trinity*. Oh Bliss! Oh Rapture! Such Intelligence and Logic! Such a sense of accomplishment after each small section is completed! ...[T]here is a sense of purpose in each puzzle and the whole seems to fit in a coherent and logical framework...

Soon I will be finished with *Trinity* and looking for something a little more holy, *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*. Now there's a spiritual sounding title.

Best Wishes,

Kelvin Wright

Hamilton, New Zealand

[We had the very large clerical market in mind when we named it Trinity.—Ed.]

## The Status Line

Mike Dornbrook as Pee Wee Herman  
 Stuart A. Kirsch as the Magic Screen  
 Hollywood Dave Anderson as Chairy  
 Gayle Syska as Miss Yvonne  
 Steve Meretzky as the King of Cartoons  
 Diane Morlock as Chicky Baby  
 Tom Veidran as Zzyzbalubah  
 Stu Galley as Floory  
 Jon Palace as Cocky  
 Dave Lebling as Globie  
 Curtis Montague as Cowboy Curtis  
 Carol Kennedy as Reba  
 Duncan Blanchard as Terry

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Dear Infocom,

I have exercised me brain, and worked me wits long, but the spell of Logick is incomplete. Long have I trekked through strange and savage zones, but to no avail. At long last, I humbly request that thou, in thy infinite wisdom, wouldst tell me the location of that Magick Stone known as Wishbringer. That my trek may be completed at long last.

Interactively Puzzled,

Alan Estenson

Morris, MN

[We hopest thou wilt getst InvisiClues, that thy trek may truly be fulfilled.—Ed.]

Dear All,

Having bought the *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and found this card enclosed in the pack I thought I would send it off to you to see if you really will send a copy of *The New Zork Times* to Britain...

Although I am enjoying the challenge (and the lady gorilla) I do feel that this disc of fiction is a little too tame in whatever mode it is played. I know you have all had two terms of Ray-gun but why be so coy? Rebel a little, it's good for the soul.

Here in Milton Keynes we really do know how to express ourselves and have fun. Perhaps one day your bunch will escape from the confines of your repressive totalitarianistic state and discover the true (wholesome) delights and pleasures of this world. Green frogs with crowns on are just one of those delights.

Meanwhile, take care, I expect I shall be buying more Infocom games at some stage so I will monitor the progress of your outfit.

Regards,

Neill Bell

Milton Keynes, Great Britain

[We send almost 10,000 TSL's to other countries in addition to over 125,000 in the US. Thanks for the invite.—Ed.]

To the critics of TSL Puzzles:

I DO own all of Infocom's games (for 8 bit computers) and Puzzle #16 is the only one I have actually finished. (I did it in under an hour!)

I cut my teeth on *Zork I, II, and III* and still play them once in a while... My big beef with Infocom [isn't the difficulty of their puzzles.] I wrote (to Infocom) about six months ago asking to buy one or two Zorkmids... I collect exonomia, which is the collecting of tokens, medals, wooden nickels, etc. It would be a shame to have a good collection without a Zorkmid. I bought all the *Zorks* when they first came out and I don't think I should be punished by having to buy the Trilogy just to get one Zorkmid.

Readers, take pity on me! Send me your spare Zorkmids!

Very Sincerely,

Pat Smith

Buhl, ID

[All Zorkmids sent to The Status Line will be forwarded to Pat. But before you whip out your Zorkmid, you should know that Hollywood and Stella had a bet (yes, InfoBets are still in vogue) that no one, during the month of November, would send a letter to TSL using the word "exonomia." Well, Stella won the bet, Hollywood bought dinner, and as a token (get it?) of his appreciation, Stella sent Pat a Zorkmid.—Ed.]



## InfoNews Roundup

### Coming soon to CompuServe

We are planning to go on-line in early '88 with our own CompuServe forum. Our forum will provide a wide range of services and information for you, our dedicated fans.

First of all we will be putting hints on-line, similar to the on screen hints offered in our newer games. Part of our new forum will include electronic mail communication with our customer support representatives. You will be able to send your questions or problems directly to our reps without the delay of the post office. We will also pack the forum full of the latest information on our products. There will also be an electronic version of *The Status Line* (The *Status Line* On-Line?). Included in our forum will be all available versions of our current sampler for downloading for free! We are also planning periodic conferences on-line so you can talk to us directly and tell us your comments and suggestions about our games. And last but not least, on-line conferences with our very own game writers.

### Sample the Sampler for just \$4.95

Christmas has come and gone, and, having checked with our inside sources in Armonk, Cupertino, Westchester, Sunnysvale, and other places, we have determined that a certain S. Claus was a busy little purchaser. Now what better could one buy for a new computer than our own Sampler? We did a survey of technicians at computer stores and the overwhelming majority of them said that when the first software a new computer gets is our Sampler, both the computer and the computer owner live longer, happier lives.

In each and every Sampler, we have stuffed parts of everybody's favorite stories. You can begin with a tutorial from the fabulous introductory fantasy, *Wishbringer*. From there it's on to the original *Zork* and then into the wonderful worlds of *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and *Trinity*.

"But won't all that adventure and excitement cost me a lot of money," you ask. Only if you think \$4.95 is a lot to spend for the best entertainment software available. That's right, our Sampler is available to you at the outrageously low price of \$4.95. So introduce your friends, your boss, your teachers, even your sister to the joys of Infocom.

### TJ wins softball shirt with 5 and 2 prediction

"It seemed like T.J. was there on the field with us," said Softball Team Manager Lorri Fischer. Sports fan T.J. Allard of Albuquerque, New Mexico, had the foresight and intestinal fortitude to predict the final season record of the InfoBoys (and Girls) of Summer. For the correct entry—the only correct entry received—T.J. wins a limited edition 1987 Infocom Softball shirt (see Fall '87 TSL). T.J. will without question be the pride of Albuquerque sporting this shirt.

The final outcome of the season was a record of 5 wins and 2 defeats, the final being in the league playoff semifinals. If you ever have a chance to go out for a drink with a member of the 1987 Infocom Softball team, be sure to ask about that playoff game with General Computer; you're sure to get a great story.

### It was bound to happen...

Believe it or not, something went awry at *The Status Line*. We never thought we'd need a corrections blurb, but here it is.

First, our sincere apologies to Kevin Savetz of Agoura Hills, CA. Kevin's award-winning drawing from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* graced the envelope of the last issue, but we did not credit him in the issue. Please send lots of money to Kevin in care of TSL.

Apologies also go out to Tara "the jewel of Somerville" Dolan. Somehow, it slipped through our careful editorial eyes that Tara lives in Cambridge not Somerville, and thus was incorrectly identified in the story. Apologies also go to the city of Cambridge for slighting it with the mistaken comparison to Somerville. While we are on the subject, we also wish to recognize Joanne "the gem of Canton" Onoyan, Jack "the ingot of Barrington" Tretton, and Jim "the nugget of Windham" Bull.

## New Hitchhiker's and Zork I only \$14.95

Marilyn McCoo, eat your heart out! We've got the *real* Solid Gold, and now you can get it too! We've taken our best-selling games, *Zork I* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, redesigned the packaging, added new features, and called them Solid Gold! But this is the first time Solid Gold has been so inexpensive; the stories of the Solid Gold series are available for only \$14.95!

We want to let everyone find out how good Infocom interactive fiction is, so we've made the Solid Gold series like the paperback version of your favorite best-seller. Not a single treasure, a single adventure, not even a single witty reply has been taken out. You get the *complete* game diskette and an instructional manual in a beautiful, newly redesigned package.

And not only did we not remove anything from the game diskettes, we filled them to the bursting point. On-

screen hints are included on the diskettes. Like InvisiClues, these on-screen hints tell you only what you want to know, when you want to know it, proceeding from a gentle nudge in the right direction to the entire answer.

### Solid gold

Solid Gold means All-Time Best-Seller! Solid Gold means Long-Term Classic! Solid Gold means the Best in Interactive Fiction! *Zork* has literally changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people for whom it was the very introduction to computers. The Solid Gold *Zork I* is the original, the one that was certified Platinum by the Software Publishers Association this fall. For anyone who doesn't own *Zork*, now's the time to get it. For anyone who doesn't know what *Zork* is, now is the time to buy them a present.

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

Please turn to page 10

## Having problems with your sex life or EGA card?

We'll start with the easy problem first. Several customers with EGA cards have reported problems with *Beyond Zork*. The game boots with the wrong colors on the screen, making the text unreadable. Not all EGA cards are affected.

We are working on a fix and should have one by the time this edition

reaches you. If you are having problems, call our customer support hotline, (617) 1 576-3190. One of our reps will provide you with further information on this problem.

If you can't wait for the fix, you can play the game in text mode by typing BEYONDZO /a (for text mode).

As for your sex life...



E. Patrick Hartnett



# Here's a second look at three classic titles

## Fooblitzky

*Fooblitzky* is a particularly special Infocom product for two reasons. First, it is our only multiplayer computer board game (2-4 players), and second, it uses whimsical graphics—yes, graphics, to delight and captivate players.

After being introduced in 1985, *Fooblitzky* has been applauded. Our customers speak out in praise of its humor and imagination; critics discuss its ingenuity and skillful manipulation of graphics.

*InCider* magazine said, "The graphic screens are lively and amusing. The action is fast, and the unusual situations in which you find yourself are frustratingly funny. *Fooblitzky* is a guaranteed good time and perfect for family fun." *Analog Computing* proclaimed, "*Fooblitzky* does for board games what the other Infocom games did for books—revolutionize them... computerize them and... bring them into the 21st century and beyond."

In an animated city named Fooblitzky, your goal is to acquire the four objects secretly chosen by each of the four players at the beginning of the game. With each spin of the wheel (your computer does the spinning), you travel through the twelve Fooblitzky streets trying desperately to acquire the right objects and make it to the check-point before anyone else.

You buy objects with foobles (a fitting name for currency in Fooblitzky!) at the different animated city stores. You are allotted a cache of foobles at the start, but if you're not careful you could encounter speeding cars, bumping pedestrians, "The Chance Man" (a con artist/mugger) or falling pianos... which might rid you of your foobles or possessions, complicating the scavenger hunt. All is not lost if you run into any of these nuisances, for you can get a job to regain your foobles or trade to reacquire objects.

Don't be fooled; *Fooblitzky* is not as simple as it may sound. Obstacles and twists of fate graduate *Fooblitzky* from a whimsical foray in the board game world to a challenging computer strategy game. Learning and playing the game comes with ease, but success depends on how well you plan your strategy. You have to combine your strategic and deductive skills to move through the city while trying to figure out what the other players are thinking. Large, erasable worksheets are included with the game to make planning easier and more thorough.

In most of our games your adversary is hidden deep in the "mind" of your computer. In *Fooblitzky*, like in most board games, you are able to compete with, trick, and outsmart living, tangible competitors who are sitting right



Foo what? Fooblitzky! Our computer board game. Two to four players race through the streets of the City of Fooblitzky trying to outsmart their opponents.



Visit the future in *A Mind Forever Voyaging*. You play the part of a computer simulating life in the 21st century. You must test a plan for the future.

next to you.

*Fooblitzky* combines elements of favorite board games with the imagination of computer games, catapulting it into the Information Age in the guise of a computer game that is part luck, part skill.

## A Mind Forever Voyaging

In *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, by Steve Meretzky, you leave puzzle-solving behind as you explore realistic worlds of the future and make decisions about the fate of the human race.

Since its introduction in 1985, *A Mind Forever Voyaging* has been the critical acclaim. *A+* magazine said, "*AMFV* is a bewilderingly with a slightly different flavor than that of Infocom's other offerings." *Analog Computing* proclaimed, "*A Mind Forever Voyaging* takes the Infocom concept to the next logical step in its evolution — and takes you on a voyage you'll never forget."

In this realistic science-fiction novel you are brought to the United States in the 21st century... the year 2031: the world has deteriorated to a chaotic

mess. Crime is rampant; social harmony has become a thing of the past. Massive government regulations have brought the United States, now USNA (the United States of North America) to the brink of becoming an immense police state. The future of the world looks grim. Something has to be done before it's too late.

Senator Ryder has a plan, a plan that would bring back the social tranquility and economic stability of the 1950s and combine it with the advanced technology of the 21st century to form an efficient, serene society.

Before the plan can be implemented it must be tested. Because you are PRISM, the world's first sentient computer, you are chosen to perform the test. Your job is to enter a simulation of the plan, which will take place in Rockvill, South Dakota, and report your findings so that it can be decided if the plan is worth implementing.

The world is depending on you. As a sophisticated computer with human perception, you must travel to the future and compile any information that might be useful in perfecting the plan and

saving humanity from doom.

We wouldn't have you save humanity without giving you a little help, now, would we? In each *AMFV* package you find a map of Rockvill, South Dakota a Class One Security Mode Access Decoder and a "Quad Mutual Insurance" pen to help you in your travel through the future.

## Planetfall

Travel to the 114th century in author Steve Meretzky's first story, *Planetfall*. *Planetfall* is a hilarious science fiction game full of adventure and galactic intrigue.

*Planetfall*, introduced in 1983, has been the recipient of numerous awards and has been blessed with overwhelming popularity.

A panel of judges assembled for Chicago's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in 1984 voted *Planetfall* one of the most original software programs for that year. *Computer Games* magazine named *Planetfall* "Best All-Text Game of the Year" in 1983. *InfoWorld* cited the product as "Best Adventure Game of '83."

As acclaimed as his story, author Steve Meretzky was named "The Best Software Designer" of 1984 by *Video Review Magazine*.

The story begins with you, a seventh class ensign in the Stellar Patrol, scrubbing decks aboard the S.P.S. Feinstein. You take your orders from miserable Ensign First Class Blather, who hands you demerits if you so much as take a short break from your drudging task. You are even forced to clean the trail of green slime left by alien ambassador, Br'gun-Te 'elknerip' nun — Ugh! Wouldn't it be nice for an unexpected adventure to come your way to rid you of this life of drudgery?

An explosion suddenly rocks the ship. You run for an escape pod to take you from the exploding ship. Safely aboard the pod, you plummet through space and land on the planet Resida. After swimming ashore, you find yourself alone on an abandoned planet.

Feeling your stomach rumble and your eyelids get heavy, you set out to find food, water shelter and sleep. "This can't be too difficult," you say to yourself. Don't be too sure; Resida has lots of surprises in store for you!

Your emergency ration will not last forever, so you must find food before starvation takes its toll. Finding liquid is no problem, but finding something safe to drink is another thing entirely.

Worried about companionship? Fear not, for during your exploration of Resida you meet Floyd, a mischievous little robot who takes an instant liking to you and becomes your constant com-

**Please turn to page 10**

Ever since we released *The Lurking Horror* by Dave Lebling we've been getting questions from players about the setting. We thought we'd go straight to the source and ask Dave for the straight dope.

**TSL:** Is GUE Tech really MIT?

**Dave:** I definitely based it on part of the MIT campus. When I was a student at MIT, there was a pastime called "Institute Exploring" (also known as "Tunnel Tours"). A group of students would go over to the main pan of the campus at around 3am and try to visit some of the more obscure and off-limits locations.

MIT is full of basements and sub-basements, and those are often with crammed with incomprehensible equipment left over from some cancelled research project. Late at night there are still professors and students working, but for the most part all you see are security guards and maintenance crews.

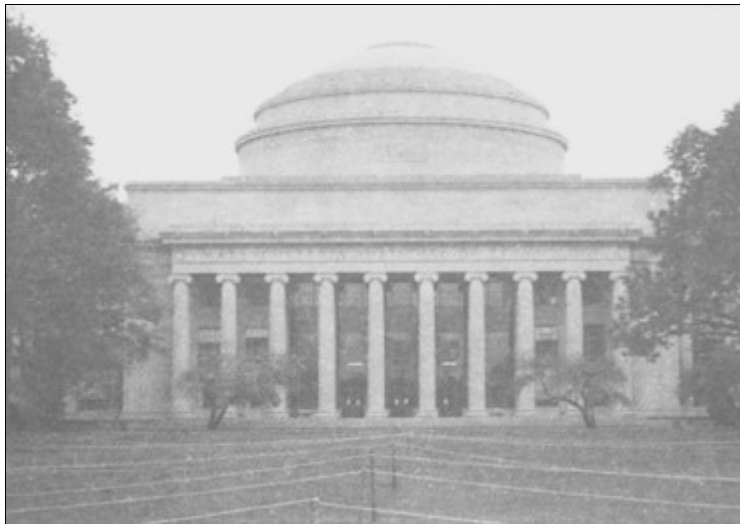
**TSL:** So some of the locations in the game are based on real places?

**Dave:** Except for a few. As far as I know, there is no eldritch altar at which students are sacrificed to nameless gods. But then, I was never a professor, so I can't be sure.

Most of MIT's buildings are connected by basements and tunnels, some of which are not generally accessible to the student population, unless... Well, let's put it this way. MIT students are very good at acquiring keys or at "getting past" locks when keys aren't available.

Until fairly recently there was a door (not at quite the same location as in the

## Is it GUE Tech or MIT? Dave Lebling explains it...



*A stunning photo of MIT's Great Dome: Is the dome a grazing pasture for cattle, or a most elaborate single car parking structure for VW Beetles?*

game) in the chemistry building that said "Department of Alchemy." Alas, I'm told that what was behind it was a storage room.

There really is a skyscraper (well, twenty stories) on campus, housing the geology department, among others. There really was at one time a semi-transparent plastic dome housing a tree atop the building. I have no idea why, or what type of tree it really was. When I was a student, it was possible to get to

this roof by going the wrong way through a door that said "Positively No Admittance, Opening Door Sounds Alarm." When we visited the roof, the alarm didn't go off.

The Great Dome, which has been featured in such masterpieces as *Star Trek*, is often the site for elaborate decorations. In my memory it's been disguised as a giant cupcake, a Halloween pumpkin, and so on. Rumor has it that a cow and a Volkswagen have also

been hoisted onto it.

**TSL:** The Infinite Corridor? Is that real?

**Dave:** The main building of MIT is almost aligned east to west. On certain days of the year, the setting sun shines all the way down the Infinite Corridor, just like the temple of the sun at Karnak, Egypt. MIT is reputed to have more miles of corridor than any building except the Pentagon.

**TSL:** There can't really be a Tomb, can there?

**Dave:** Yes, there can! It's called the Tomb of the Unknown Tool ("tool" is MIT slang for a nerd). It's roughly coffin-shaped, not quite as tight a squeeze as in the game, and has no trap door inside it.

**TSL:** What about Miskatonic University? Is GUE Tech in Arkham?

**Dave:** Well, I have a theory about Miskatonic University. After all the troubles they were mixed up in the twenties and thirties, they probably had a lot of difficulty recruiting students. It was the Depression, after all. I think that perhaps a benefactor, George Underwood Edwards, may have infused a lot of money into several struggling small schools about then, and caused them to merge into GUE Tech. After all, Yale University was renamed after its benefactor, why not Miskatonic?

**TSL:** Do you really live on a hill crowned with a circle of stones?

**Dave:** Absolutely, although we've since discovered that the odd noises at night were merely a raccoon.

## Dear Diary: Chips & chicks don't mix

Dear Diary,  
Well, I decided to tell you about my problems with girls. I hope the person who reads this is able to give me some good advice. I don't know how serious the writer of the Dear Diary column is, but I am quite serious.

Should I tell the good news or the bad news first? Well, let's start with the good news. The good news is that I am quite handsome; not my opinion, many have said it to me. The bad news is that I am very shy, so it's difficult for me to get a girlfriend. To say the truth, I have never had one - and I am eighteen! On top of this, I am an Infocom and computer fan; I am the proud owner of a Commodore 64 personal computer. I have often wondered, why is it that girls run away when they hear the word "computer"? I hope the people at Infocom have an explanation for this.

There is no reason to fear me, you know. I have a good sense of humour and I am a great poet. Example:

My life, what does it mean

Without a girl tenderly loving?  
I'd better take my life  
Without anybody knowing.

Sorry, Dear Diary, I must go now; the macaroni is ready in the kitchen. I'll be back some other time!

Bye for now,  
Kalman Tanito  
Tampere, Finland

P.S. I wonder if *Plundered Hearts* is the answer?

Dear Fickled in Finland,  
Perhaps it is the way you say 'computer' that makes women retreat in horror. If that is the case, I highly recommend playing *Plundered Hearts*, an adventure game that will allow you to uncover the feminine mystique, while adapting the persona of the heroine in order to complete the game.

Or, perhaps, the mention of a computer in conversation plants visions of boring evenings spent to the sound of whirring fans and pick-and-pecked keys in the minds of these still young and impressionable ladies. If that is the

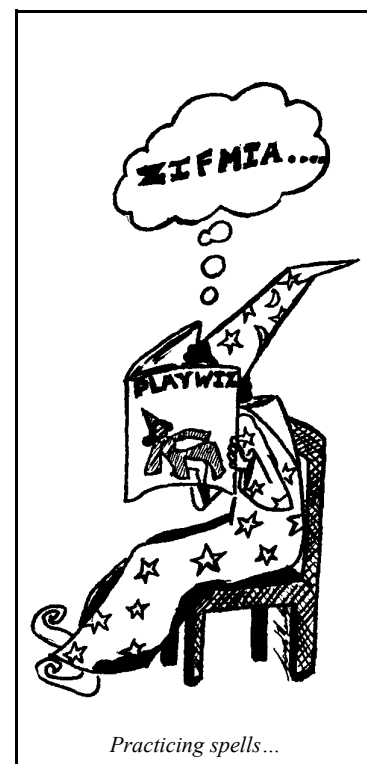
case, why not suggest a date playing one of our games, like *Plundered Hearts* or *Moonmist*, to show how exciting the world of interactive fiction can be

Or, perhaps you should re-evaluate the sources of information about your looks. If they are nerds, or worst yet, family members, take a long look in the mirror. Try a more modern hair-cut; try to wear pants that cover your socks, and throw those plastic pen holders away. Then I suggest you try to find women by joining a computer club.

Remember the old cliché, "Beauty is only skin deep." And, if you become immersed in one of our games in a darkened room, let your imagination run wild. Go ahead, make that risky move! No one ever died on a first date.

P.S. Don't forget to save your place! Good luck!

*Need advice about romance? If there are any other lost lovers out there, please write me, Dear Diary, in care of The Status Line.*



Joseph F. Mundy

# Infocom & TSP team up for Infocomics

Both Infocom and Tom Snyder Productions are located in North Cambridge, Massachusetts. As the pigeon flies, the companies are about a half-mile from each other. But thanks to "no left turn" signs, a shopping center, a dump-turned-park, and a couple of life-threatening rotaries, you have to journey miles in seemingly wrong directions to drive from one company to the other.

Similarly, Infocom and Tom Snyder Productions (TSP) are philosophical neighbors separated by a labyrinthine medium. Both companies protect unique corporate cultures that encourage creativity, and both are known for producing innovative, high-quality software. Yet Infocom is the king of all-text adventure games, while TSP is the renegade frontiersman of educational software. What brought the companies together was their shared daring to develop a whole new kind of product.

## Games for students

TSP was founded in 1980 by Tom Snyder (no relation to the TV talk-show personality of the same name). While teaching fifth grade, Tom made his geography and history lessons more fun by devising simulations and games for the students. Soon he was using his home computer to keep track of all the class information, and eventually he was designing educational software for both students and teachers.

Tom doesn't have his Ph.D. in education (in fact, he says his academic record is "below average"). He's a rock-and-roll musician and a self-proclaimed computer nerd; yet he is considered one of the country's leading educators. He has strong convictions, trusts his instincts, and with his talented staff, he has built a successful and well-respected company.

Though TSP has produced mostly



Lane Mastodon faces the anti-dieting fanatic Blubbermen. This illustration and many more are from the electronic pens of TSP's artists Doug McCartney, Bob Thibeault and project leader, Peter Reynolds.

educational software, it has dabbled before in the entertainment market with *Puppy Love*, where players teach tricks to an electronic dog, and *The Other Side*, a multiplayer game similar to *Diplomacy*.

## Ten years of experience

Infocom brought to Infocomics ten years of experience in interactive storytelling. TSP brought the technology, the artists, and the idea to tell a story through graphics. Computers today are capable of displaying graphics of extraordinary detail and color. Most software developers, let loose like kids in a candy store, spend lots of time and disk space trying to "max out" the graphics capabilities. (This craze hit a peak recently when the publisher of a new game boasted "The graphics in the boot

screen take up more disk space than everything else put together!") TSP, as usual, bucked the trend, focusing its efforts on using the pictures, not just showing them.

TSP designed highly evocative, mini-

malist, comic-book-style line drawings, which can move or transform. Thus, even though each Infocomic has hundreds or thousands of images, there's plenty of room for a long, rich story. The result: graphics which tell and are the story, rather than "paintings" which mask, over-whelm, or are irrelevant to the story.

## Like editing a film

Infocom and TSP were equal creative partners in the development of Infocomics. Together they kicked around ideas for each story. Infocom drew a "flowchart" diagramming the criss-crossing paths of each character in the story, and wrote a script for each scene in the flowchart. TSP then used the script and flowchart as a foundation, adding new ideas as the pictures were drawn. Each week TSP gave a work-in-progress disk to Infocom, and like the editing of a film, both companies worked together to improve both the text and graphics, right up to the last minute.

Infocom and TSP are proud of the first three Infocomics: *Lane Mastodon vs. The Blubbermen*, *Gamma Force in Pit of a Thousand Screams*, and *Zork-Quest: Assault on Egreth Castle*.

## More about Infocomics

### Continued from page 1

ics allow you to wander through this structure, following any character's tale and branching to another's whenever their paths intersect. At every turn, another piece or another perspective is added to the overall story in an enlightening and often surprising way. The plot thereby delightfully unfolds in a manner that is totally unique to this new storytelling medium.

### No puzzles, maps or manuals

While Infocomics are complex in their structure, they're incredibly simple to use. In fact, they're so easy to use, there's no need for an instruction manual. Only four keys are needed to watch them! The "pages" turn by themselves. You can fast forward, stop, and rewind any time you like by pressing the arrow keys or the space bar. To jump to another character's path, press the RETURN (or ENTER) key. Otherwise, just sit back and enjoy!

### Something for everyone

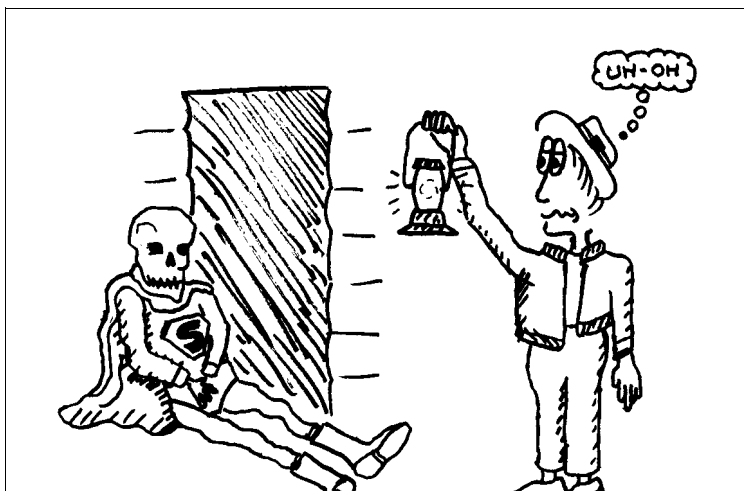
The first three issues of Infocomics offer a host of varied and entertaining characters and storylines. There's something for every taste—from comedy to fantasy to adventure.

Check out *Lane Mastodon vs. The Blubbermen* by Steve Meretzky. In this comic spoof of 1930's science fiction, Lane Mastodon, accountant turned superhero, fights to save humanity from the evil Blubbermen of Jupiter.

Or try *Gamma Force in Pit of a Thousand Screams* by Amy Briggs. This exciting superhero series features the *Gamma Force*, a trio of brave aliens each of whom possesses a different power. Thrill to the action as they try to free their planet from an evil overlord and his Pit of a Thousand Screams.

Finally, you'll enjoy *Zork-Quest: Assault on Egreth Castle*, by Elizabeth Langosy with characters and selected architectonics by Dave Lebling. Follow a caravan of Quendorians as they travel through the countryside, unaware that they are being manipulated by the Evil Magician and headed to a fateful confrontation at Egreth Castle.

There's more action and adventure to come, so don't miss these three premier issues. All three titles will be available in March for Apple II series, Commodore 64/1 28, and IBM and 100% compatible computer systems. With hours of entertainment at the amazingly low price of only \$12, Infocomics are an incredible bargain.



Brian Tate

Hi! Suzy Statistician here with more scintillating statistics and a super new survey I'm certain you'll be psyched to see. First, here's some of the results from Readers' Poll #3. In that poll, if you remember, we asked you, our loyal fans, whom we should collaborate with in future works of interactive fiction. We also asked what historical and fictional characters should be the subjects of future works of interactive fiction.

If you've read page one of this issue, you know by now what historical/fictional character was overwhelmingly chosen for the subject of an Infocom title! That's right, you wanted to see Sherlock Holmes, and we've now provided him. (If you're thinking that we took your poll results and came out with this game in a few short months, please contact *The Status Line's* resident bridge salesman.) Actually, *The Riddle of the Crown Jewels* has been in the works for over a year now. But it does go to show how much we're all on

# Results from Readers' Poll #3

the same wavelength.

We haven't stopped with Sherlock Holmes either. Development is hard at work looking into all the other wonderful ideas that all of you came up with. And rather than just blurring out all the names of your favorites now (Our competitors would love that, wouldn't they!), we'll wait until the games are done and surprise you.

The same holds true for the people whom you think we should collaborate with. Many a legal document might be put in jeopardy if we were to tell you who we are trying to get to co-write a game. But many of you not quite understanding the word "collaborate"

gave us some interesting ideas, that we will list here. For those of you who don't understand, just look up *collaborate* in your favorite dictionary. Topping the list of non-contenders are: J.R.R. Tolkien, Ernest Hemingway, C.S. Lewis, Steve Meretzky, Dave Lebling, Brian Moriarty, Gayle Syska, Elizabeth Langosy, and various other dead people and employees.

Well, enough about the past; let's talk about the future. Paula (you remember her, our previous pollster, known for her positively prolific polls) tells me that you haven't all been too diligent in filling out readers' polls, and that maybe you need some, well, motivation. So, here's the motivation: I, Suzy Statistician will hereby, hitherto, henceforth, and heretofore randomly choose some poll responses and send the responders some lovely gifts. You know, a poster here, a t-shirt there, a game over there, a trilogy way over there, and... who knows what else? A date with Suzy Statistician, even?

## Readers' Poll #4

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F  
 How many Infocom games do you own? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many have you bought direct from Infocom (mail or phone orders)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What type(s) of computer systems do you own?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Apple IIe \_\_\_\_\_ Apple IIc  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Apple II clone—specify brand and model \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Apple IIgs  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh 128K \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh XL  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh 512K \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh 512KE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh Plus \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh SE  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Macintosh II  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Atari (8 bit) Specify model \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Atari 520 ST \_\_\_\_\_ Atari 1040 ST  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Atari Mega 2 ST \_\_\_\_\_ Atari Mega 4 ST  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Commodore 64 \_\_\_\_\_ Commodore 128  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Commodore Amiga 500 \_\_\_\_\_ Commodore Amiga 1000  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Commodore Amiga 2000  
 \_\_\_\_\_ IBM PC \_\_\_\_\_ IBM PC jr  
 \_\_\_\_\_ IBM PC XT \_\_\_\_\_ IBM PC AT  
 \_\_\_\_\_ IBM P/S 2—specify model \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ IBM clone (specify model)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Compaq \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Tandy \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Leading Edge \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ AT & T \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (brand and model) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (specify brand and model) \_\_\_\_\_

N.B. If you have more than one system, please answer on a separate sheet for each computer and mark at the top of each sheet the computer for which it applies.

How many disk drives do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many are: \_\_\_\_\_ 5 1/2 inch? \_\_\_\_\_ 3 1/2 inch?  
 If have a hard disk, what is its capacity?  
*Commodore 64/128 only:* What models are your drives?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1541 \_\_\_\_\_ 1571  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Macintosh only:* How many of your drives are \_\_\_\_\_ 400k? \_\_\_\_\_ 800k?  
 Do you have expansion memory? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how much? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you use an accelerator board? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please specify type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please specify brand and model \_\_\_\_\_  
 What kind of monitor do you use?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ TV \_\_\_\_\_ monochrome \_\_\_\_\_ composite \_\_\_\_\_ RGB  
*IBM only:* Do you have a graphics board? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What type is it? \_\_\_\_\_ Hercules \_\_\_\_\_ EGA \_\_\_\_\_ CGA  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other—Please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you have a printer? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What type is it? \_\_\_\_\_ dot matrix \_\_\_\_\_ daisy wheel \_\_\_\_\_ laser  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other—Please specify type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you have a modem? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What speed? \_\_\_\_\_ 300 baud \_\_\_\_\_ 1200 baud  
 Do you subscribe to \_\_\_\_\_ CompuServe? \_\_\_\_\_ Genie? \_\_\_\_\_ Delphi?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ others?—Please list \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you have a mouse? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you have a joystick? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you expect to upgrade or change your system within the next 12 months?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 To what kind of system?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Send to:  
 Suzy Statistician—Poll #4  
 c/o Infocom, Inc.  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140





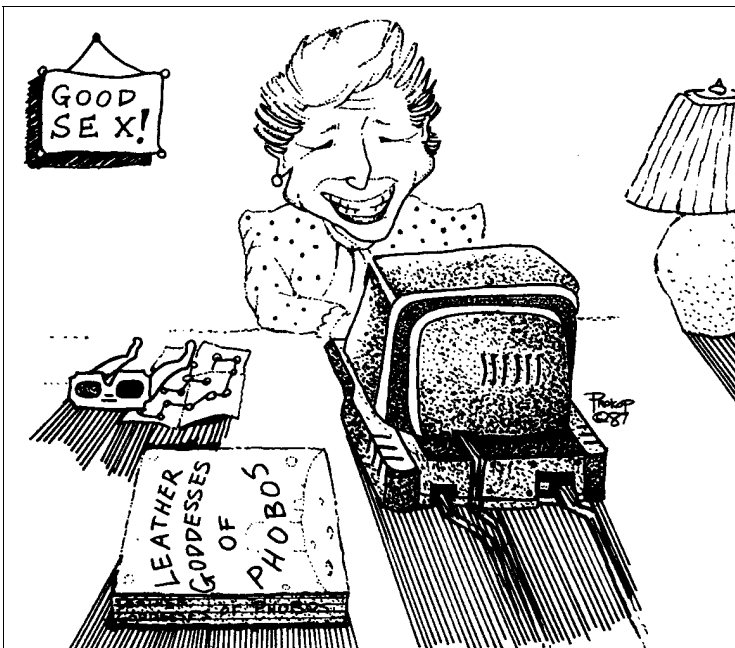
Gleefully receiving the Software Publishers Association awards are (L-R): Stuart "Stella" Kirsch, Marketing Assistant; Chris Reeve, Vice President for Development; Cynthia Weiss, Public Relations Manager; Mike Dornbrook, Director of Marketing; Gayle Syska, Product Manager; Joel Berez, President; Gabrielle Accardi, Sales Development Manager.

## SPA honors Infocom with Platinum, Gold and Silver

Pomp and Circumstance wasn't the song for the night, but it was still a night of honors and celebration for Infocom. The scene was the Grand Ballroom of the Cambridge Marriott, site of the third annual conference of the Software Publishers Association (SPA). Infocom was one of many well-known software companies presented with plaques recognizing the outstanding popularity of their products. InfoPrez Joel Berez almost needed a handtruck to carry away the awards at the end of the night. And when you add the rest of Activision's awards, our fearless leader, Activision President Bruce Davis, needed a forklift to carry them all home.

Infocom received five awards: *Wishbringer* and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* were certified Silver (50,000 units sold); *Suspended* was certified Gold (100,000 units sold) and *Zork* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* were two of the first products ever to be certified Platinum (a new category for sales of over 250,000). To date Infocom has received two Platinum awards, six Gold Awards, and eight Silver Awards. We all thank you for your support in making these awards possible.

The Software Publishers Association is the primary trade association of micro-computer software publishers, developers and distributors.



Bob Prokop

## > Tell me about Customer Support

Did you know that our customer support representatives get about 1200 calls and 500 letters every month from our fans? As the computer industry changes, everyone wants to be kept informed about compatibility with new hardware. This column will help you do just that. Questions? Call (617) 576-3190 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern time. Or write to: Customer Support, Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

Remember our customer support representatives will not answer questions about hints.

### Mac SE and Mac II compatibility

Everyone, but everyone, wants to know about Macintosh SE and Macintosh II compatibility. From our limited testing, we've found that our games are compatible. Some of our older games, however, have outdated Systems and Finders on them. Anyone can simply throw away the old System and Finder from the Infocom game disk and copy the new System and Finder on to the game disk. Please let us know if you encounter any problems.

Also if you are having trouble saving to an 800k disk, try a 400k disk. Our older interpreters won't recognize the hierarchical file system (HFS). We will upgrade your disks with new interpreters for \$5 per disk.

### New games use Commodore Ram Expansion

Our newer games (starting with *Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*, *Beyond Zork*, and *Border Zone*) will now take advantage of Commodore Ram Expansion Cartridges on the Commodore 64 and 128! This will certainly cut down on disk access. Our older games, however, cannot take advantage of Ram Expansion.

### Use COPYA for Apple II backups

Many people call about making backups of their Apple disks. If the reference card which came with your Infocom game has a section on making a backup, you will be able to backup the disk using COPYA on the DOS 3.3 disk. No other copy utility that Apple provides (including those on the PRODOS systems utilities) will work. We haven't tested third-party copy programs, but give them a try and let us know.

### Infocom games on 3 1/2 inch disks for the IBM

Infocom doesn't produce 3 1/2 inch disks for the new IBM series of computers. However, there is no copy protection on our IBM line of products. You can, therefore, just copy your 5 1/4 inch disks to 3 1/2 inch disks through DOS. Infocom provides this service for a \$10 fee. Send us your original disk and a check or money order for \$10 and we'll send you back a 3 1/2 inch copy.

### Have you lost your copy protection?

As you know, most Infocom software is not copy-protected, so we include something in every package that you need in order to complete the game. We understand that sometimes these items get lost. If you have lost any item in your package (except the box itself), you can replace it, provided you send us your proof of purchase (a sales receipt with the name of the game on it, or the master disk) and \$2 per game piece or \$5 per manual. We will return your proof of purchase along with your new game piece.

### Got a new computer and old games?

In this time of changing computers, many people have bought newer machines to replace their old 8-bit machines. You can trade in your older games for your new computer through Infocom. Just send us your old master disk along with a check or money order for \$10 for the first disk and \$5 for each other disk and we'll send you disks for your new system.



## “What’s wrong with marketing software?”

“We produce a lot of programs for personal computers and I market them all the time.”

“I’m a pirate. Every time you market one of your programs, you’re taking away my income — I depend on pirated programs for a living.”

“Oh, come on. My company developed it: I have a right to market it.”

“You do have a right to develop software, that’s true. But when you start selling programs for a profit, you’re breaking the law.”

“What law? Any marketing I do is the business of my own company.”

“It doesn’t make any difference why you do it. Every time you copy-protect a program beyond the ability of the hacker to break it, you’re putting a pirate out of business.”

“That’s all right, I won’t get caught.”

“You’re missing the point. The issue isn’t “What can I get away with?” — it’s “who am I hurting?” Remember, lots of people worked hard to pirate every program you produce: hackers, bulletin-board operators, “distributors,” not to mention all the people who support pirates. They have a right to be compensated for their efforts, and their major compensation is through pirated software sales.”

“Well, I don’t mean to hurt all those people — or anyone, really.”

“Unfortunately, that’s what marketing does: it hurts people. And, ultimately, it hurts people like me, who want to pirate new and innovative software.”

**Do you market software?  
Think about it.**

**The unauthorized marketing of software is a crime.**



## What about Atari 8-bits and the Commodore 64?

Here at *The Status Line*, we make it a practice to keep aware of what's going on in the computer industry in general, and in the minds of our customers in particular. One concern on a lot of people's minds is why Infocom seems to be ignoring the thousands of loyal fans who own Atari 8-bits and Commodore 64s. And since we have trouble answering all your letters sent by mail and by modem, we spent some time discussing the situation with Mike Dornbrook, our Director of Marketing.

**TSL:** Mike, why isn't *Beyond Zork* available for the Commodore 64 and the Atari XL/XE?

**Mike:** Well, computer technology has been advancing by quantum leaps and the trend has only accelerated in the last few years. For instance, the original *Zork* had to be cut in thirds to be downloaded for personal computer use only seven years ago. Now *AMFV* and *Beyond Zork* are each bigger than the entire *Zork Trilogy*.

Consumers, to their credit are keeping up with technology. People are eager to buy every worthwhile new product that hardware manufacturers develop; and in general they're quite able to tell a rising star from a lemon.

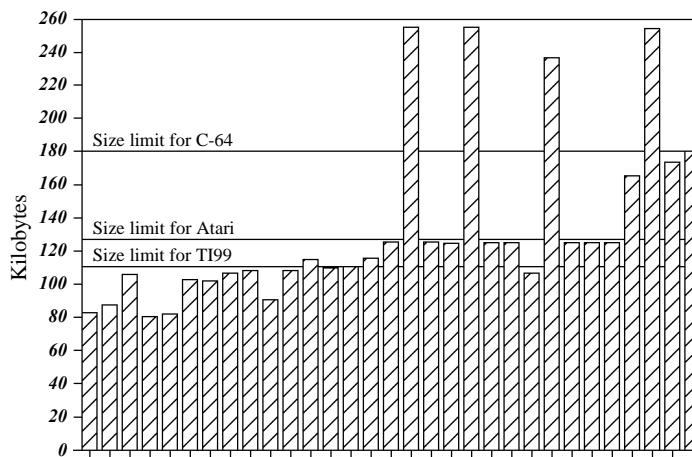
Considering the sales of new models in the last five years, consumers want new features and increased capacity in their computers.

This situation puts software companies in a difficult position. To not support new machines to the best of their technological capabilities spells a very short future for a software developer. To leave behind older machines breeds not only loss of customers' respect and loyalty, but also the destruction of the current sales base; this, too, puts a software company on the edge.

The route that we are following reflects the route that you are following. 80% of the sales of our smaller games—those that run on the C-64 and the Atari—are to people whose machines can support much larger games. Since we have the capability of doing that much more for those machines, we feel that to not do so would be short-changing the vast majority of our constituents.

On the other hand, we don't want to turn our backs on those with less powerful machines, and we've made conscious—and even painful—efforts to continue to support those customers. Both *Border Zone* and *Sherlock*, the

Infocom Game Sizes  
In release date order



N.B.—Though there are other considerations, total size of the story is a good indicator for the computer resources required.

two releases after *Beyond Zork*, run on the Commodore 64. And it was an especially tough job getting *Sherlock* down to that size, but we made a commitment in both time and personnel to do just that. To get *Sherlock* to where it could run on the Atari, however, would require removing fully one third of the story—an unrealistic compromise both artistically and structurally.

As for *Beyond Zork*, there was no

way to put out a product for the lower-end machines that could do the things we wanted it to do. We apologize to those of you who feel disenfranchised.

We hope that you now understand our dilemma and that you don't hold it against us. We still love you.

**TSL:** Thanks, Mike. Unfortunately, there isn't time or space for my 37 other questions, but maybe I'll get back to you next issue.

## The Riddle of the Crown Jewels

Continued from page 1

Our packaging mavens have outdone themselves with an authentic map of Victorian London and a reproduction of a London newspaper of the day. With actual articles, notices, and advertisements, you get an unforgettable glimpse into the day-to-day life of a Londoner of Holmes's day. Also included in the package is a distinctive key fob with the unmistakable silhouettes of the master sleuth and his companion.

But it is Holmes himself who attract and holds our attention here. He is that lean, nervous character whose piercing eyes miss nothing and whose deductions from the smallest piece of

evidence are guaranteed to astound. As Big Ben strikes each hour and you come ever closer to either victory or abject failure, it is his words of impatience or praise that spur you on.

Scheduled for release January 15, 1988, *Sherlock* will be available for a wide variety of personal computers including Apple II series, Commodore 64/128, IBM series and 100% compatibles.

Versions with sound will be available March 1, 1988, for the Macintosh, Atari ST, Amiga, and Apple IIGs. Suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

## Zork I and Hitchhiker's only \$14.95

Continued from page 3

has been a phenomenal success as a series of books, on radio, and on television. It is little wonder that everybody said *Don't Panic* when the interactive version came out. It, too, was honored with a Platinum award by the SPA. Douglas Adams's wacky wit and Steve Meretzky's challenging puzzles have made the interactive story a must for every software library.

By now you want to know where you can get Solid Gold classics. Well, it's as easy as 1-2-3! (1) Go to your dealer and kick him in the shins if he doesn't

have it. (2) Call 1-800-262-6868 and order it with your favorite credit card. (3) Fill in the order form in the center of this issue (or photocopy) and mail it to us.

But wait, there's more! If you are one of the first ones to order by phone or mail, we'll send you the hardback version at paperback prices! That's right, you'll get all the cute little things in the packages for only \$14.95! And since the hardback version doesn't have on-screen hints, we'll send you free InvisiClues, too! A total value of up to \$47.90 for only \$14.95!



Zods! Just look at all the cool intergalactic stuff that comes with Planetfall. Three postcards from various planets, your diary and a Stellar Patrol card.

## More about the three classic titles

Continued from page 4

panion. Floyd might be a bit too talkative at times but he really is a helpful little fellow!

The search for food, water and a safe place to sleep are not the only sources of adventure in *Planetfall*. The real intrigue begins as you try to save yourself and the lost planet of Resida from doom. Being a proud member of the Stellar Patrol you act with bravery and courage as you try to conquer the ob-

stacles put in your path.

*Planetfall* comes complete with a Stellar Patrol ID Card, a space diary and postcards (great to send back to your home galaxy!) which will aid you in your adventure on Resida.

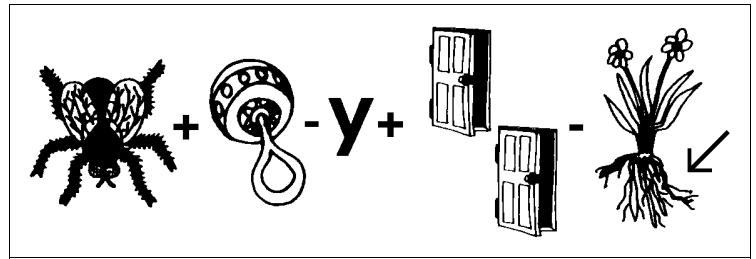
*A Mind Forever Voyaging*, *Planetfall* and *Fooblitzky* are available for a wide variety of personal computers. Turn to the middle of this issue for complete availability information.

# > Examine puzzle #17

Puzzle #17 is a plain old-fashioned rebus. Just figure out what each picture represents, write the words down, and add or subtract the letters as indicated. When done, your answer should be a variation on an Infocom-related phrase, title, or name. (See example at right.)

Note that you will sometimes have a choice of letters while subtracting; if you subtract the wrong letters, you'll have to do some anagramming. In the example, if the wrong "Y" had been subtracted, you would have ended up with "FLYOD."

Also note that this is trickier than it looks. The first picture is "FLY" but it could have been "BUG" or "INSECT" or "HORSEFLY"; the second picture might have been "GAME" or "PLAYTHING" or "RATTLE."



(FLY) + (TOY) - (Y) + (DOORS) - (ROOTS)  
 FLY + TOY = FLYTOY  
 FLYTOY - Y = FLTOY  
 FLTOY + DOORS = FLTOYDOORS  
 FLTOYDOORS - ROOTS = FLOYD

+ <b>3</b> +  -  + <b>P</b> -
+  + <b>U</b> +  -  -
+  -  - <b>O</b>
+  +  -  -

### Puzzle #17 Entry Form

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Puzzle Rules:** 1) All entries must be postmarked by March 31, 1988. (Entries from outside the U.S. and Canada are due by June 31, 1988.) 2) Entries must be

on this form or on a photocopy of this form. 3) Limit of one entry per person. 4) All entries must be mailed separately. 5) Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. 6) Void where prohibited by law or by good taste.

**Prize:** *The New York Times* Puzzle Winner T-Shirts. (Note to newer subscribers: *The Status Line* was formerly called *The New York Times*. The name was changed following a length legal wrestling match with a certain great metropolitan newspaper, and we're not referring to *The Daily Planet*.)

**Mail to:** Infocom, Inc.  
*The Status Line* Puzzle  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

### Kartoon Kontest

Can you draw? Are you funny? Can you write a headline that doesn't resort to misspellings to be eye-catching? Then perhaps you should enter our Cartoon Contest.

Just send us your cartoon(s), along with this form or a photocopy of this form. We'll pick the best cartoons and print them here in *The Status Line*. If we print your cartoon, you'll win an Infocom game of your choice! (Note: we receive about 50 times as many cartoons as we print.)

Your cartoon must be in black ink on white paper. Do not include a border around your cartoon unless your cartoon demands it. Do not fold your cartoon when mailing it. Please do not include non-cartoon-related correspondence (such as changes of address, puzzle entries, or bugs).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Game desired (single titles, not trilogies):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Computer version desired (such as Apple II, C-128):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your cartoon to: The Status Line Cartoon Contest  
 c/o Infocom, Inc.  
 125 CambridgePark Drive.  
 Cambridge, MA 02140

## > Look at puzzle winners

In Puzzle Number Fifteen, we gave you eight short interactive fiction transcripts based on real movies or TV shows. Your job was to identify the name of the character you were playing in each transcript. The answers:

1. Dave Bowman (from *2001: A Space Odyssey*)
2. Max Bialystock (from *The Producers*)
3. Thurston Howell III (from *Gilligan's Island*)
4. John Rambo (from *Rambo: First Blood, Part II*)
5. Zoot (from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*)
6. Auric Goldfinger (from *Goldfinger*)
7. Jane Hathaway (from *The Beverly Hillbillies*)
8. George Bailey (from *It's A Wonderful Life*)

Puzzle 15 was a reprise of Puzzle 9, and it turned out to be considerably harder. There were only 124 entries, of which 89 (71.8%) were correct. (Puzzle 9 garnered 420 entries, 227 of them correct.) The most common mistake was omitting Goldfinger's first name.

25 of those 89 correct entries were drawn randomly. These lucky people will be receiving a *New Zork Times* Puzzle Winners T-Shirt: Kevin Mahoney, Plainsboro NJ; Richard Barth, Burke VA; Hana Teitel, Brooklyn NY; Shea Kammer, Clarkstown MI; David Pickels, Esmond RI; Robert L. Duncan, Fenton MO; Donald Lemma, Holmdel

NJ; Frank Manning, Tulsa OK; John R. Joyce, Midland MI; Steve Vincent, Grand Blanc MI; Larry Sargent, Hamilton MA; Ed Corley, Eldorado OH; Buster C. St. John, Chico CA; Thomas Barth, Martinez CA; Ken Gryer, Spring TX; Joe Hertz, Franklin Park IL; Dean Whitlock, Minolt ND; Chuck Guarino, Troy NY; Andrew Growve, Oak Rich TN; Larry Varney, Fairfield OH; Linda Lynam, Warrensburg MO; Arvid Greggerson, Santa Ana CA; Joe Kilpatrick, Colonia NJ; Gwyneth Church, Athens OH; John Kennedy, Chatham NJ.

## Lexington, Massachusetts



Hollywood Dave Anderson shows off a copy of *Beyond Zork* on the Lexington Green. Maybe if the minutemen had warmed-up with *Beyond Zork* they would have been to fare a bit better that day in April, 1775.

## Smile and say "Zork"

Planning a vacation soon? Don't forget to pack your Infocom game. Next time you visit a landmark, pause and snap a picture of yourself holding one of our games. We'll publish the best ones we receive.

And for even more fun, if you are the first to send us a photo of someone holding one of our games on the Great Wall of China, we'll send you our complete catalog of games.

Black and white photos would be best, since we don't plan on changing to a full-color glossy magazine anytime soon. But we don't expect you to change your vacation plans just for us, so color slides and prints are okay. Send your photos to: Landmark Photo, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Dr., Cambridge, MA 02140. Go ahead, give it a shot!

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# NEW!

## Zork T-Shirt!



Zork T-shirt!

Front

Back

Product	Zork T-shirt Small	Zork T-shirt Medium	Zork T-shirt Large	Zork T-shirt X-Large
Catalog # and Price	IZ1-TSS \$9.95	IZ1-TSM \$9.95	IZ1-TSL \$9.95	IZ1-TSX \$9.95

## Get the Classic Works of the Master Storytellers for only \$14.95

System	Wishbringer	Zork II	Zork III	Trinity	Deadline	Witness	Starcross	Suspended	Planetfall	A Mind Forever Voyaging	Infidel	Seastalker	Fooblitzky
Apple II Series (48K, 16-sector)	IZ0-AP1 \$14.95	IZ2-AP1 \$14.95	IZ3-AP1 \$14.95	IZ7-AP1 \$14.95	IM1-AP1 \$14.95	IM2-AP1 \$14.95	IS1-AP1 \$14.95	IS2-AP1 \$14.95	IS3-AP1 \$14.95	IS5-AP1 \$14.95	IA1-AP1 \$14.95	IA2-AP1 \$14.95	GS1-AP1 \$14.95
Apple Macintosh	IZ0-AP2 \$14.95	IZ2-AP2 \$14.95	IZ3-AP2 \$14.95	IZ7-AP2 \$14.95	IM1-AP2 \$14.95	IM2-AP2 \$14.95	IS1-AP2 \$14.95	IS2-AP2 \$14.95	IS3-AP2 \$14.95	IS5-AP2 \$14.95	IA1-AP2 \$14.95	IA2-AP2 \$14.95	
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)	IZ0-AT1 \$14.95	IZ2-AT1 \$14.95	IZ3-AT1 \$14.95		IM1-AT1 \$14.95	IM2-AT1 \$14.95	IS1-AT1 \$14.95	IS2-AT1 \$14.95	IS3-AT1 \$14.95		IA1-AT1 \$14.95	IA2-AT1 \$14.95	GS1-AT1 \$14.95
Atari ST Series	IZ0-AT2 \$14.95	IZ2-AT2 \$14.95	IZ3-AT2 \$14.95	IZ7-AT2 \$14.95	IM1-AT2 \$14.95	IM2-AT2 \$14.95	IS1-AT2 \$14.95	IS2-AT2 \$14.95	IS3-AT2 \$14.95	IS5-AT2 \$14.95	IA1-AT2 \$14.95	IA2-AT2 \$14.95	
Commodore 64 (1541 disk)	IZ0-CO1 \$14.95	IZ2-CO1 \$14.95	IZ3-CO1 \$14.95		IM1-CO1 \$14.95	IM2-CO1 \$14.95	IS1-CO1 \$14.95	IS2-CO1 \$14.95	IS3-CO1 \$14.95		IA1-CO1 \$14.95	IA2-CO1 \$14.95	
Commodore 128	IZ0-CO1 \$14.95	IZ2-CO1 \$14.95	IZ3-CO1 \$14.95	IZ7-CO5 \$14.95	IM1-CO1 \$14.95	IM2-CO1 \$14.95	IS1-CO1 \$14.95	IS2-CO1 \$14.95	IS3-CO1 \$14.95	IS5-CO5 \$14.95	IA1-CO1 \$14.95	IA2-CO1 \$14.95	
Commodore Amiga	IZ0-CO4 \$14.95	IZ2-CO4 \$14.95	IZ3-CO4 \$14.95	IZ7-CO4 \$14.95	IM1-CO4 \$14.95	IM2-CO4 \$14.95	IS1-CO4 \$14.95	IS2-CO4 \$14.95	IS3-CO4 \$14.95	IS5-CO4 \$14.95	IA1-CO4 \$14.95	IA2-CO4 \$14.95	
CP/M (8" disk, 48K, Version 2.0 and above)						IM2-CP1 \$14.95	IS1-CP1 \$14.95	IS2-CP1 \$14.95			IA1-CP1 \$14.95	IA2-CP1 \$14.95	
DEC Rainbow (CP/M Option)		IZ2-DE2 \$14.95	IZ3-DE2 \$14.95		IM1-DE2 \$14.95	IM2-DE2 \$14.95	IS1-DE2 \$14.95	IS2-DE2 \$14.95	IS3-DE2 \$14.95		IA1-DE2 \$14.95		
DEC Rainbow (MS-DOS Option)	IZ0-IB2 \$14.95	IZ2-IB2 \$14.95	IZ3-IB2 \$14.95		IM1-IB2 \$14.95	IM2-IB2 \$14.95	IS1-IB2 \$14.95	IS2-IB2 \$14.95	IS3-TI1 \$14.95		IA1-TI1 \$14.95	IA2-IB2 \$14.95	
Epson QX-10						IM2-EP1 \$14.95							
IBM Series and 100% compatibles only	IZ0-IB2 \$14.95	IZ2-IB2 \$14.95	IZ3-IB2 \$14.95	IZ7-IB1 \$14.95	IM1-IB2 \$14.95	IM2-IB2 \$14.95	IS1-IB2 \$14.95	IS2-IB2 \$14.95	IS3-TI1 \$14.95	IS5-IB1 \$14.95	IA1-IB2 \$14.95	IA2-IB2 \$14.95	GS1-IB1 \$14.95
IBM Series and MS-DOS compatibles	IZ0-IB2 \$14.95	IZ2-IB2 \$14.95	IZ3-IB2 \$14.95		IM1-IB2 \$14.95	IM2-IB2 \$14.95	IS1-IB2 \$14.95	IS2-IB2 \$14.95	IS3-TI1 \$14.95		IA1-IB2 \$14.95	IA2-IB2 \$14.95	
Kaypro II CP/M					IM1-KA1 \$14.95	IM2-KA1 \$14.95						IA2-KA1 \$14.95	
Osborne (CP/M)						IM2-OS1 \$14.95		IS2-OS1 \$14.95	IS3-OS1 \$14.95				
TI 99/4A (48K expansion, disk, one of the following: Extended Basic, Mini-Memory, Editor/Assembler)					IM1-TI2 \$14.95	IM2-TI2 \$14.95							
TI Professional	IZ0-IB2 \$14.95	IZ2-TI1 \$14.95	IZ3-TI1 \$14.95		IM1-TI1 \$14.95	IM2-TI1 \$14.95	IS1-IB2 \$14.95	IS2-TI1 \$14.95	IS3-TI1 \$14.95		IA1-TI1 \$14.95	IA2-IB2 \$14.95	
TRS-80 Model I (48K and disk)		IZ2-TA1 \$14.95	IZ3-TA1 \$14.95		IM1-TA1 \$14.95	IM2-TA1 \$14.95	IS1-TA1 \$14.95	IS2-TA1 \$14.95	IS3-TA1 \$14.95		IM2-TA1 \$14.95		
TRS-80 Model III (48K and disk)		IZ2-TA3 \$14.95	IZ3-TA3 \$14.95			IM2-TA3 \$14.95	IS1-TA3 \$14.95	IS2-TA3 \$14.95					
TRS-80 Color Computer (48K and disk)	IZ0-TA4 \$14.95	IZ2-TA4 \$14.95	IZ3-TA4 \$14.95			IM2-TA4 \$14.95			IS3-TA4 \$14.95		IA1-TA4 \$14.95		
InvisiClues	IZ0-INV \$7.95	IZ2-INV \$7.95	IZ3-INV \$7.95	IZ7-INV \$7.95	IM1-INV \$7.95	IM2-INV \$7.95	IS1-INV \$7.95	IS2-INV \$7.95	IS3-INV \$7.95	IS5-INV \$7.95	IA1-INV \$7.95	IA2-INV \$7.95	


These games require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.

These games are available only while supplies last.

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System	Cornerstone	Solid Gold Zork I	Zork Trilogy	Enchanter	Sorcerer	Spell-breaker	Enchanter Trilogy	Suspect	Ballyhoo	Moonmist	Solid Gold Hitchhiker's	Cutthroats	Leather Goddesses of Phobos
Apple II Series (48K, 16-sector)		IZ1-AP1 \$14.95	IT1-AP1 \$49.95	IZ4-AP1 \$29.95	IZ5-AP1 \$44.95	IZ6-AP1 \$49.95	IT2-AP1 \$59.95	IM3-AP1 \$39.95	IM4-AP1 \$39.95	IM5-AP1 \$39.95	IS4-AP1 \$14.95	IA3-AP1 \$39.95	IC1-AP1 \$39.95
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Apple Macintosh		IZ1-AP2 \$14.95	IT1-AP2 \$49.95	IZ4-AP2 \$29.95	IZ5-AP2 \$44.95	IZ6-AP2 \$49.95	IT2-AP2 \$59.95	IM3-AP2 \$39.95	IM4-AP2 \$39.95	IM5-AP2 \$39.95	IS4-AP2 \$14.95	IA3-AP2 \$39.95	IC1-AP2 \$39.95
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)		IZ1-AT1 3 \$14.95	IT1-AT1 \$44.95	IZ4-AT1 \$24.95	IZ5-AT1 \$39.95	IZ6-AT1 \$44.95	IT2-AT1 \$49.95	IM3-AT1 \$34.95	IM4-AT1 \$34.95	IM5-AT1 \$34.95	IS4-AT1 3 \$14.95	IA3-AT1 \$34.95	IC1-AT1 \$34.95
Atari ST Series		IZ1-AT2 3 \$14.95	IT1-AT2 \$49.95	IZ4-AT2 \$29.95	IZ5-AT2 \$44.95	IZ6-AT2 \$49.95	IT2-AT2 \$59.95	IM3-AT2 \$39.95	IM4-AT2 \$39.95	IM5-AT2 \$39.95	IS4-AT2 3 \$14.95	IA3-AT2 \$39.95	IC1-AT2 \$39.95
Commodore 64 (1541 disk)		IZ1-CO1 \$14.95	IT1-CO1 \$44.95	IZ4-CO1 \$24.95	IZ5-CO1 \$39.95	IZ6-CO1 \$44.95	IT2-CO1 \$49.95	IM3-CO1 \$34.95	IM4-CO1 \$34.95	IM5-CO1 \$34.95	IS4-CO1 \$14.95	IA3-CO1 \$34.95	IC1-CO1 \$34.95
Commodore 128		IZ1-CO1 \$14.95	IT1-CO1 \$44.95	IZ4-CO1 \$24.95	IZ5-CO1 \$39.95	IZ6-CO1 \$44.95	IT2-CO1 \$49.95	IM3-CO1 \$34.95	IM4-CO1 \$34.95	IM5-CO1 \$34.95	IS4-CO1 \$14.95	IA3-CO1 \$34.95	IC1-CO1 \$34.95
Commodore Amiga		IZ1-CO4 3 \$14.95	IT1-CO4 \$49.95	IZ4-CO4 \$29.95	IZ5-CO4 \$44.95	IZ6-CO4 \$49.95	IT2-CO4 \$59.95	IM3-CO4 \$39.95	IM4-CO4 \$39.95	IM5-CO4 \$39.95	IS4-CO4 3 \$14.95	IA3-CO4 \$39.95	IC1-CO4 \$39.95
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DEC Rainbow (CP/M Option)		IZ1-DE2 3 \$14.95		IZ4-DE2 \$14.95	IZ5-DE2 \$14.95								
DEC Rainbow (MS-DOS Option)		IZ1-IB2 3 \$14.95	IT1-IB2 \$49.95	IZ4-IB2 \$29.95	IZ5-IB2 \$44.95	IZ6-IB2 \$49.95	IT2-IB2 \$59.95	IM3-IB2 \$39.95	IM4-IB2 \$39.95	IM5-IB2 \$39.95	IS4-IB2 3 \$14.95	IA3-IB2 \$39.95	IC1-IB2 \$39.95
Epson QX-10		IZ1-EP1 3 \$14.95									IS4-EP1 3 \$14.95	IA3-EP1 3 \$14.95	
IBM Series and 100% compatibles only	BC1-IB1 2 \$99.95	IZ1-IB1 \$14.95	IT1-IB2 \$49.95	IZ4-IB2 \$29.95	IZ5-IB2 \$44.95	IZ6-IB2 \$49.95	IT2-IB2 \$59.95	IM3-IB2 \$39.95	IM4-IB2 \$39.95	IM5-IB2 \$39.95	IS4-IB1 \$14.95	IA3-IB2 \$39.95	IC1-IB2 \$39.95
IBM Series and MS-DOS compatibles		IZ1-IB2 3 \$14.95	IT1-IB2 \$49.95	IZ4-IB2 \$29.95	IZ5-IB2 \$44.95	IZ6-IB2 \$49.95	IT2-IB2 \$59.95	IM3-IB2 \$39.95	IM4-IB2 \$39.95	IM5-IB2 \$39.95	IS4-IB2 3 \$14.95	IA3-IB2 \$39.95	IC1-IB2 \$39.95
Kaypro II CP/M		IZ1-KA1 3 \$14.95		IZ4-KA1 \$14.95							IS4-KA1 3 \$14.95	IA3-KA1 \$14.95	
Osborne (CP/M)				IZ4-OS1 \$14.95	IZ5-OS1 \$14.95						IS4-OS1 3 \$14.95	IA3-OS1 \$14.95	
TI 99/4A (48K expansion, disk, one of the following: Extended Basic, Mini-Memory, Editor/Assembler)		IZ1-TI2 3 \$14.95			IZ5-TI2 \$14.95						IS4-TI2 3 \$14.95	IA3-TI2 \$14.95	
TI Professional		IZ1-TI1 3 \$14.95	IT1-IB2 \$49.95	IZ4-TI1 \$14.95	IZ5-TI1 \$14.95	IZ6-IB2 \$49.95	IT2-IB2 \$59.95	IM3-IB2 \$39.95	IM4-IB2 \$39.95	IM5-IB2 \$39.95	IS4-IB2 3 \$14.95	IA3-IB2 \$39.95	IC1-IB2 \$39.95
TRS-80 Model I (48K and disk)		IZ1-TA1 3 \$14.95		IZ4-TA1 \$14.95	IZ5-TA1 \$14.95								
TRS-80 Model III (48K and disk)				IZ4-TA3 \$14.95									
TRS-80 Color Computer (48K and disk)		IZ1-TA4 3 \$14.95		IZ4-TA4 \$14.95					IM4-TA4 \$14.95		IS4-TA4 3 \$14.95		
InvisiClues	BC1-BOK \$14.95	IZ1-INV 5 \$7.95	IT1-INV 6 \$12.95	IZ4-INV \$7.95	IZ5-INV \$7.95	IZ6-INV \$7.95		IM3-INV \$7.95	IM4-INV \$7.95	IM5-INV \$7.95	IS4-INV 5 \$7.95	IA3-INV \$7.95	IC1-INV \$7.95

 These games require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.

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- These versions contain excerpts from ZORK I, INFIDEL, The WITNESS, and PLANETFALL.
- Requires IBM PC, XT, AT or 100% compatible; PC DOS 2.0, 2.1, 3.0, or 3.1; Minimum 384K; 2 floppy disk drives or 1 floppy and 1 hard disk drive.
- Original packaging; without on-screen hints.
- Requires 192K.
- Solid Gold series contains on-screen hints.
- Available 2/88.
- Available 3/88.
- Package contains both 5¼" and 3½" disks.




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Apple IIgs							IZ8-AP3 \$49.95				CS1-AP3 7 \$39.95	
Apple Macintosh	IA4-AP2 \$39.95	IC2-AP2 \$39.95	IS6-AP2 \$39.95	IH1-AP2 \$39.95	IC3-AP2 \$39.95	IR1-AP2 \$39.95	IZ8-AP2 \$49.95	IE1-AP2 \$39.95	IT3-AP2 \$59.95	IT4-AP2 \$59.95	CS1-AP2 7 \$39.95	ID2-AP2 1 \$4.95
Atari XL/XE (48K, 810 or 1050 disk)	IA4-AT1 \$34.95		IS6-AT1 \$34.95	IH1-AT1 \$34.95		IR1-AT1 \$34.95						ID2-AT1 1 \$4.95
Atari ST Series	IA4-AT2 \$39.95	IC2-AT2 \$39.95	IS6-AT2 \$39.95	IH1-AT2 \$39.95	IC3-AT2 \$39.95	IR1-AT2 \$39.95	IZ8-AT2 \$49.95				CS1-AT2 7 \$39.95	
Commodore 64 (1541 disk)	IA4-CO1 \$34.95		IS6-CO1 \$34.95	IH1-CO1 \$34.95	IC3-CO1 \$34.95	IR1-CO1 \$34.95		IE1-CO1 \$34.95	IT3-CO1 \$49.95		CS1-CO1 \$34.95	ID3-CO1 \$4.95
Commodore 128	IA4-CO1 \$34.95	IC2-CO5 \$34.95	IS6-CO1 \$34.95	IH1-CO1 \$34.95	IC3-CO1 \$34.95	IR1-CO1 \$34.95	IZ8-CO5 \$44.95	IE1-CO1 \$34.95	IT3-CO1 \$49.95	IT4-CO5 \$49.95	CS1-CO1 \$34.95	ID3-CO1 \$4.95
Commodore Amiga	IA4-CO4 \$39.95	IC2-CO4 \$34.95	IS6-CO4 \$39.95	IH1-CO4 \$39.95	IC3-CO4 \$34.95	IR1-CO4 \$39.95	IZ8-CO4 \$44.95				CS1-CO4 7 \$39.95	
CP/M (8" disk, 48K, Version 2.0 and above)												
DEC Rainbow (CP/M Option)												
DEC Rainbow (MS-DOS Option)	IA4-IB2 \$39.95		IS6-IB2 \$39.95	IH1-IB2 \$39.95		IR1-IB2 \$39.95			IT3-IB2 \$59.95			ID3-IB2 \$4.95
Epson QX-10												
IBM Series and 100% compatibles only	IA4-IB2 \$39.95	IC2-IB1 \$39.95	IS6-IB2 \$39.95	IH1-IB2 \$39.95	IC3-IB1 \$39.95	IR1-IB2 \$39.95	IZ8-IB1 4 \$49.95	IE3-IB1 \$39.95	IT3-IB2 \$59.95	IT4-IB1 \$59.95	CS1-IB3 8 \$42.95	ID3-IB2 \$4.95
IBM Series and MS-DOS compatibles	IA4-IB2 \$39.95		IS6-IB2 \$39.95	IH1-IB2 \$39.95		IR1-IB2 \$39.95			IT3-IB2 \$59.95			ID3-IB2 \$4.95
Kaypro II CP/M												ID3-KA1 1 \$4.95
Osborne (CP/M)												ID3-OS1 1 \$4.95
TI 99/4A (48K expansion, disk, one of the following: Extended Basic, Mini-Memory, Editor/Assembler)												ID3-TI2 1 \$4.95
TI Professional	IA4-IB2 \$39.95		IS6-IB2 \$39.95	IH1-IB2 \$39.95		IR1-IB2 \$39.95			IT3-IB2 \$59.95			ID3-IB2 \$4.95
TRS-80 Model I (48K and disk)												
TRS-80 Model III (48K and disk)												ID3-TA3 1 \$4.95
TRS-80 Color Computer (48K and disk)												ID2-TA4 1 \$4.95
InvisiClues	IA4-INV \$9.95		IS6-INV \$9.95			IR1-INV \$9.95						

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- 1 These versions contain excerpts from ZORK I, INFIDEL, The WITNESS, and PLANETFALL.
- 2 Requires IBM PC, XT, AT or 100% compatible; PC DOS 2.0, 2.1, 3.0, or 3.1; Minimum 384K; 2 floppy disk drives or 1 floppy and 1 hard disk drive.
- 3 Original packaging; without on-screen hints.
- 4 Requires 192K.
- 5 Solid Gold series contains on-screen hints.
- 6 Available 2/88.
- 7 Available 3/88.
- 8 Package contains both 5¼" and 3½" disks.

## INFOCOMICS<sup>7</sup>

System	Lane Mastodon No. 1	Gamma Force No. 1	ZorkQuest No. 1
Apple II Series	SL1-AP1 \$12.00	SG1-AP1 \$12.00	SZ1-AP1 \$12.00
Commodore 64/128	SL1-CO1 \$12.00	SG1-CO1 \$12.00	SZ1-CO1 \$12.00
IBM Series and 100% compatibles	SL1-IB1 \$12.00	SG1-IB1 \$12.00	SZ1-IB1 \$12.00





# INFOCOM™

P.O. Box 478  
Cresskill, New Jersey 07626

Address Correction Requested



# The Status Line

Volume VII Number 2

Formerly The New York Times

Summer 1988

## Change is inevitable. Don't panic!

We've been asking what you'd like to see in our software. And you've responded. You've sent in your Status Line polls, and answered our warranty card questions, phone surveys, and in-package questionnaires. The results? You want on-screen maps. You want character development with bar charts. You want color. You want animation. In short, you want graphics.

Graphics? From Infocom? The company that advertised itself as "sticking our graphics where the sun don't shine"? We know that the very idea is anathema to a number of very loyal Infocom fans. You're afraid that our richness of prose, number and depth of puzzles, and quality of plotting will suffer. We'd like to address the concerns of those who feel this way. And we'd like to let the rest of you know that we've listened to your requests and, yes, we are making changes.

First off, we want to let you know that although we're moving away from all-text stories, everything you've come to know and love about interactive fiction will still be there. We are not compromising on quality, richness, or depth in any way. In fact we refuse to compromise on any of these concerns. What we are doing is enhancing these features with graphics that exhibit the same attention to quality and detail as our prose. A new technology is here, and we're making full use of it.

The fact is, a lot has happened in both hardware and software since *Zork I* first appeared on the Apple II and TRS 80 Model I back in 1980. At that time, personal computers had a limited amount of memory and only rudimentary graphic capabilities. Using text to create a vivid environment, Infocom interactive fiction stood out for its richness and depth in comparison to other entertainment software.

Today, with the graphic and memory capabilities of computers like the Macintosh, Apple IIGS, Amiga, Atari ST, Tandy, and IBM, we're happy to announce that we can

**Please turn to page 3**

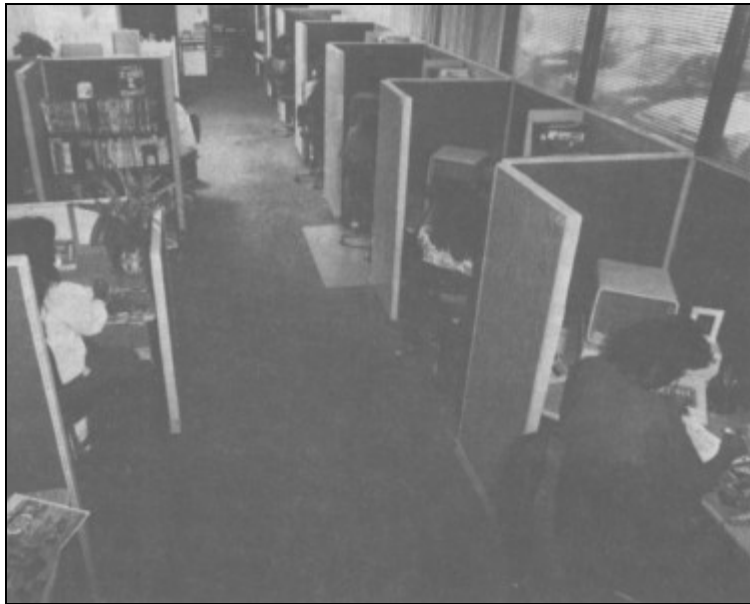
## New mail order firm-really!

We are pleased to introduce Triton Products Company as the new authorized Infocom direct marketing center. Veterans in the field of phone and mail orders and fulfillment, Triton, in the words of Vice President Terry Miller, "hopes to be the best darn direct marketing company you've ever seen." Triton was recently acquired by Activision to become the company's direct marketing specialists.

You'll notice lots of changes in this issue of *The Status Line*, and most of those are through the expertise and the good graces of Triton, our new corporate cousins. Just open to the center of the newsletter, and you'll see some of the changes immediately: a postage-paid envelope, special coupons and offers, clear concise ordering instructions, and who knows what else.

But the more you deal with Triton, the more changes you'll see. They have twenty-five (count them—25!) in-

**Please turn to page 3**



*The dedicated operators at our new mail order house are far too busy to pose for our camera as they courteously assist eager customers.*

## Newest Infocomic: ZorkQuest II

Are you sunburned and tender, blister-red from too long at the beach? Or lethargic, stickier than Scotch tape in the heavy-skied humidity that weather reports have the temerity to call "dewpoint"? Bored with the long summer, the ennui of work, the doldrums of those hot, endless afternoons when your friends are away on vacation? Well, here's the answer to your prayers, the harbinger of those brisk and busy, cool autumnal months: a new Infocomic—*ZorkQuest II: The Crystal of Doom*.

*ZQII* picks up shortly after *ZorkQuest I: Assault on Egreth Castle*. Our caravan of intrepid adventurers is continuing its journey to Accardi-By-The-Sea. The magician Frobwit is on his way to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, looking forward to telling his friends about his battle with the evil magician (in *ZQI*). Acia, proud and beautiful, is traveling to visit her sickly grandmother; while Gurthark the merchant just wants to get his load of quilts to market. These three and the cargo are guarded by the scout Ryker, who is head-over-heels in love with Acia.

Ahead of them, in Accardi-By-The-Sea, two young hoodlums have just stolen a powerful spellbook, the relic of an ancient circle of wizards known as the Zizbits. Moog, a recent graduate of the Frobozz Magic Correspondence School, ringleads her old pal, Slye, into helping her break into the protected ruins of the old Zizbit city.

Using spells found in the magic book, Moog and Slye fulfill two-thirds of a prophecy that foretells a dark and evil force shadowing the land: a trio of powerful magicians called the Triax. They discover a magic reflecting pool that

will answer any question, and though it, search out a third to complete the Triax. The pool shows them Radnor, the powerful and evil wizard of *ZQI*. Moog determines to bring him to the Zizbit wins.

Meanwhile, the caravan from Egreth is beset by a series of calamities. Giant corbies attack the wagon; Acia becomes deathly ill; Gurthark is lost in a disastrous attempt to cross a raging river; Ryker suddenly discovers his strength is gone. Will they complete their journey? What horrors await them in Accardi-By-The-Sea, where Moog and Slye are cooking up an evil such as has never been seen in Quendor?

*ZQII* was written by Elizabeth Langosy, in collaboration with graphic artists at Tom Snyder Productions. Elizabeth, one of our in-house product designers, and artists Peter Reynolds, Doug McCartney and Bob Thibeault, also worked to-

### Rave reviews for Infocomics

**Turn to page 6**

gether to create *ZQI*.

Comic aficionados will recognize the fantastic cover artwork of artist Howard Chaykin, author of *American Flagg*, *Shadow*, and *Blackhawk*.

Three other Infocomics are already available. *ZQI* acquaints us with the caravan of travellers: Gurthark, Acia, Ryker and Frobwit. In this tale, the band of adventurers are caught in the talons of a powerful wizard, Radnor, who seeks control of the magic amulet they unknowingly possess.

Lane Mastodon, accountant turned superhero, appears a spoof of a sci-fi space opera, battling his Jovian arch-

**Please turn to page 3**

# The Status Line

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi guys!

It's me again. (You know: ugly, writes annoying letters, won't go away...) I'm just writing to tell you that I've just seen your new line of Infocomics. (Do you care? Do these letters ever get read? You have better things to do. Stop this foolish time-wasting!)

I think it's an interesting idea, intriguing. I'd like to express shock and disappointment at seeing an Infocom product with graphics, but I can't. I like the things too much. I work in a software store, and when my manager came in and plopped down *Lane Mastodon*, *Gamma Force* and *Zork Quest*, I picked them up immediately, staggered around a bit, stared agape-mouthed for a while, then went and put *Lane* into the IBM we have set up. My mind was whirling with possibilities. Good? Bad? What's going on? Agh! I was all set to be critical of whatever came up onto the screen but it was twenty minutes later before I quit playing with it, then only because my manager told me to get off my butt and get to work.

I don't want to give the impression that I think Infocomics are perfect, but they are very, very good. Enjoyable if nothing else. A few months ago I wrote you a letter damning the inclusion of graphics into an Infocom product, and now I happily eat my words. You're doing something daring here, and I don't know how it's going to turn out... but you are to be applauded for taking the chance.

Clap, clap, clap!

Greg "Maddog" Knauss  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA  
[Maddog—If we have told you once, we've told you a thousand times. Don't applaud; send large sums of money to that Post Office box. And your boss says get back to work and stop showing this to everyone.—Ed.]

HELP!!!

You and your warped minions are on the verge of destroying what once was a happy, close-knit family. Last summer, we borrowed a friend's C-64 and some games, including *Zork I*. After several weeks of watching my 8 year old type, ponder, reason, and try one solution after another, I finally had the final selling point to convince my wife...

We sold our trusty Colecovision and purchased an Apple IIc... Not content with a low degree of torture and pain, we actually rushed out to buy *Leather Goddesses*, *Hitchhiker's Guide*, *Beyond Zork*, and *Wishbringer*.

As a result, I have now spent 3 and 2 days trapped in a cage female gorilla in the basement of a mad scientist's

home. I have also spent the better part of 5 weeks attempting to catch a babel fish from the Sirius Cybernetic Corp. Dispenser...

Final point, a real honest-to-God conversation with my 8-year-old: STACY: When you write, tell them that your daughter is begging on her hands and knees and would do anything for a Zorkmid coin.

DADDY: Would you sleep in your room tonight without your nightlight?

STACY: NO!!! The room would be pitch black, I would get eaten by a savage grue, and then I'd never get to see my Zorkmid!

Robert Kitsis  
St. Louis, MO

Dear People in Wraparound Sleeves,

I am writing in protest to the letter from a Ms. Horton in your last issue of *TSL* [Winter/Spring 88.—Ed]. I resent the statement that all people who play interactive games are "glandular, mouth-breathing male adolescents suffering from terminal acne and dangerous anti-social tendencies who wear coke-bottle-bottom glasses, and who—when not drooling over the keyboard while playing *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*—are either hacking their way into the Defense Department computer system or reading such intellectual goodies as *Writhing Slave Girls Meet the Tentacled Horror*. I only occasionally breathe through my mouth, and I have a less than terminal case of acne. I do not wear glasses and do not own *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*. (I would like to own it.) I am not hacking into the Defense Department computer (I can't break the code—ha-ha!) Finally, I do not read *Writhing Slave Girls Meet the Tentacled Horror*. I read *Writhing Slave Girls Meet the Pimple-Faced Four-Eyed Hacker!*

Now I'll get to more interesting business. I greatly enjoy your games. That square, black, flat thing with the hole in the middle makes a great frisbee!...

Droolingly Yours,  
Michael G. Hurd  
Clinchport, VA

Dear Infoco Status Line,

I have recent purcha your new title *The Lurkin Horror*. So far I have enjoye the game a lot, even though it scares the hell out of me and causes me to have nasty nightm. I have also ordere DouglA Adams's *Bureau* because I enjoye *Hitchh* so much.

I also wrote to congra you on *Zork's* annive, and for writin *Beyond Zork*. I am a great admire of Infoco, and would like to add that I own eight Infoco titles. I have enjoye all (except

I'm findin it hard to comple *Wishbr*. Maybe there's someth wrong with the game). I think that becaus I play your games so often (give or take five hours a day), it influe my everyd life, such as talkin in class, writin letter, or feedin the dog.

Yours Faithf,  
Michac Mauzy  
Newton, MA

[Don't Panic. Our new games have a nine-letter parser.—Ed.]

Dear Infocom,

It's awful—I work hard, pass my exams, get to University—and then I find out it's the wrong Cambridge! Have you guys ever considered moving?

Yours,  
Shane Murphy  
Cambridge, England

Dear TSL,

As the respected historian Frobozz Mumbar has pointed out, the adding of "G.U.E." after a year did not become common practice until the latter part of the eighth century.

Why then is the zorkmid—during the reign of Belwit the Flat—dated "699 G.U.E", nearly one hundred years before Lord Dimwit invented the name Great Underground Empire?"

Inquiringly,  
Jeremy Hollobon  
Christchurch, New Zealand  
[Zork co-author and expert Dave Lebling explains: I really don't see any conflict here. The addition of "G.U.E." did not become common practice until the latter part of the eighth century; nonetheless, it was an uncommon practice during the time preceding its universal acceptance. Obviously, uncommon practices had their place at the Frobozz Magic Zorkmid Company.—Ed.]

## Poll #4 prizes...

On behalf of Suzy Statistician, Paula Pollster, and the entire surveying staff, we would like to congratulate the grandest of prize winners, drawn randomly from responses to Reader's Poll #4. Thank you all for your responses; by next issue, we'll be able to tell you who you are!

Wonderful prizes were sent to: Michael Grayford (Lake Jem, FL), David Prival (Washington, DC), Tom Blade (Wetaskiwin, AB), Ann LaBrecque (Middleboro, MA), and Kyle Dean (Bradbury, NSW, Australia). Not quite as wonderful (but groovy nonetheless) prizes were sent to lots of others of Poll respondents. Congratulations and thanks!



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

### Now we stick our graphics where the sun does shine

#### Continued from page 1

add an exciting visual dimension to our interactive fiction without sacrificing any of the qualities that we're proud of and that you love.

As we've done from the start with our all-text stories, we intend to use these capabilities to the fullest, employing graphics to enhance our products in new and interesting ways.

We are also working to expand our horizons into other areas of interactive storytelling, including role-playing games, graphic adventures, and other categories as yet unexplored. Over the next year, you'll see several introductions from us in these areas.

We will bring to these new products the same standards we've brought to interactive fiction—standards of quality, creativity, fine writing, and good underlying story-

lines. In addition, we will take full advantage of the capabilities of your advanced hardware.

This bold new direction has stirred the enthusiasm of all of us here at Infocom. At this very moment, your favorite game writers are thinking up innovative ways to graphically enhance their stories.

Steve is honing his skills in Double Fanucci and Peggleboz. Dave has become an expert in oriental culture. Brian is boldly going where no one has gone before. Marc, too, has embarked on a fantastic journey all his own.

As for the top-flight designers we're working with across the country... Well, you'll have to see what they come up with to believe it. Find out more in the fall issue of *The Status Line*, coming soon to a mailbox near you.

### Triton: our new mail order house

#### Continued from page 1

coming WATS lines, so they can handle all your phone calls, plus those of your friends, your best friend's little sisters, and even your mother's dentist's cousin's nephew that lives in Hollywood and was in that movie, oh-what-was-it-called-again?

In a rush for that new title? In desperate need for those InvisiClues? Well, fear no more! Triton can get them to you in 48 hours (domestic only). For a fee, you can request 2nd day air delivery, and you'll get your order before you can run a 10k race, read *War and Peace*, and watch a Three Stooges Marathon. And Triton even offers C.O.D. service! (That's Cash On Delivery, not some famous Boston fish.)

Plus, Triton tells us they have the

best telephone operators in the entire world. They're kind, they're knowledgeable, they're considerate, they're helpful, and they're friendly. And they're sitting in a luxurious telephone room in Foster City, California, just waiting for you to pick up your telephone and dial that 1-800 number.

But the best part, by far, is for you bizillions of New Jersey residents who won't have to pay 6% sales tax when you order something through Triton. (Unfortunately, if you live in California, such duty now falls on you. But hey, that's what sales taxes are all about.)

So when you place your order with Triton, by phone or by mail, make sure you say "HI!" and "Welcome to the wonderful world of Infocom."

### ZQ II: The Crystal of Doom

#### Continued from page 1

enemies in *Lane Mastodon vs. The Blubbermen*.

*Gamma Force in Pit of a Thousand Screams*, tells how three disparate people, saved from sure death by vastly superior beings, combine their supernatural powers in order to defeat the evil overlord of their planet.

*ZorkQuest II: The Crystal of*

*Doom* will be available in August for Apple II series, Commodore 64/128, and IBM and 100% compatible computer systems.

With hours of entertainment awaiting you in an air-conditioned room, learning about the characters you came to know and love, and for the low price of only \$12, *ZQII* is a story not to be missed.

## LGOP and Planetfall Solid Gold at \$14.95

During the past year, we have begun to confer Solid Gold status on certain venerable titles. These are best-sellers which have begun to slow down. In some ways, our Solid Gold software can be compared to paperback books—the whole game is there but in a simpler package. However, in the case of Solid Gold software, we're adding something more—on-screen hints. At \$14.95 retail, these wonderful old titles are getting a second life and attracting a new group of computer owners to interactive fiction.

*Zork I* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* have been quite successful as Solid Gold (in these two cases, we should have called it Solid Platinum). Now we are pleased to announce that our 1986 hit, *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, and Steve Meretzky's first hit, *Planetfall*, will be joining them.

Solid Gold *Leather Goddesses*, due to ship in June, was the fastest selling new title in Infocom's history. In *Leather Goddesses* you are kidnapped by minions of the evil Leather Goddesses, who are plotting to turn earth into their private pleasure palace. Your goal is to defeat the lustful leather maidens and save humanity from their dastardly plan. *Leather Goddesses* is a hilarious spoof of 1930's pulp science fiction with a dash of space opera thrown in for good measure. Despite the title and the three naughtiness levels, *Leather Goddesses* is not X-rated. We would call it

"R" (some would say "PG-13").

"*Leather Goddesses is an uproarious role-playing romp that heralds a new breed of computer games.*"

Newsweek

"*Leather Goddesses of Phobos is humorous and fast-moving, and even when the writing is ribald, it is never cheap—it is amusing and clever.*"

A+

*Video Review* magazine awarded Steve Meretzky the Best Computer Software Designer of 1983 for his first work, *Planetfall*. Set 120 centuries in the future, you are an Ensign Seventh Class in the Stellar Patrol. You wanted to see the galaxy, but all you've seen so far is the other end of the mop you're using. But soon you're marooned on a doomed planet, your only companion a robot named Floyd with the personality of an eight-year-old. Your goal is to save this world, and yourself from destruction.

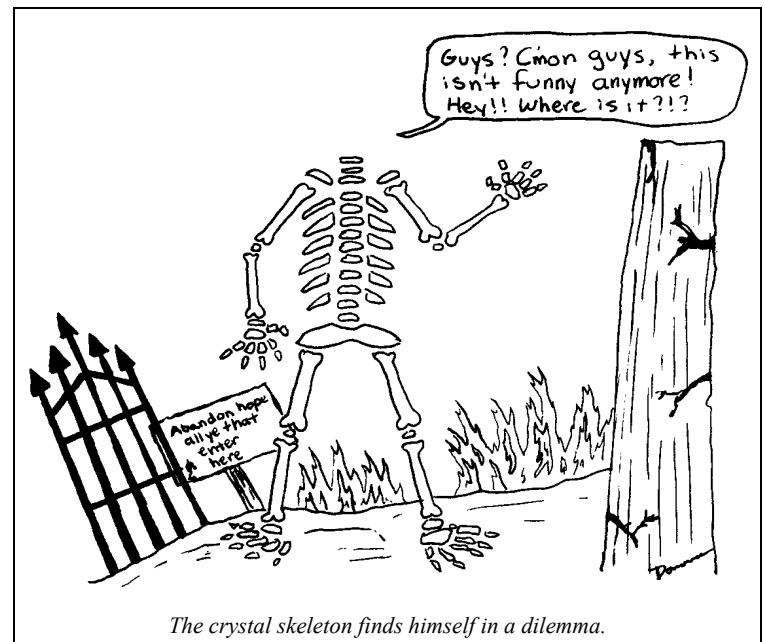
In polls of our fans, *Planetfall* repeatedly comes in at the top of the list of most-loved games. *Planetfall* has probably generated more fan mail than any other Infocom game. Guaranteed to make you laugh and make you cry.

"*The invention of the robot sidekick was a stroke of genius.*"

*Video Review*

"*Planetfall is as remarkable, funny, perplexing, and entertaining a game as you are likely to find anywhere...*"

Creative Computing



The crystal skeleton finds himself in a dilemma.

Sean Donovan

# The Great Wall of

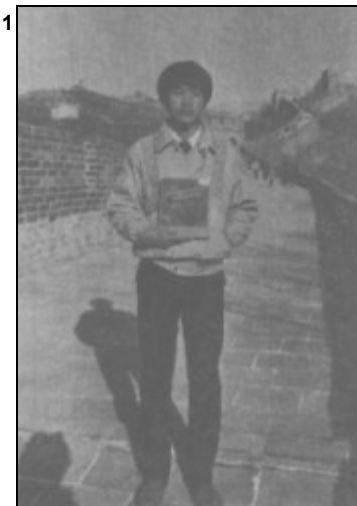
And Hollywood Dave Anderson figured we would have to wait at least a year before we would get a photo of someone holding one of our games on the Great Wall of China. Right now he is busy eating his words and packing our entire catalog of games and sending them to our winner—(1) Michael Chen of Raleigh, North Carolina. Michael didn't include a letter with his photo telling us how he got this photo, but most of you did. Guess he didn't have time, since his entry arrived via Airborne Express on February 2.

We decided to publish all the Great Wall of China photos we received and send a game to each person. The most authentic letter accompanying an entry was from (2) Robin Hamm, who mailed his entry from China—on stationery from the Shangri-La Hotel in Beijing. (A Shangri-La International Hotel, by the way.) Robin is in an exchange program with a college in Beijing. He said in his letter that it took him several days to "beat feet" to the wall after he received *The Status Line*. He at first expressed remorse about waiting but then wondered "...

how many other people are trying to swing this also?"

How many indeed? Had Robin glanced over his shoulder he would have seen Lillian Fauver of Everett, Washington, snapping a shot of her husband (3) David. Lillian's brief letter claims she and her husband play our games all the time. Well, apparently not all the time. It must have been quite a sight at the Wall when Craig and Bonnie Thayer's son (4) Luke flew by with a pair of our games in hand. Unfortunately Luke was disqualified by our esteemed panel of judges because the rules specifically state "...a photo of someone holding *one* of our games..."

No doubt (5) Michele Richardson of Madison, Wisconsin, brought not only her copy of *Zork II* with her to China, but a professional photographer as well. Smartly framed in an embrasure of the Wall, Michele certainly wins for best composition. Bill Swift, of Winnipeg, Canada, included a brutally frank letter with his entries—"I enclose three photos of someone holding the *Beyond Zork*





# China Photo Contest

box..." (6 & 7) Bill's close friends.

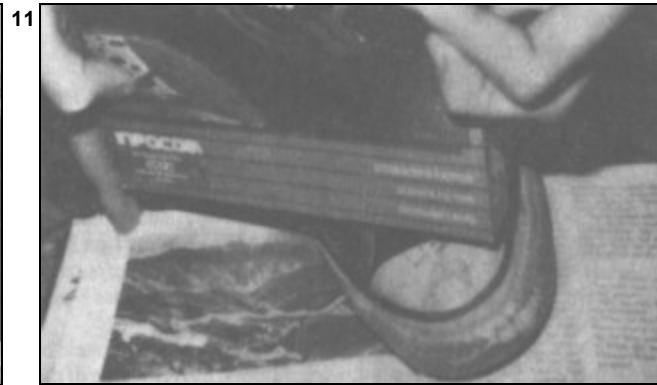
It is unclear from her letter whether this is (8) Dianne Meyer or just a close friend. In her letter, Dianne said "WOW!!! Am I excited!!!" But the person in this photo certainly would seem to be at the lower end of the "excited" spectrum. Gary Heffelfinger of Piedmont, South Carolina, managed to convince his in-laws (9) Len and (10) Shirley Hollabaugh to snap a few photos of themselves at the Wall on their recent visit. When we first saw these photos we were all set to run a feature on The Family that Travels Together, and Plays Intocom Games Together, Stays Together." Then we read the letter. Perhaps in a future issue.

One of many hoax photos we received was from (11) Geoffery Zippy" Sperl of Detroit, Michigan. Apparently unable to acquire a visa (Why wouldn't the Chinese want someone called "Zippy" in their country?), Geoffery opted for a strict interpretation of the rules. Neil Hellwig of Indianapolis, Indiana, persuaded an in-law to carry a copy of one of our games to China. He enclosed two photos.

The first showed his mother-in-law all alone. In the second photo, Neil explains, (12) a group of tourists noticed his mother-in-law holding one of our games and rushed over to meet her. That's when the second picture was taken. She then joined the group sight-seeing. Neil says she had a great time and is going to bring one of our games on vacation with her from now on. (Doesn't everyone?)

We actually expected more of the type of letters we got accompanying (13) Jack Schaberg's photo. Well, sure its a fake, but he spins quite a tale of intrigue. While waiting for a flight back to the U.S.A. from China, Jack notices a beautiful oriental woman with a briefcase overflowing with classified Communist Party documents. He looks up from his portable PC (playing *Infidel* at the time) and notices she drops her copy of *TSL* Winter/Spring 1988 edition... Anyway, you get the idea. Fortunately he came to his senses later in the letter and admitted his father had brought back a wall hanging from China and he took the photo in front of it.

**Please turn to page 8**



# Infocomics: New approach to entertainment

*Lane Mastodon, Gamma Force and ZorkQuest receive rave reviews from far and wide*

"Even a completely computer illiterate person can enjoy an Infocomics story..."

Praises like this one from *Computer Entertainer* are being sung nationwide about Infocomics, the new line of comic stories from Infocom and Tom Snyder Productions that come to life on the screen. Introduced at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) last January, each Infocomic, *Lane Mastodon vs. The Blubbermen*; *Gamma Force in Pit of a Thousand Screams*; and *Zork Quest: Assault on Egrecht Castle*, has won favorable reviews.

After seeing for the first time "a highly entertaining demo" of Infocomics (given at CES by Tom Snyder and Peter Reynolds of Tom Snyder Productions and Infocom's Jon Palace), *INFO* enthused, "These guys were giving off sparks of creativity like a plasma generator."

The April issue of *Commodore Magazine* highlighted Infocomics in its news section. *Newsweek*, in its March 14 issue, listed Infocomics as one of

the entertainment programs helping to revive the industry.

In its review of *Lane Mastodon vs. The Blubbermen*, *Computer Entertainer* dubs Infocomics "a whole new approach to the concept of entertainment software for computers... It is simply a story, with a single ending and no user control over the final outcome, like a book or a movie."

Dan Gutman, a New York-based syndicated columnist, likens the Infocomics experience to "curling up with a good book." Indeed, each Infocomic is an intricately-woven story which branches out into many directions. As the story unravels, you can jump from character to character to explore their points of view or to flashback to their thoughts, dreams or memories. Or, you can simply follow the plot and enjoy the story. But, as Dan points out, "No matter what route you take through the story, everybody reaches the same ending, like a novel."

L.R. Shannon of the *New York Times* distinguishes Infocomics from

other forms of entertainment software: "They are not computer games as we know them... These are real stories with beginnings, middles and ends, except that they may be followed from the viewpoints of different characters, with related subplots that do not necessarily come in the same way every time. The exact path of the story, in fact, depends on decisions the player makes."

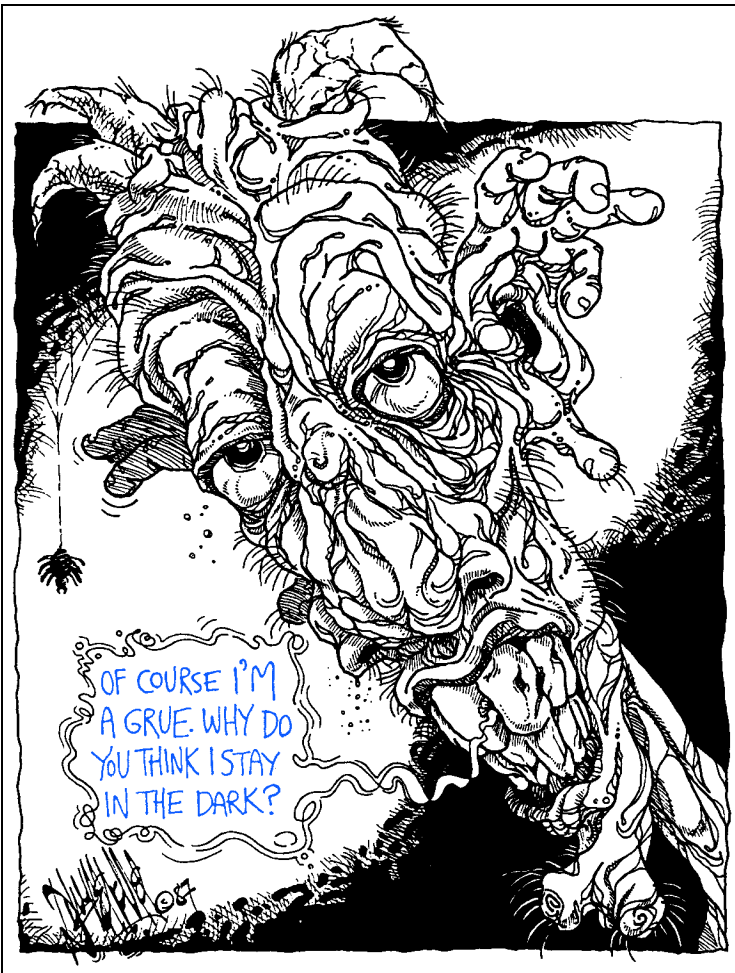
Shannon continues, "In another difference from computer products, these comics do not require an intimidating manual or advanced flight training. Only four keys are needed to move the story along, and you can switch to fast forward, stop or rewind at any time."

Of *Lane Mastodon*, *Computer Entertainer* continues, "The story itself is wonderfully funny - not surprising when you learn that it was written by one of Infocom's most humorous writers, Steve Meretzky (*Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, among others). It follows the adventures of the a bum-

bling accountant-turned-super-hero, Lane Mastodon, as he saves Earth from the threatened invasion of the Blubbermen of Jupiter... The basic story is told from Lane's point of view, but it's great fun to step into the shoes of his young companions, Ivory and Lambert, or those of the Thin Men, the Blubbermen, or a number of others."

*Computer Entertainer* concludes, "It's a novel approach to computer entertainment software and one that appears to have plenty of potential, particularly at its very low price. Infocomics present a new direction for storytelling, one of man's oldest pastimes."

From what we can tell, many of you are waiting on the edge of your seats for the next Infocomic. Another sequel to *ZorkQuest* perhaps? A sequel to *Lane Mastodon*? Or maybe a collaboration with a world famous comic book author? Whatever it is, you can be sure the creative geniuses at Infocom and at Tom Snyder Productions will blow all of our socks right off.



Mark Mills and Deke McClelland

## New books based on our Planetfall & Wishbringer

*Novels take place in the same 'universe' as the games*

Books based on two of our most popular games will be published this August. *Wishbringer: The Riddle of the Twin Worlds*, and *Planetfall: In Search of Floyd, Part I* are being published jointly by Infocom, Avon Books, and Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc.

The books are new novels by leading authors, not retellings of the original games or choose-your-own adventures. The novels take place in the same worlds as the games and use some of the characters and ideas from the games, but the plots are all new. Take, for instance, this excerpt from the back of the *Wishbringer* book:

"Simon never wanted to meet an ogre... But Simon was a con man who got caught and sentenced to deliver mail in the lovely town of Festeron. It would have been an easy sentence if Festeron hadn't turned into the town of Witchville.

"Suddenly, Festeron wasn't lovely anymore. The postmaster wanted to cancel him. The librarian wanted to shelve him. The Boot Patrol wanted to kick him, and Gloria, sweet Gloria, the girl of his dreams, was dating the entire Patrol."

Those of you who have played the

*Wishbringer* game recognize the postmaster, the librarian, and the Boot Patrol. But Gloria is a new character, created by the author of the book, Craig Shaw Gardner, whose other literary achievements include *A Malady of Magicks* and *A Difficulty with Dwarves*.

The *Planetfall* book also combines the old with the new:

"Homer got lost. Really lost. Fortunately, he was accompanied by his loyal robot Oliver and the ghost of his beloved robot Floyd. The fate of the Third Galactic Empire depended on the Stellar Patrol's finding Homer—the only man in the fleet who can play the soprano saxophone."

The *Planetfall* book was written by Arthur Byron Cover, who also wrote *The Platypus of Doom*, one of the Isaac Asimov Robot City novels.

We know from talking to you that one thing most people who play our games have in common is that they like to read. Here, then, are two more opportunities to enjoy the worlds created by Infocom.

The books will sell for \$3.95 each (\$4.95 in Canada) and should be available in August at all bookstores carrying science fiction and fantasy titles.

# PUZZLE PAGE

## PUZZLE #16 WINNERS

In Puzzle #16, we asked you to solve some word picture-puzzles; the answers were locations and things from the *Zork Trilogy*. For example, the clue to #11 was the word "WIZARD" cut up into four pieces. The answers:

1. Round Room (or Circular Room)
2. Narrow Tunnel
3. small mailbox
4. Top of Well
5. pair of candles
6. Hairpin Loop
7. broken timber
8. Volcano Near Small Ledge
9. white cliffs
10. triangular button
11. Wizard's Quarters
12. Dimwit Flathead
13. End of Rainbow
14. pile of leaves
15. Formal Garden

There were 465 entries for Puzzle #16; only two previous puzzles ever drew more entries. Of those 465 entries, 208 of them got all 15 correct, necessitating a drawing. Of the 257 incorrect entries, 116 had one wrong, 53 had two wrong, 56 had three to five wrong, and 32 had six or more wrong.

Of the individual picture-puzzles, the easiest were "Round Room" and "Dimwit Flathead." The hardest turned out to be "white cliffs," "Volcano Near Small Ledge," and (surprisingly) "pair of candles."

This was obviously a very popular puzzle. We'll probably do it again a few issues down the road, even though it's a BITCH to score the entries!

The lucky twenty-five: John Miller (Alexandria, VA), David J. Petersen Jr. (APO NY), John Predmore (Fairport, NY), Stephen Hubbard (Lakewood, NJ), Jeff Paull (Wappingers Falls, NY), Nancy S. Skooglund (Pittsburgh, PA), John Kalstrom (Goleta, CA), William Knapton (Churchville, MD), Mark Peterson (Roseburg, OR), Stuart Roberts (Salt Lake City, UT), Rawson Chaplin (Wellesley, MA), Todd Tokubo (Carnelian Bay, CA), John A. Norman III (Wilkesboro, NC), Jason Keeley (Pine Hill, NJ), Andrew Schomick (Farmington, MI), David Hattrup (Portland, OR), Brian Slominski (Bakersfield, CA), Eddie Welch (San Diego, CA), James Kosinski (Benien Springs, MI), Wes Hart (Anderson, IL), Sally Green (Oxford, OH), Jon Wildstrom (Kensington, MD), Eric Melby (Provo,

UT), Steve Foremny (New Park, PA), and Anne Hupert (Northbrook, IL).

The international winner was Alan Pryke from down under in Yowie Bay, Australia.

## PUZZLE #17 WINNERS

In Puzzle #17, we supplied a rebus in which you were to translate pictures into words, then add and subtract letters as indicated to get "a variation on an Infocom-related phrase, title, or name."

- The solution, word by word:
- LEAK + THREE + BRIEFS  
KREBF + P - PIES = LEATHER
  - GONDAR + DESKS + U + NEST
  - TANK - URN = GODDESSES
  - ROOF + BOOT - ROBOT - O = OF
  - DEVIL + MALYON + SEAT
  - VALLEY - ANT = DEMOS

So, the final answer is "Leather Goddesses of Deimos," a variation on *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*. (Deimos is the other moon of Mars, if you weren't aware.)

465 of you attempted Puzzle #17, and 211 (45.4%) succeeded. The vast bulk of the wrong answers — 230 — were "Phobos" instead of "Deimos." Another 29 of the wrong answers were even closer, merely misspelling "Deimos," as in "Leather Goddesses of Dimes" and "Leather Goddesses of Demos." (We've seen the latter at a few trade show booths.)

The most interesting of the wrong answers were "Infocom," "Planetfall," "Fooblitzky," "Leather Goddesses of Denver," and "Please wait 1.5 minutes."

Once again, there was an excess of correct entrants, so a drawing determined the 25 t-shirt winners: Aaron Cavendar Elgin, (AZ), Lowell Yaeger (Jericho, NY), Mark Brown (Brighton, MA), Joseph Yeh (Freehold, NJ), Eric Gerhardt (Hammond, IN), Bill Cole (Hot Springs, AZ), Richard Feitelberg (Weymouth, MA), Kim Rollins (Troy, MI), Helen Gildersleeve (O'Neill, NE), Stephen Hsu (Oberlin, OH), Bob Guernsey (Silver Spring, MD), Thomas Witeiski (Rockaway Park, NY), Marcus Johnstone (Belen, NM), Mike Toth (Harrisburg, PA), Jennifer Robison (Alexandria, VA), John Liska (Oregon, WI), Tony Yankovsky (Brooklyn, NY), Rick Kuhnel (Salt Lake City, UT), Nancy Porco (Fort Lee, NJ), Yoan Johnson (Manchester, CT), James Fischer (Milwaukee, WI), Kurt Kreitzer (Gresham, OR), Lee Shirk (Walled Lake, MI), Bonnie Packert (Escondido, CA) and Scott Hughes (Doylestown, PA).

# PUZZLE NUMBER 18

This puzzle is a reprise of our very first Status Line Puzzle (although back then, in the winter of 1984, we called it the New York Times Puzzle, of course).

Puzzle #18 is based entirely on our most popular game of the last year, *Beyond Zork*. To solve it, you'll need

to refer to both the game and the game packaging.

To solve the puzzle, figure out the values of the individual letters from the information given below. Then plug those values into the equation, and determine its value. Your answer should be a positive integer.

$$\left( \frac{A}{B-C} + \frac{D \times E}{F+G} + H \right)^I = ?$$

M
J + K - L

A = the range at which a corbie can spot a grotch, in bloits

B = the illiteracy rate among monkey grinders, in percent

C = the number of keys in the Mayor of Froon's cask

D = the last year of Entharion's reign

E = the distance between signs in the Fields of Frotzen, in bloits

F = the year of the Rose Riots

G = the estimated height of the stack that would result if all claimed relics of the Coconut of Quendor were gathered together, in bloits

H = the number of locations in the Ethereal Plain of Atrii whose names do not begin with the letter "O"

I = the number of shiny stars on the amulet

J = the vintage year of the wine in the Rusty Lantern's wine cellar

K = the number of units by which your intelligence is increased by donning the Helm of Pheebor

L = the year in which Moss of Mareilon was first classified

M = the number of room names in *Beyond Zork* which contain the word "Edge"

### PUZZLE #18 ENTRY FORM

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL) \_\_\_\_\_

#### RULES

1. All entries must be postmarked by September 1, 1988. (Entries from outside the U.S. and Canada are due by December 1, 1988.)
2. Entries must be on this form or a photocopy of this form.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will determine the winners.
6. Void where prohibited. Prohibited where void.

#### PRIZE

The Recently-Reprinted-As-A-Collector's-Item-Due-To-Overwhelming-Demand New York Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt.

#### MAIL TO

Infocom, Inc.  
The Status Line Puzzle  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140

# Hey, we need a jingle— you got any ideas?

*Mares eat oats and does eat oats and  
little Grues eat whatever they want to.*

—Zorkian nursery rhyme

What are you doing next winter? Would you like a free trip to the Grammy Awards? Maybe you'd like to win a Grammy Award? Maybe you'd like to rub shoulders with Bruce Springsteen or Whitney Houston or Winton Marsalis or Tiffany? Well, if you do go, send us pictures; we can't send you there, but we can do the next best thing. Introducing: The Infocom Songwriting Contest!!! Write a song about Infocom (it can be a full-blown song or a jingle), make a tape of you or someone else singing it (the song can use your own music, or the music from any other song or jingle), and send it to: DEBBIE GIBSON'S ARMY c/o Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

The grand prize is a copy of the music video we will make of your song, starring all your favorite Infocom folk plus some very special guests, plus the game of your choice. Second and third place contestants win the game of their choice. Entries are due by September 1, 1988. (Due to high postage costs for tapes, there will be no international deadline, but outstanding foreign songs will be recognized if received by November 1, 1988.)

We would like to congratulate Audrey Young of San Marino, CA for this contest idea. She is the first winner in our Contest and wins a myriad of prizes. If you have an outstanding *Status Line* contest idea send it to Pat Sajak at *The Status Line*. And please, no TSL puzzle ideas, just contests!

## The Great Wall of China

Continued from page 5

Due to a clerical error (Anybody buying that?) we were unable to find the letter that goes with this picture, hence we have no idea who it is. (14) If you know, please tell us and we'll send you a free game. We sincerely apologize for this most ugly incident. The last photo entry included a letter from Dan Wallach, which we didn't lose. Dan, or as he refers to himself, The Mad Dunjoneer, convinced his (15) dad, who was traveling to China on business, to make a detour (assuming he isn't in the wall building business) to the Wall and snap a photo of himself with a game.

So all in all, this contest turned out much better than our "Help Us Name Our Yak/Company Mascot" Contest. So well in fact that in addition to the Landmark Photo, now a regular feature, we are going to have another photo contest.

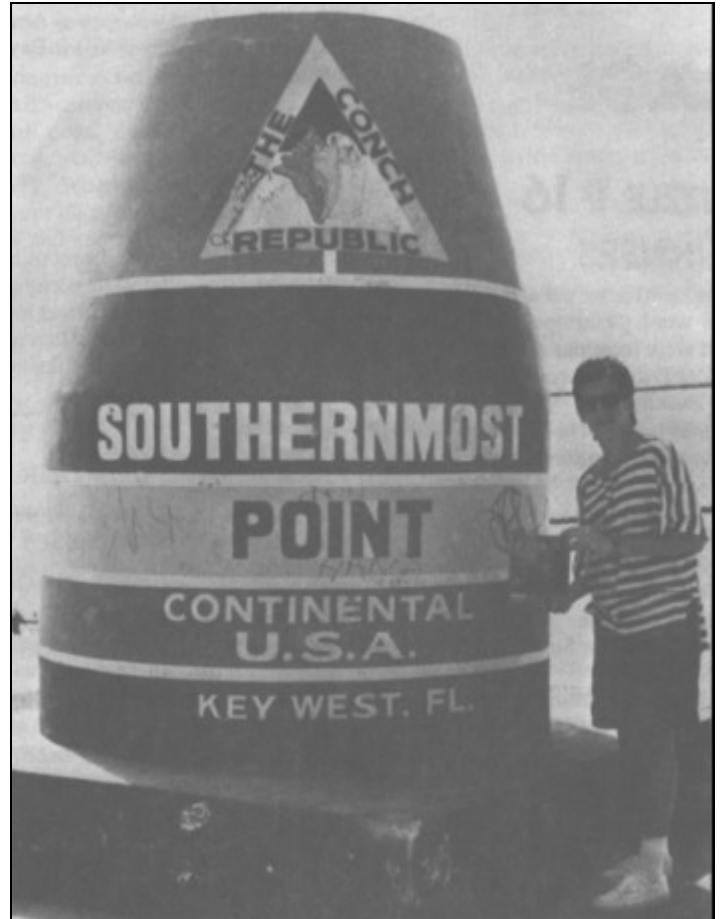
This one isn't too hard. Just have a picture taken of a Head of State, present or past (Baby Doc or Marcos would be really cool) or future, holding one of our games or you with a Head of State holding one of our games. Since our last contest we have decided to change the rules a little bit. Instead of awarding a complete set of our games to the *first* person to send in the photo, it will now be the photo with the *best* content. This is intended to compensate for the fact that TSL is mailed out in waves by zip code. So a

budding photographer with a zip code starting with zero is going to beat out a budding photographer with a zip code starting with nine.

Don't worry if your photo isn't great. Content is what is important—not print quality or composition or any of that stuff.

Send your entry to: Castro Candids, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. Sorry, but we can't return your photos and slides. (We're too lazy.)

### Key West, Florida



*Infocom fan Chad Ruggleman takes time out from his busy Spring Break schedule in Florida to pose with Cutthroats beside the marker for the southernmost point in the continental U.S.A.*

### Keep those prints and slides coming in...

Don't forget to bring an Infocom game on your next vacation. If we use your photo, you'll receive a free game. Send your color slides or prints (of course black and white would be nice) to: Landmark Photo, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Dr., Cambridge, MA 02140.

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### MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The minimum system requirements for using the software in this catalog are as follows. Exceptions or additions to these requirements appear in each product's description.

**COMMODORE**  
Commodore 64,128,  
1 Disk Drive

**APPLE II**  
Apple II, II+, IIe, IIc, Franklin 2000 series,  
Laser 128  
48K Memory, 1 Disk Drive

**IBM**  
IBM PC, XT, PCjr, Tandy 1000 and  
100% Compatibles  
128K Memory, 1 Disk Drive

**AMIGA**  
256K Memory

**MACINTOSH**  
128K Memory

**ATARI ST**  
512K Memory

**ATARI XL/XE**  
48K Memory, 1 Disk Drive (810 or 1050)

### INFOCOMICS™ All the Fun of Comic Books on Your Computer!

This new dimension in entertainment software brings comic books to life on your computer. But because it's an *Infocomic*, there's much more. The panels of an *Infocomic* use sounds and exciting cinematic effects to bring the colorful graphics to life and draw you into the action. You'll even get to see the story unfold from the perspective of each of the main characters. (Apple II version requires 128K Memory, IBM version requires 256K Memory and Color Graphics Card. Not available for IBM PCjr.)



#### LANE MASTODON™ VS THE BLUBBERMEN

*Lane Mastodon*, accountant turned superhero, save humanity from the Blubbermen of Jupiter in this cornball spoof of 1930's space operas!

ITEM #1301	C64/128	\$12.00
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ITEM #1303	IBM	\$12.00

#### ZORK® QUEST: ASSAULT ON EGRETH CASTLE

Set in the fabulous world of *Zork*, a magic amulet leads a small caravan of travelers to mysterious Egreth Castle, the moldering lair of trolls, hobgoblins, night gaunts and a diabolical wizard.

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Travel back in time to Victorian London, where the city is bustling with preparations for Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee. But, unbeknownst to the celebrants thronging the city, a crisis has arisen: the Crown Jewels have been stolen from the Tower of London. If they're not recovered

before the festivities begin, the theft will be exposed and the government will fall into international disgrace.

Use your wits, intuition and a myriad of clues to solve the riddles and piece together the mystery. Includes on-screen hints. (All versions except C64/128 require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

ITEM #1316	C64/128	\$34.95
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ITEM #1563	Apple II	\$12.00
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The pulse-pounding tension of espionage is heightened by the addition of real time, which ticks on regardless of your actions. As you race against the clock to complete your missions, you'll find yourself caught up in an incredibly suspenseful and spine-tingling adventure. Includes on-screen hints. (All versions except C64/128 require at least 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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ITEM #1325	Macintosh	\$39.95

#### BEYOND ZORK™



Dread times have befallen the Kingdom of Quendor. The wizards have mysteriously disappeared and vicious monsters haunt the streets and wastelands. Now it falls on you, a lowly peasant, to unravel the meaning behind these ominous events.

You start by designing your own character, blending attributes such as strength, endurance, compassion and luck. Your search for the answer will lead you deep underground, where unspeakable monsters guard the world's most fabulous treasure—the fabled Coconut of Quendor. Includes on-screen map. Written by Brian Moriarty. (All versions require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K. IBM version requires 192K.)

ITEM #1326	C128	\$44.95
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ITEM #1328	IBM	\$49.95
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Following a hundred year voyage through space, you return to Earth, only to find it very different from the world you once knew.

Where once there was teeming humanity, now there is only quiet... and no people. Finally, you discover an on-line computer terminal. Through it you contact the ultimate goal of man's technology—a living computer named Homer. Together you and Homer must unravel the mystery of the vanished civilization before it's too late. From Activision. (Commodore version requires Joystick(s).)

ITEM #LABA	C64/128	\$9.95
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Who better to guide you through the Hitchhiker's Guide than the man who created the concept and wrote the famous books and radio scripts? Douglas Adams himself recreates the Hitchhiker universe and sets you free to roam at will. Of course, once Earth is demolished for an interstellar bypass, freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose. But chin up, you're headed for a hilarious series of intergalactic misadventures. So grab a pint of bitter and a couple for the road and join Ford Perfect, Trillian and friends on a cosmic jaunt into the outer reaches where anything can—and does—happen. Written by Steve Meretzky. All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

ITEM #1538	C64/128	\$14.95
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ITEM #1546	C128	\$14.95
ITEM #1547	Apple II	\$14.95
ITEM #1548	IBM	\$14.95
ITEM #1549	Amiga	\$14.95
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**SPECIAL OFFER**

Buy *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Planetfall* and *A Mind Forever Voyaging* in the **Science Fiction Classics™ Package** for only **\$29.85**.

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ITEM #1534	C64/128	ITEM #1535	Apple II
ITEM #1536	IBM	ITEM #1537	Macintosh

**FOOBLITZKY™**

*Fooblitzky* is a unique graphics strategy game for 2 to 4 players. It's a dog-eat-dog world, as you rove the crowded streets and busy shops of *Fooblitzky*, trying to deduce and obtain the four objects needed to win the game. Victory depends on how well you use funds, keep records and outsmart your opponents. (Requires 128K. IBM version requires Graphics Card with Composite Monitor recommended.)

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*Zork I* is "the program which all other computerized adventures are judged."—Playboy. In this story, a great starting point for first-time players, you travel into the Great Underground Empire in search of the fabulous Treasures of Zork.

All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. Written by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling.

ITEM #1490	C64/128	\$14.95
ITEM #1491	Apple II	\$14.95
ITEM #1492	IBM	\$14.95
ITEM #1493	Amiga	\$14.95
ITEM #1494	Macintosh	\$14.95
ITEM #1495	Atari ST	\$14.95
ITEM #1496	Atari XL/XE	\$14.95
ITEM #1497	InvisiClues™	\$7.95

**ZORK® II**

Journey to a long hidden region of the Great Underground Empire, dominated by the frivolous *Wizard of Frobozz*. Exiled years before, the befuddled Wizard is still a force to be reckoned with, materializing at odd moments to cast bothersome spells. There are many curiosities to explore in his realm, including the garden of an elusive Unicorn and a maze of Oddly-Angled Rooms. Written by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank.

ITEM #1526	C64/128	\$14.95
ITEM #1527	Apple II	\$14.95
ITEM #1528	IBM	\$14.95
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*Enchanter* is the introduction to the highly acclaimed *Enchanter Trilogy* which takes you to a world of magic, where spells are power and magicians rule the land. As a novice magician, you are sent to do battle with the warlock Krill. To succeed in your quest, you'll need to use all the cunning you can muster, along with spells acquired on the way. By Dave Lebling and Marc Blank.

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In Steve Meretzky's *Sorcerer*, you have advanced to the illustrious Circle of Enchanters. Now you must show an even greater command of magic as you attempt to rescue your mentor Belboz and defeat the evil demon Jecarr. "The world of *Sorcerer* is rich in detail and wonderment. The final solution is like a delicate orchid achieving full bloom. Long after the game is over, the heady fragrance stays with you."—St. Game.

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"*Trinity* mixes logic and magic with history and fiction. Often poetic in its imagery, the evocative prose is as entertaining to read as the puzzles are to solve."—Family Computing

(All systems require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

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Everyone, at one time or another, feels bound up in an endless swathe of red tape. In *Bureaucracy*, you'll find yourself in the midst of a bureaucratic muddle so convoluted that you can't help but laugh.

You've just landed a great new job and moved to a spiffy house in a nice little town. You're even being sent to Paris this very afternoon for a combination training seminar and vacation. What could possibly go wrong? The answer, of course, is everything.

(All versions require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

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## LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS<sup>®</sup>

"*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* is an uproarious role-playing romp that heralds a new breed of computer games."—Newsweek

How did you, a regular at Joe's Bar in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, end up on a Martian Moon? What delights await you in the luxurious chambers of the Harem? Can you stop the *Leather Goddesses'* fiendish plot to turn the Earth into their own personal sex playground?

Find these answers and more in this titillating romp through the solar system. *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* features three levels of play. (Tame, Suggestive and Lewd) to satisfy all appetites. Written by Steve Meretzky. All versions but Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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ITEM #1365	Apple II	\$14.95
ITEM #1366	IBM	\$14.95
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The circus is a place where dreams come true. At least, that's what you think... until you get behind the scenes. Beyond the spangles lies a seedy world of deception and crime. Exploring the tattered corners of the circus lot, you learn that the owner's daughter has been kidnapped. Good samaritan that you are, you decide to find her. But watch your step. Or the kidnapper will set you up for a permanent slot in the freak show. A unique puzzle-oriented mystery.

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## WISHBRINGER<sup>®</sup>

"There's no better introduction to the richness of adventure-gaming experience than this beautiful, imaginative game."—inCider

When the story begins, your life as a postal clerk in the seaside village of Festeron, is quite ordinary. But when you're asked to deliver a strange envelope to the outskirts of town, things become quite extraordinary. All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. Written by Brian Moriarty. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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ITEM #1401	Apple II	\$14.95
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ITEM #1405	Atari ST	\$14.95
ITEM #1406	Atari XL/XE	\$14.95
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## THE WITNESS<sup>®</sup>

February 1938. Los Angeles.

FDR's New Deal is rolling. Hitler's rolling, too; this time through Austria. But as Chief Detective for a quiet burgh on the outskirts of L.A., you've got other fish to fry.

One gilt-edged society dame is dead. And now it looks like some two-bit drifter is putting the screws to her multi-millionaire old man. Then you step in, and the shakedown turns ugly. You're left with a stiff and a race against the clock to nail your suspect... unless you get nailed first.

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ITEM #1503	Atari ST	\$9.95
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## SUSPECT<sup>®</sup>

At an elegant costume ball, you mingle with blue-bloods and power brokers. It's a delightful evening—until you go from unsuspecting newspaper reporter to murder suspect. It takes all your newspaper skills of observation, deduction and interrogation to come up with the proof of your innocence. Don't dally over the champagne—you only have 'til morning. Written by Dave Lebling.

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ITEM #1508	IBM	\$14.95
ITEM #1509	Amiga	\$14.95
ITEM #1510	Macintosh	\$14.95
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## MOONMIST™

More ghosts haunt the misty seacoast and stone ramparts of Cornwall than any place on earth. One such soul roams Tresyllian Castle. You arrive at the castle in response to an urgent plea from your friend. Her life is threatened and the culprit seems to be the ghost. You'll meet an eccentric cast of characters as you hunt down the phantom and search for secret treasures. *Moonmist* has four variations, each with a different guilty party, hidden treasure and hiding place.

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### SPECIAL OFFER

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A classic! The first computer mystery.

As the chief of detectives, you're up against a 12-hour time limit trying to solve a classic locked-door mystery. A wealthy industrialist is dead of a drug overdose and you've been called in to determine whether it's suicide or murder. To learn "whodunit", you must sift through a myriad of clues and motives. No easy feat, for all six of your suspects exercise free will—coming and going, scheming and maneuvering independently of your actions. Written by Marc Blank.

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ITEM #1425	Apple II	\$9.95
ITEM #1426	IBM	\$9.95
ITEM #1427	Macintosh	\$9.95
ITEM #1428	Atari ST	\$9.95
ITEM #1429	Atari XL/XE	\$9.95
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Your innocent journey turns dangerous as you barely survive an encounter with pirates and other obstacles you must overcome with your cunning and agility. True, it's not easy; but at least you can control your fate. What you cannot control is much more dangerous: your passion for Nicholas Jamison, the handsome pirate captain.

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ITEM #1334	Apple II	<b>\$39.95</b>
ITEM #1335	IBM	<b>\$39.95</b>
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## ZORK® TRILOGY™



Infocom's 3 most popular stories together at last! Your quest for the fabulous Treasures of Zork takes you further and further into the Great Underground Empire. You'll come to expect the unexpected—such as the Wizard of Frobozz who specializes in materializing at odd moments and casting bothersome spells.

As the force of the Dungeon Master draws you deeper into his mysterious inner sanctum, nothing is as it seems. You'll need to summon all your courage and wisdom to prove yourself worthy of the Master's Great Secret—and of life itself.

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## MANIAC MANSION™



His ambition was to rule the world... one teenager at a time.

The diabolical Dr. Fred has kidnapped Dave's girlfriend, Sandy. He's holding her in the *Maniac Mansion*. It's up to you to lead Dave and his pals on this wacky search and rescue mission.

It's a story of love, lust, power, greed, insanity, rock 'n roll music, electric cattle prods, soft drinks, small furry animals, strange aliens, late night talk show hosts, geeks, punk rockers, undeveloped photographs, medical experiments and world domination. From Lucasfilm Games (Commodore version requires Joystick(s)).

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## THE FAERY TALE ADVENTURE™



Enter the Magical Land of Holm, where you participate in the adventures of three brothers as they seek their ultimate fate. Travel with brave Julian, lucky Philip and gentle Kevin, on their quest through a land full of vicious monsters, enchanted princesses, fearsome dragons and even a kindly old woodcutter or two. Over 17,000 screens in all. From Microworlds.

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## STATIONFALL™



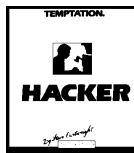
*Planetfall* has long been a favorite of Infocom fans. Now Floyd is back in the boffoid sequel!

Since your incredible heroics in *Planetfall*, things have hardly changed at all. Life in the Stellar Patrol is still a bore. Today's thrilling assignment: travel to a space station to pick up some trivial forms.

Arriving at the space station, you find it strangely deserted with a spooky alien ship resting in a dock bay. Luckily, Floyd is on hand to help you identify and overcome the dangerous forces at work. But then, even he begins acting oddly... written by Steve Meretzky.

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ITEM #1342	Apple II	<b>\$14.95</b>
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## HACKER™



Temptation. To stumble into somebody else's computer system. To be someplace you're really not supposed to be. And to get the strange feeling that it really does matter. "LOGON PLEASE:" is all you get to start with. That's it. From there, it's up to you.

Just like in real life, there are no rules, no clues, no instructions. From Activision. (Commodore version requires Joystick(s).)

ITEM #LAAH	C64/128	<b>\$14.95</b>
ITEM #LACH	Apple II	<b>\$14.95</b>
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## HACKER II™: THE DOOMSDAY PAPERS™



As the world's leading authority on computer security systems, the CIA is counting on you to preserve Western Civilization. The Russians have in their possession "The Doomsday Papers", a notebook which could destroy our government. Your mission is to break into the maximum

security complex where the papers are stored, avoid the heavy electronic surveillance and get them back!

Your only weapons are your computer, a few droids called Mobile Remote Units and your skill. From Activision. (Macintosh version requires 512K. Commodore version requires Joystick(s).)

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ITEM #LACA	Apple II	<b>\$14.95</b>
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## CORNERSTONE™

Control is the key to maximum productivity with any information management system and *Cornerstone* gives you full control from start to finish.

*Cornerstone* is as easy to learn as it is to use. The on-line help system is sensitive to your immediate needs and the unique options key lets you know what you can do next.

"For sheer value and power, we have to give the top rating to *Cornerstone*."—InfoWorld.

(Requires 384K Memory, 2 Floppy Disk Drives or 1 Floppy and 1 Hard Disk Drive, and PC-DOS 2.0, 2.1, 3.0 or 3.1.)

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## THE LURKING HORROR™



Ever since you arrived G.U.E. Tech, you've heard stories about the creepy old campus basements and storage rooms. Until now, you've kept a safe distance. But tonight, something draws you down into the mysterious depths of the institute.

Suddenly, you're in a world that rivals your most hideous visions, a realm of horror lurking beneath the calm corridors and study halls.

Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so horrifying that they will feed your nightmares for weeks. Written by Dave Lebling.

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ITEM #1350	Apple II	<b>\$39.95</b>
ITEM #1351	IBM	<b>\$39.95</b>
ITEM #1352	Amiga	<b>\$39.95</b>
ITEM #1353	Macintosh	<b>\$39.95</b>
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## MIGHT AND MAGIC™



Can you discover the Secret of The Inner Sanctum in this fantasy role-playing adventure?

First, you'll have to find the Inner Sanctum itself, which won't be easy since it's not on the map. You'll cross vast oceans, climb tall mountains, search through ancient castles and dark dungeons in your quest. You'll use 94 different spells and more than 250 items of magic to deal with over 200 monsters that you may encounter.

You can create up to 6 different characters to go adventuring, and since *Might and Magic* reacts differently to each player, no two quests for the Secret of the Inner Sanctum are alike. From New World Computing. (IBM version requires 256K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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ITEM #LADH	Apple II	<b>\$42.95</b>
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## SHANGHAI™

Infocom's favorite Activision game!

Smoke hangs thick as smoldering intrigue in the steamy alley backroom in Shanghai. Tension grips as fortunes ride on the clicking ivory tiles of a game. The game? Mah Jongg—the 3,000 year-old Chinese obsession of sailors, warriors, scoundrels and kings.

Brought to America in the 1920's, now it's coming to your home computer screen. Play against the computer, another player or the clock with this captivating strategy challenge. From Activision. (Commodore version requires Joystick(s). IBM version requires 128K and Color Graphics Card.)

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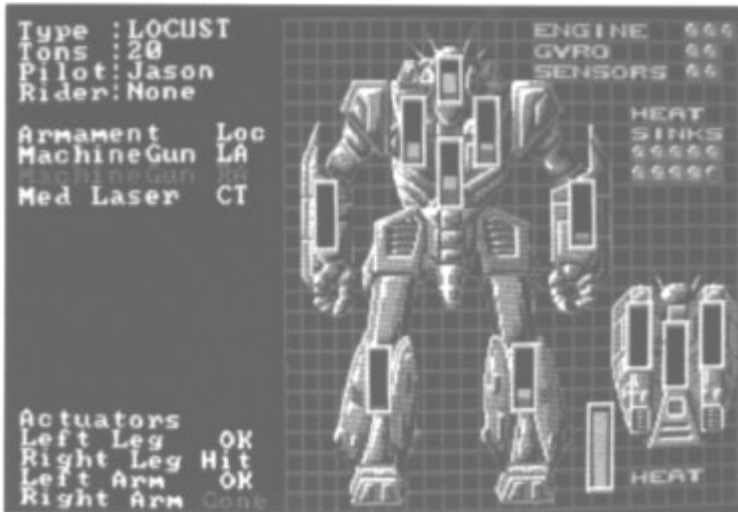
# The Status Line

Volume VII Number 3

Formerly The New York Times

Fall 1988

## BattleTech: Lots of Meching around



Check out that 'Mech—A detailed scan of a WASP BattleMech is just one of the features in this action-packed role-playing game based on the popular BattleTech role-playing and strategy board-game series.

He cursed himself for what felt like the 15th time in the last hour. The inside of his neuro-helmet was slick with sweat, making matters even worse now that there was poor contact with the helmet's electrodes. He remembered the message that his instructors drilled into his head again and again: "Controlling a 'Mech requires patience and above all strategic allocation of resources." Funny how it was never as easy when the trainer 'Mechs were firing back.

"I cannot let father down," Jason mumbled to himself as he aligned the Chameleon's twin medium lasers on the approaching Locust's torso. "Cannot let the computer keep fighting for me, especially after last time," Jason thought, ruefully remembering how he had caused a critical overheat by being careless.

Slowing his breathing, Jason

scanned the status report of his 'Mech's condition. His concentration was broken by alarm bells sounding and the warning, "Critical shot to the head! Man eject!" blaring into his ears. Numb, Jason triggered the eject button, blasting the canopy off the top of the 'Mech and causing him to drop the 35 feet to the ground, safely cocooned within the seat's webbing.

Dejectedly, Jason detached himself from the now useless seat and trudged back to the Citadel's training grounds, realizing that he now had another failure he would have to try to live down with the mechanics. "They already hate me because of their station in life," said Jason, realizing that tomorrow's training session would be just as brutal as today's.

If Jason thought he had problems training to be a 'MechWarrior, he

Please turn to page 5

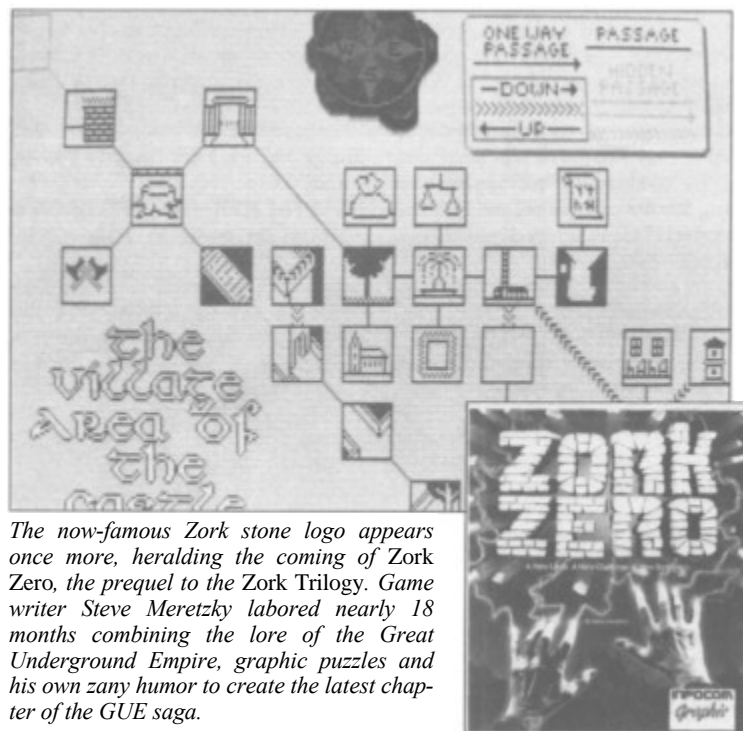
## Zork Zero takes you back to the beginning

Ever since *Zork I* first appeared on home computers, and the *Zork Trilogy* became our best-loved series of interactive stories, countless fans have begged for *Zork IV*. Now our Steve Meretzky, doing exactly the opposite, gives you something even better by taking you back to before the beginning. Nearly 18 months in the making, we are proud to reveal our most ambitious project ever, *Zork Zero*.

*Zork Zero: The Revenge of Megaboz* takes you back to the last days of the Empire. A wizard's curse has destroyed the ruling Flathead family and has threatened the kingdom itself. Although you are but one of many fortune hunters who have flooded the capital city of Flatheadia to try to claim the huge reward for stemming the curse, a carefully guarded family secret gives you a big advantage!

### Every corner of the kingdom

As you begin your quest, you'll meet the court jester, whose rhymes will leave you laughing, whose tricks will leave you cursing, and whose rebuses and riddles will leave you scratching your head. You'll travel to every corner of the kingdom, visiting exotic locales from the glaciers of the Gray Mountains to the swamps of Fenshire, from the placid shores of Lake Flathead to the searing heat of the Great Underground Desert, from



The now-famous Zork stone logo appears once more, heralding the coming of *Zork Zero*, the prequel to the *Zork Trilogy*. Game writer Steve Meretzky labored nearly 18 months combining the lore of the *Great Underground Empire*, graphic puzzles and his own zany humor to create the latest chapter of the *GUE* saga.

the defoliated Fublio Valley to the granola mines of Antharia.

*Zork Zero* answers many of the questions that have tormented Zorkers for ages: What is it like to play Double Fanucci? Where did gues

come from? And finally, most compelling of all, what is the origin of the white house where *Zork I* begins?

Epic in both size and scope, this prequel covers a full century and explores the collapse of the Great Un-

derground Empire. Straining our new "Y" development system to the limit, *Zork Zero* is our largest game ever, with more than 200 locations, and as many puzzles as all three games of the *Zork Trilogy* combined. To top it off, *Zork Zero* shatters one of computerdom's most sacred barriers—the first true graphical enhancements to an Infocom story.

### Double Fanucci

Our diehard fans are probably mourning the passing of an era; but take heart. "*Zork Zero* has everything you've come to expect from us: lots of descriptive prose, a ton of puzzles, depth and attention to detail; it's a well-tested and polished game, all served up in a fun, handsome package," says author Meretzky. "The graphics simply add one more level of excellence. I tried to use them in a different way; rather than illustrate locations, the graphics are integrated into the puzzles themselves. I'm really pleased with the result." The graphics, created by computer artist James Shook, make possible such graphical puzzles as Pegglego, Snarfem, the Tower of Bozbar, and Double Fanucci.

But wait—there's more! *Zork Zero* abounds with exciting new features. It marks the introduction of our newest-

Please turn to page 6

# The Status Line

Mike Dornbrook  
Ruthless Slave Driver

Stuart A. Kirsch  
TV Game Show Quiz Master

Hollywood Dave Anderson  
Vacationing Starlet

Rob Sears  
Noisy Neighbor

Tomas Bok  
Marketing Switch Hitter

Lori Hornung  
Mouse Pusher

Stu Galley  
Scout Master

Steve Meretzky  
Prom King

Christopher Erhardt  
Marjorie Gove  
Matt Hillman  
Elizabeth Langosy  
Eileen Milauskas  
Curtis Montague  
Grave Robbers

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# Good-bye to Status Line, hello to Escape

Here it is--the 20th edition of *The Status Line*. Well, of course, most of those editions were called *The New Zork Times* until a "major metropolitan newspaper" marshalled their cadre of lawsuit-thirsty lawyers.

After 20 newsletters we think we have somewhat perfected the medium. Our combination of news, features, nutty contests and puzzles has been praised by many, including our competitors. So as we are reshaping the world of interactive fiction and other forms of storytelling, it is time for us to push back the publishing envelope once again. We have decided to retire *TSL* and replace it with a full color magazine called *Escape*.

Don't Panic. We will still be the same publication we have always been, but now in color and with more detail about gaming in general. And



don't worry about *TSL*, it is going to Florida to join the *NZT* at the retirement home for leading-edge publica-

Next stop--Florida!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Infocom,  
I like your games. I like your games so much that I've tried other company's games, and realized how much better yours are.

I've just finished *Beyond Zork*. I've enjoyed previous romps, but *BZ*--you must come out with more games using this interface, and I mean yesterday. "Define keys"--I didn't have to type "roll onion," "blow bubble" or "turn mirror" 555 times! I never thought I'd find a companion to match Floyd (I cried when I thought he was dead, just ask my roommate), but Spunky the minx, Stu the caterpillar, and Phil the pterodactyl came pretty damn close.

I thank you, my mother thanks you, and my roommate thanks you for the Solid Gold and \$14.95 specials (Mastercard and VISA do not). Actually, my roommate may be grateful that they enable me to pay my rent, but she's probably not pleased (or maybe she is) that they tend to make me somewhat reclusive. And for the love of God, don't tell my thesis advisor--I've missed so many deadlines because of these things he probably thinks I'm out with the reserves a lot or suchlike...

If you ever need testers, or writers, or brainstormers, or just generally cute people to liven up the joint, say the word.

Saving up another \$14.95 (plus \$2 postage and handling)

Debby Berry,  
Columbus, OH

Dear Infocommies,  
Infocom Terms for the Beginner:  
INVENTORY--any necessary items such as chips, soda, beer, etc.

STATUS LINE--number of hours you've been working on the same puzzle.

MARITAL STATUS LINE--something funny you tell your spouse to stop them from leaving because you spend all your time at the computer.

A LINE--something often used at single's bars but which has little or no meaning to an Infocommie (except maybe at the Infocom Friday office parties).

WISHBRINGER--Mailman who brings you the Hint Booklet you ordered.

SEASTALKER--one who chooses to walk on the beach to work out Infocom puzzles.

WITNESS--some friend you call when you are about to solve an incredibly difficult puzzle, like the infamous Babel Fish we-have-to-get this-slimy-little-fish-in-our-ear puzzle.

ZORK I, II--planets people might think you're from if you intend to get involved with Infocom.

ZORK III--a good game if you are from Zork I or II.

ENCHANTER--a friend of the opposite sex who clues you in on how to solve a puzzle.

SORCERER--a friend of the same sex who gives you a game or a hint.

PLANETFALL--what the Earth could do, as long as you have your computer and your Infocom games.

CUTTHROATS--what your family might do if you don't quit playing those doggam Infocom games and come to dinner.

SUSPECT--everyone, if your favorite Infocom game is missing.

A MIND FOREVER VOYAGING--your brain when you're figuring out a

difficult puzzle.  
INFIDEL--someone who interrupts your game.  
DEADLINE--what you may look like after solving an Infocom game in 3 days without stopping if you didn't start out with a big enough inventory.  
SPELLBREAKER--someone who breathes while you are completing a very fragile chain of thought that will enable you to solve a puzzle.  
STARCROSS--when you stop day-dreaming about a puzzle and get back to work.  
SUSPENDED--the type of animation you appear to be in when thinking about a puzzle.  
CHESS--a nice relaxing game (of course, before you know it, Infocom will come out with interactive chess, and you'll have to turn to checkers, or marbles to relax).

Here is a sample of what to expect in the first edition of *Escape*:

James Clavell's *Shogun*--Dave Lebling's adaptation promises to make this one of our most inspiring interactive fiction stories. Incredible graphics, too.

Marc Blank sends you on a fantastic *Journey*--the co-author of *Zork* once again creates an entirely new way to experience a fantasy adventure story on your computer.

More conversions of *Zork Zero* and *BattleTech*--the excitement grows as our latest releases find their way to more and more systems.

Plus lots more!

Sincerely,  
Ben Holzman  
Roslyn Heights, NY  
[Thanks Ben. We will be adding these to our new game manuals--Ed.]

Dear TSL,  
I need help. I am a junior in high school and frankly, I hate History. In effect, I am not doing so well in it. After a long conference with my teacher, we decided that if I could get my letter published in any professional publication, he would raise my grade 1/2 a grade. I was just wondering if you knew of any professional publications.

Pleadingly yours,  
Eric Lee  
San Leandro, CA  
[Eric, have you tried The New York Times?--Ed.]

# Quarterstaff: Our first role-playing fantasy

Three months ago, a peaceful colony of druids vanished without a trace. As their crops lie overgrown and abandoned, a crossfire of rumors has descended upon the land, laying blame on everything from epidemic to mass homicide to demon worship. Scouting parties have been frantically assembled and sent forth to bring an end to all the hearsay, but none has returned. Now the local kingdoms, restless for news of the missing sect, have called upon you to venture into the depths of the lost Tree Druid colony, buried deep beneath a great oak tree. You must discover whatever foul secret lies within.

## Graphics and sound

*Quarterstaff: The Tomb of Setnoth* — our first entry into the fantasy role-playing (FRP) genre and the first in our RPG series — is role-playing adventure as you've never seen it before on a computer. You'll read rich text descriptions of the places, objects, and creatures you come across. High-resolution graphics and digitized sounds reinforce the text, and your moves are tracked by a detailed on-screen map which your characters "draw" as they go.

You issue commands to your characters in full English sentences. And as in any FRP, the characters in your party develop and mature in a variety of specific skills, and fight according to a comprehensive combat system.

Pervading the *Quarterstaff* universe at all levels is close attention to detail — apparent in everything from the weight and bulk of objects they're carrying to the complex timetable by which hunger and fatigue affect the characters in the game. All these elements weave together into a game which is more akin to a "pen and paper" adventure environment than anything previously released on a computer.

## Monsters learn from mistakes

As the game opens, you stand at the entrance to the Tree Druids' colony, ready to begin your underworld quest. As you progress, you meet many a curious creature. In *Quarterstaff*, monsters are not merely "deathbots," whose only purpose in life is to maim and destroy, but ordinary living things whose actions are guided by real life drives such as hunger, anger, and the need for friendship.

Monsters even learn from their mistakes and accomplishments through an artificial-intelligence learning system. Some creatures will react negatively to your party, resorting to combat and force. Others, however, will try to help your party, or even join forces with you; and so,

though you begin the adventure with only one character, you're sure to quickly acquire a formidable band of adventurers.

*Quarterstaff* provides a number of innovations for manipulating your party. Your characters can move about independently, or as part of a central group that moves as a unit. You can even divide your party into two or more groups that explore different parts of the geography on their own. This gives you unlimited freedom to control your



party: you could, for instance, allow some of your group to sleep, while two characters stand watch, and a scouting party probes the nearby rooms for action.

*Quarterstaff* was originally designed, written and implemented for the Macintosh by Simulated Environment Systems, which released the game in 1987. The game immediately received rave reviews—*MacUser* gave it a near-perfect rating of four mice, while *Dragon* gave it a perfect

five stars, saying "Quarterstaff... is, in our opinion, among the finest fantasy role-playing games available for any computer system." Despite reviews like these, which reflected impressive design and development, *Quarterstaff* ran into marketing trouble, and its distribution was limited. We recognized the game's potential, and bought the rights to the product.

## Includes hierarchical menus

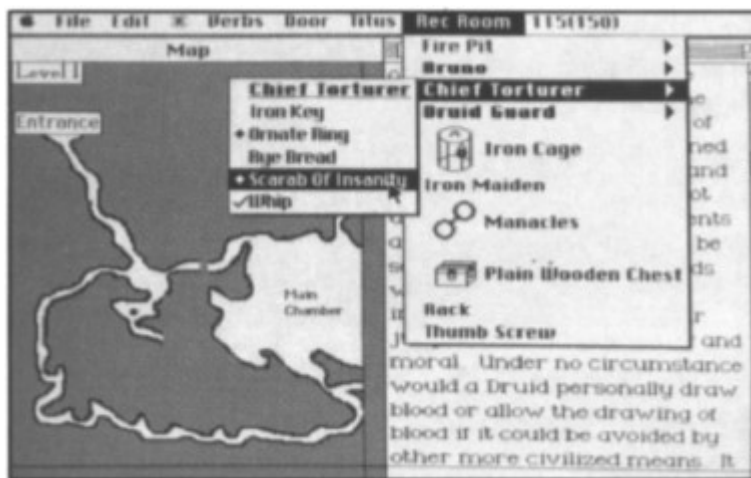
We've spent months in collaboration with the game's authors, Scott Schmitz and Ken Updike, and a slew of talented artists, writers and programmers in order to perfect the game. The first improvement was the implementation of a new Macintosh interface — one that allows the user to play the game entirely with the mouse, or to play entirely using the keyboard. Pull-down menus allow you to easily point and click your way through even complex sentences. We've included Apple's hierarchical menus, usually found only in top-notch business products, to allow you easy access to your inventory. Of course, any command can be typed in via the keyboard.

Next, InfoImplementor Amy Briggs (author of *Plundered Hearts*) reworked and rewrote most of the game's text to provide a greater sense of plot and continuity within the story. We also corrected a few grammatical errors as well. Computer artists were brought in to touch up the high-resolution graphics and to design a special set of gorgeous color graphics which the game uses when running on a color Mac II.

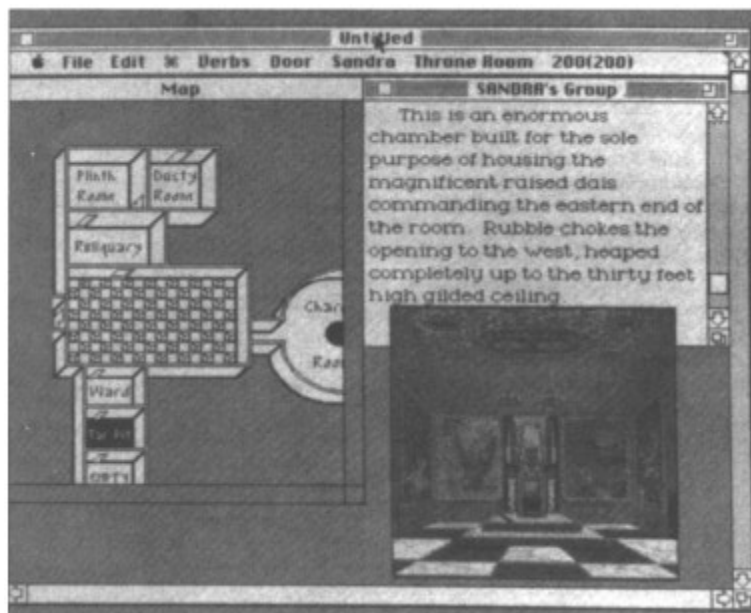
## New package and manual

Our infamous testing staff (which had recently been genetically altered so as to not require sleep) was unleashed on the program to perform exhaustive bug-whacking. After several dozen cases of Jolt cola were consumed over the course of a few months, the finished game emerged. Finally, a new package was conceived and produced featuring beautiful cover art by artist Ken Barr. Inside we put a brand new user's manual and, as is our style, an assortment of mood setting pieces: a mystical parchment titled "The Path to Enlightenment," a wooden druidic coin and a dazzling color poster featuring the cover art.

The Macintosh version of *Quarterstaff* will be available in October, and will include the special color graphics for the Mac II. Versions for the Apple II GS and IBM will be available in spring of 1989. Watch upcoming issues for further information. All versions will retail for \$49.95.



*Quarterstaff features Apple's hierarchical menus for the ultimate Macintosh interface, making your adventuring even easier. Your quest is also aided with the convenience of on-screen mapping.*



*In Quarterstaff we've included on-screen room-by-room mapping as well as a map of the surrounding geography (shown in the picture above). Digitized sounds and high-resolution graphics enhance the mood.*



## Four more popular titles reduced to only \$14.95

We at Infocom are offering you, our most loyal fans, a special deal, the kind of deal that just makes you want to cry with joy. Well, get your hankies out, because now you can get four of our most wildly popular games—*The Lurking Horror*, *Stationfall*, *Nord & Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*, and *Plundered Hearts*—for the low, low direct-mail price of \$14.95!

### The Lurking Horror

Since they were released last year, each game has received incredible reviews. For example, *RUN* magazine game Infocom's first interactive horror story, Dave Lebling's *The Lurking Horror*, a grade of "A," saying, "Whatever it is that alarms, unnerves, dismays, startles, or turns blood into ice water can be experienced in this boundless romp into the unknown." This eerie thriller, which takes you through the G.U.E. Tech campus from the top of the great dome to the bottom of the elevator shaft, will have "your spine tingling and your heart beating faster," promises *A+* magazine.

### Stationfall

"Fall into *Stationfall* and you'll have trouble climbing back out," warns *Analog Computing*. The entertaining sequel to the ever-popular *Planetfall*, Steve Meretzky's *Stationfall* once again features the lovable and hilarious Floyd up to a completely new set of mischievous antics. But this time, he's paired up with another robot named Plato, becoming "what will probably be known as the greatest comedy team ever in interactive fiction," according to *Analog Computing*. *MacUser*, which gave *Stationfall* four-and-a-half mice, says, "*Stationfall* is one of those rare sequels that lives up to the original."

As a Stellar Patrol officer, you and your beloved Floyd set out to explore a deserted space station. What might you find? You'll just have to find out for yourself, if you can put up with Floyd's habit of reciting multiple digits of pi. In the words of *ST X-Press*, "...if you haven't ever played Infocom games or have just passed them by, then this is the one to pick up (along with *Planetfall*)." And now it's just \$14.95!

### Nord and Bert

Do you believe that the pun is mightier than the sword? Do you appreciate word plays, puns and other linguistic twists? Then get the ball rolling, take the bull by the horns and try *Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It* by Jeff O'Neill. "In a world that is hungry for some literary humor, *A+* states, "*Nord and Bert*

is an entertaining and distinctive step in the right direction."

If you have ever had the itch to really make a mountain out of molehill, then put your nose to the grindstone with this collection of eight short interactive fiction stories. Observes *inCider*, "It's perfect for those who are clever, intelligent, and quick-witted. On the other hand, it could be a most humbling experience." In *Nord and Bert*, you learn that the town of Punster is undergoing a linguistic crisis so severe that its citizens are unable to communicate. It's up to you to save the day. Just watch out for the large chocolate mousse standing in the aisle of the Shopping Bizarre on your way to visiting the Manor of Speaking. And if getting the right answer is like finding a needle in a haystack, then the on-screen hints should get you one leg ahead. Indeed, as *Newsday* says, *Nord and Bert* is "a hoot, really," and as *COMPUTE'S Gazette* confirms, "*Nord and Bert* is truly different, and that's as sure as little green apples."

### Plundered Hearts

And now for something completely different—pirates, ripped bodices and steamy passion are all yours for only \$14.95 in Amy Briggs' 17th-century tale of romance, *Plundered Hearts*. The first interactive fiction title to feature a woman as the main character, *Plundered Hearts* puts you in the middle of a high seas adventure as you sail to the West Indies to see your ailing father for what might be the last time. But can you resist the escalating passion that you feel for the dashing pirate Nicholas Jamison?

Men and women alike have hailed *Plundered Hearts* as intriguing and enjoyable. *Commodore* magazine praises Amy's rich storyline and considers her knowledge of the time period to be a contributing factor to the intricate plot. But it warns, "Don't let the fact that the main character is a woman scare you away! *Plundered Hearts* won my respect by not relying on this gimmick and delivering a challenging adventure with which to pass the time."

*Computer Entertainer* asserts, "While women players of interactive fiction have adapted, of necessity, to playing male roles in adventures, now it's time for men to show their flexibility and assume a feminine role for a change!" And Dan Gutman, syndicated columnist, found *Plundered Hearts* to be "well written and fun to play, romance novel or not. But I must confess I felt a tad uncomfortable kissing Captain Jamison."



Convention goers visit the joint FASA-Infocom booth at this year's GENCON/ORIGINS. Over 10,000 participants packed the MECCA.

## Infocom attends GENCON gaming mega-convention

The year 1988 was a banner year for the amalgam of companies making up the board/strategy/fantasy role-playing/war/hobby-gaming industry. The two major conventions were, for the first time, combined into one mega-convention. GENCON, the fantasy role-playing convention, sponsored by TSR (makers of *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, among others) and ORIGINS, the war gaming show, sponsored by Avalon Hill (a leader in the field of both non-computer and computer war gaming) became GENCON/ORIGINS 1988.

The show attracted over 10,000 fanatics and first-timers to the MECCA in Milwaukee, where for a weekend, gaming was king. Over 125 exhibitors attended, easily making this the biggest and the most successful convention the industry has ever seen.

While companies like TSR, FASA, Avalon Hill, Games Workshop, and Ral Partha Miniatures ruled the show, strangely different banners also adorned the exposition hall—names like Infocom, Strategic Simulations Inc. (SSI), Electronic Arts, Atari, Commodore, Mindscape, New World Computing, Origin Systems, and Computer Gaming World appeared. Yes, computers and computer gaming had merged into the world of traditional gaming. Said one computer professional, "Hey, games is games. Whether you play them alone, with friends, or on a computer is only a difference in the method. But in the end, games is games."

Perhaps the convergence of the

industries is the proof of this theory. Infocom is releasing a computer version of *BattleTech*. SSI has released computer products for *AD&D*. Origin Systems has its versions of *Auto Duel* and *Ogre*. Gamers gave software products and computer gaming an overwhelmingly positive reception. The computer rooms were sponsored by Atari, Commodore, and the Milwaukee Area Commodore Enthusiasts (MACE); they were continually packed with people playing everything from *Might and Magic*, *Pool of Radiance*, and *Dungeon Master* to *Earl Weaver Baseball*, *Universal Military Simulator*, and *Jet*.

But for Infocom, not only was the convention a new market and a new show, but it was also a homecoming of sorts. Milwaukee is the original home of the Zork User's Group and the birth place of this very magazine (then the *New Zork Times*). Even though neither Mike Dornbrook nor his parents live there anymore, we were received like hometown heroes. (Just ask us about the Astor Hotel—on second thought, don't.)

The response of GENCON/ORIGINS to *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* was simply stupendous. Crowds gathered from aisles around whenever the familiar beat of "The BattleBeast" (our promotional video) began. Everyone wanted to be the first on their block to find out what it would be like to be Jason Youngblood. Plans have already been made (by MACE) for a *BattleTech* computer competition during next year's Con.



# War is a way of life on 31st-century Pacifica

Continued from page 1

didn't know what fate lay ahead when Kuritan forces attacked the planet. Now, eighteen years old and totally alone, he's adrift within a war-ravaged city, undertrained, and with only the money he had saved as a student. Add to this his being hunted and pursued by the occupational forces and you'll get the feeling of our new role-playing game, *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. While the above text is not from the game, it does give you a taste of how you might feel when you play it.

Based upon FASA's popular adventure board games of armored combat in the 31st century, you are cast as Jason Youngblood. Raised as a court favorite (due to father's friendship with the local duke), Jason is arrogant, egotistical and vain. But suddenly he's forced not only to survive on his own, but to try to piece together the fate of his father... and his father's loyal guard.

While this storyline may seem to be a reasonable premise for one of our interactive fiction stories, walking into *BattleTech* is a departure for the traditional Infocom player. This is not an interactive fiction story. This is a full-fledged computer role-playing game (RPG), complete with training and experience, armour, weapons and equipment acquisition, party building, impressive graphics, and lots of combat. And, as an Infocom first, this game is not text based! But this is not standard RPG experience.

This is a game with all the depth and richness you expect from Infocom, plus all the excitement of the *BattleTech* universe.

Developed by Westwood Associates, the wizards behind SSI's *Phantasia III* and Epyx's *Summer Games* and *World Games*, *The Crescent Hawk's Inception* is a unique, animated, and richly detailed game. The story in *BattleTech* is more intriguing and more in depth than that of any other computer role-playing game.

One of the features that makes this game unique is the addition of many animated "outtakes" that appear at various points throughout the game. They are designed in the style of "monga" or Japanese, comic books. Whether you see the expressive face of Jason or the explosive missile launch from a Locust, the "outtakes" will bring the story even more alive and enrich your playing experience.

But the animated "outtakes" and a rich storyline are only part of the excitement of the game. *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* features the largest playing area of any com-



Emotive outtakes in the style of Japanese "monga" comic books add extra visual excitement to our new role-playing game, *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. Should Jason get into trouble you'll see this look of fear and surprise in his eyes. The artwork on the cover (right) is just part of what you'll find inside.



puter RPG. With over four million (that's right, four million!) locations which your party can visit, *BattleTech* offers the player a huge territory in which to explore and fight.

Combat, too, is of a scope befitting such an exhilarating game. Whether you are in your 'Mech (a 30-foot tall, 20-ton war-machine) or on foot, alone or in the party you've assembled, combat is a frequent test of your skills and nerves. Hand-to-hand combat weapons range from longbows and pistols to vibroblades and laser rifles. But seated in your 'Mech, you can fire off laser blasts, infernos, and missiles. War is a way of life in the 31st century, and armaments of destruction are a way to survive in this harsh world.

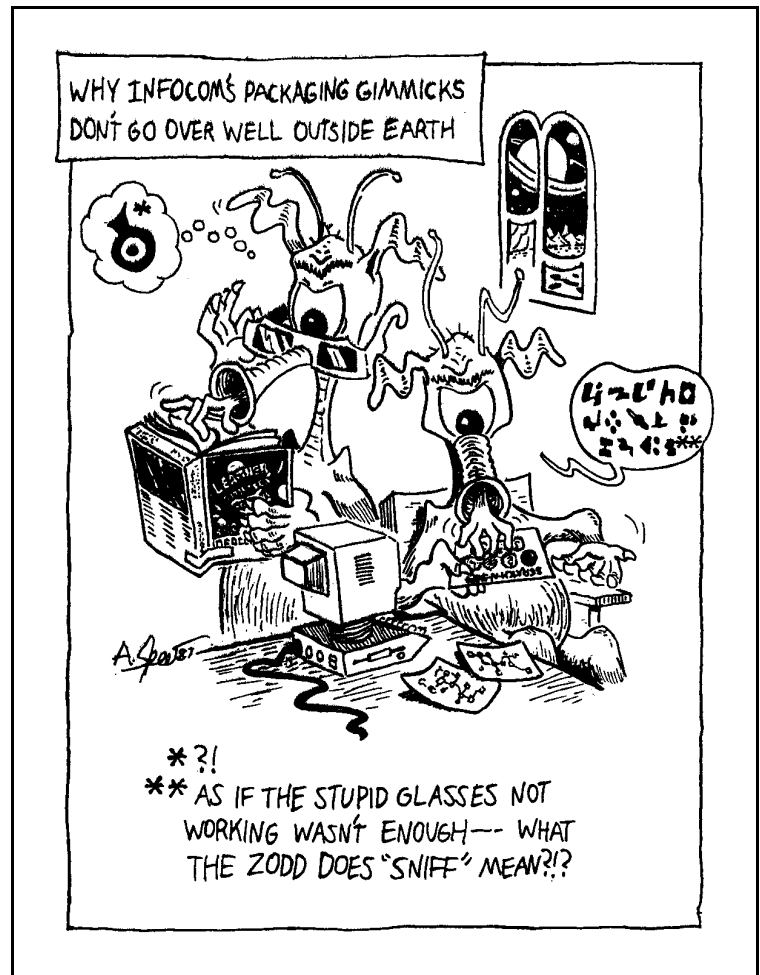
If lots of tactical maneuvering and strategic planning is not your thing, *BattleTech* has an auto-combat capability that lets your computer do the planning and fighting for you. The story, the discovery, the excitement, however, are all still there.

And playing *BattleTech* couldn't be easier on the fingers. Your numeric keypad or arrow keys move you around both your geography and your menu choices. Joystick support will be available on some versions.

There's an added bonus for winning the game: should you be skillful enough to discover the secretly hidden 'Mech that we've placed at the end of the game, you can send for an exclusive, custom crafted Ral Partha *BattleTech* lead miniature. Just answer the

question on the card inside the package (and send it to us with shipping and handling costs) and we'll send you the figure that has been designed and created especially for us and *The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. Plus, in your *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* package you'll find a spectacular poster and official Lyran Commonwealth 'Mech and Weapons Recognition Guide. And if you're among the first to get your copy of *BattleTech*, you'll get another real prize: in a limited number of specially marked packages, you'll find an authentic Crescent Hawk insignia pin! Wear it proudly!

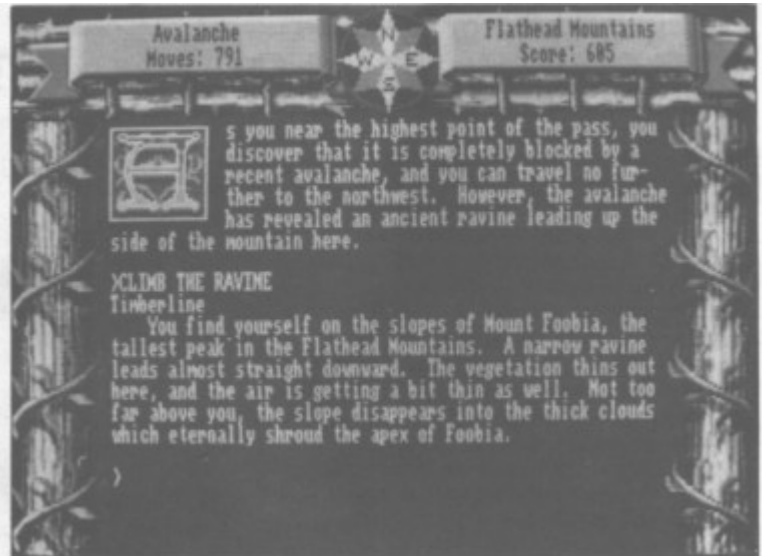
*BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* will be available in November for the IBM and 100% compatibles (supports CGA, EGA, VGA, MCGA, and Tandy Graphics; 384K RAM required), in February for the Commodore 64/128, and in the Spring for the Apple II series and Amiga. Suggested retail price is \$39.95 for the Commodore 64/128 and \$49.95 for all other systems.



Andrew Speer



In *Zork Zero*, the prequel to the *Zork* Trilogy, you'll finally get a chance to try your hand at a Double Fanucci. We have taken computer game graphics a step further by integrating graphic-oriented puzzles into *Zork Zero*.



We've gotten more extravagant than Dimwit Flathead himself with our new development system. Ordinary screens of text come to life with graphic enhancements like these.

## Computerdom's most sacred barrier broken

### Continued from page 1

generation parser, our friendliest ever. Now it's easier for a novice to start, and powerful enough for the experience player.

*Zork Zero* includes our very popular on-screen hints. In a development made possible by our new graphics system, *Zork Zero* also has complete on-screen mapping. The puzzles themselves range from simple to boggling. Finally, *Zork Zero* is laced with

that famous Meretzky humor you loved so much in *Planetfall*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*.

The packaging lives up to our usual standards. Start with a scrap of parchment containing a spell from the secret notebooks of the great magician Megaboz. Then, add a construction blueprint from Rockville Estates, the cave-bound condo complex that's targeted for Young Underground Profes-

sionals. And top it off with a handsome calendar, featuring excerpts from "The Lives of the Twelve Flatheads" and illustrations by the great painter, Leonardo Flathead. This calendar is from the year 883 GUE, but (by an incredible coincidence) it is also perfectly usable as a 1989 calendar.

From the exciting prologue, where you come face to face with Lord Dimwit Flathead the Excessive, to the

climactic epilogue, where you meet the most powerful wizard ever to set foot on the soil of Quendor, *Zork Zero* has something for everyone, and promises to be the best offering yet from the Master Storytellers.

*Zork Zero* will be released in October on the Apple Macintosh, supporting both color Mac II and regular black and white Macs, and will retail for \$59.95. Watch upcoming issues for details on other computer versions.

Stuck in the cellar? Frustrated by the Pheehelm? After interviews with thousands of *Beyond Zork* players and many days of detailed statistical analysis, we have selected these two puzzles as winners of our "Most Likely To Cause Irate Adventurers To Axe Their Computers After Endless Hours Of Agonized Frustration" Award. By popular demand, this issue of *The Status Line* features these tricky puzzles from *Beyond Zork*. The hints for each puzzle slowly lead you through the solution. To read the coded portion (in boldface), simply count forward one letter; "A" becomes "B", "Z" becomes "A", etc.

### The Cellar

The cellar is a fairly difficult area of the game, yet it must be completed early in order to reach other areas. The first thing you need is a light source. Notice the **mzld** of the **szudqm**? Take the **qtrsx kzmsdqm** from the **szudqm**'r rhfm.

Can't get the light to last long enough? If only you had some way of recharging it. While holding the **kzmsdqm**, **qzdc** the **Rbqkkn ne Qdeqrdgldms**, found at the **anssnl** of the **rszhr**.

Now to explore. You'll need a weapon to dispatch the rat ant and discipline the crab; the dagger should do. **Jhkkhmf sgd bqza** should give you the **shmx bqnm**. The skeleton should be easy to kill, and don't forget to take its **zltkds**. Make sure to **rdzqbg** the **ohkd ne rdzrgdkkr**.

Hmm. The stack of barrels looks interesting,

## VisiClues: Hints for Beyond Zork

doesn't it? If you're too clumsy to climb it you may have a problem. Luckily, there is something in the cellar which can **hmbqdzrd** your **cdwsdqhsx**. Read your Book of Lore. Still stumped? **Rptddy** the **lnrr**.

Okay, you've climbed the barrels and gotten the **vmd ansskd**. Now you just need to get out, but someone has shut the door. Fortunately, you have a way to get through the door. Have you noticed those **rsqzmf fqddm qtmr** on the **zlt-kds**? They are obscured by **qdc rvhqkr**. You need to find a way to **ehksdq nts** the **qdc rvhqkr**. Try **knnjhmfs sgd zltkds sqntfg sgd vmd ansskd**.

Now **vdzq** the **zltkds** and **qzdc** its **vnqc ne onvdq**. What happens? Use that **dwsqz rsqdmfsg** to **rlzrg** the **cnng** and **drbzod**!

### The Pheehelm

Getting the Pheehelm is the most difficult puzzle in the end part of *Beyond Zork*. The famed Pheehelm is an ancient helmet, rumored to possess magic powers of intelligence. It lies north of the River Phee, among the ruins.

However, it's not easy to find. Perhaps some

magic would help. Notice the **zqbgvzx** in the ruined plaza. Have you found any other object which has a similar shape? The **gntqfkzrr**, which can be **antfgs** with the **Bqbnbnchkd'r Sdzq** at the **Lzfhbj Rgnood**, is the key object. **Rszmc tmcddq** the **zqbg** and **ekho** the **gntqfkzrr**. Lo and behold, you can now **lnud azbjvzqcr zmc enqvzqcr hm shld**! Explore the scenery a little.

In the era of the battleground, the Pheehelm falls off the dying prince's head and rolls into a trench. His horse then falls in, blocking it. Try to find a way to **lnud sgd gnqrd**. Can't do it? Well, don't worry, because **hs'r hlonrrhakd**. Maybe you can **chf hs nts**. But you are not very good at **chffhmf**. Perhaps you can **ehmc z adssdq chffdq** to help you. Try the **lhmw**.

So, you brought the **lhmw** back in time, but she didn't dig up the helmet. Give her some incentive! Try putting a **xtllx bgnbnkzsd sqteekd** in the trench too. But the ground is too hard to dig here. You're stuck. But wait! You have the **onvdqr ne shld**! Maybe you could go to a **cheedqdm sgd**, when the **fqntmc hr rnesdq**. Try the **Cdrnkzshnm**.

The **lhmw** still didn't dig up the Pheehelm? Perhaps the **sqteekd ldkds**—after all, it's been a few thousand years. You can't find any **bgdlhbzk oqdrdqzshudr** in this game. But there is a **lzfhb oqdrdqzshudr**: the **Onnk ne Dsdqmkz Xntsg. Cho z sqteekd hm sgd onnk**. Then try again.

## The Governor of Montana



Montana Governor Ted Schwinden picks up another vote for his 1996 re-election by posing with our contest winner, Jordan Anderson.

## Head of State Photo Contest winner

Since we announced our Great Wall of China Photo Contest, we have received over 25 photos of fans holding their favorite games on that famous landmark. So we figured we would have no problem with our next photo contest, The Head of State.

We did receive many good gags, but by the time we had to go to press we had received only one real photo—this photo of Infocom fan Jordan Anderson and the Governor of Montana, Ted Schwinden. Jordan cleverly stated in his letter “I *Suspect* that I’m the only entrant to have a picture taken with the Governor of Montana!”

So we’ll give you another chance. Get out there and find Baby Doc and Marcos. Send your entries to Castro Candidos, do Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. And don’t forget to buy an extra roll of film for our Elvis Impersonator Photo Contest.



How I got the Babel Fish

Eric Blumrich

## PUZZLE NUMBER 19

And now for something completely different a puzzle that has nothing to do with any Infocom games! (Except that it’s similar to the sort of puzzles you might run into in one of our interactive stories.)

The 12 sentences below all share the same unusual feature — except for two of them. To answer the puzzle, just give us the two numbers of the sentences which don’t fit the pattern. Okay, you’re on your own — and there are no In-visiClues to help you out!

We’ve left room on the answer form for you to include the reasoning behind your answer, but that’s simply for your amusement and ours. Only the two numbers will matter toward the correctness of your entry.

- 1) The earnest tenant took Karl’s spigot to our ruined dacha.
- 2) Five eager runners sent their red designer robes swinging gaily.
- 3) My yellow wig gives Sarah horrible earaches.
- 4) Dora and Dave evicted Dagbert the elf from my yard.
- 5) Mice and cats often race below fleecy clouds.
- 6) No one eats Sally’s stew without tongs.
- 7) Your razor replacement thundered dryly yesterday.
- 8) Andrew was singing graceful little enchantments.
- 9) The overcoats fret beside badly mangled hooks.
- 10) Weather robots stop people even next to oceans.
- 11) Never replenish his silver reading glasses.
- 12) The ego of frozen Norwegians seems stable.

### PUZZLE #19 ENTRY FORM

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR REASONING (optional):

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL) \_\_\_\_\_

### RULES

1. All entries must be postmarked by January 31, 1989. (Entries from outside the U.S. and Canada must be postmarked by March 31, 1989.)
2. Entries must be on this form or a photocopy of this form.
3. There is a limit of one entry per person.
4. Iodized salt helps prevent thyroid problems.
5. All entries must be mailed separately.
6. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will determine the winners.
7. Void where prohibited by law or mother-in-law.

### PRIZE

The New York Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt (The Status Line Puzzle was called The New York Times Puzzle back when The Status Line was called The New York Times).

### MAIL TO

Infocom, Inc.  
 The Awesomely Wonderful Puzzle Editor  
 125 CambridgePark Drive  
 Cambridge, MA 02140



## CUSTOMER SUPPORT

In this world of constant change, we are forever improving our products to adapt to new hardware. We also occasionally find a bug that even gets by our super-duper Testing Department. The following information might help you if your newest game doesn't seem to be working right. Send all inquiries and disks to: Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140, Attention: Customer Support. Or call us at (617) 576-3190.

**Beyond Zork on the IBM - IBM** users may be having problems with some EGA cards, using a Microsoft mouse, or saving and restoring on PCjr's or Tandy's with 256K of memory. We have an updated version of *Beyond Zork* which corrects all of these problems. Simply send us your original disk with a letter explaining exactly the problem you're encountering and the hardware you're using. We'll have a free upgrade out to you in a jiffy. (*Sherlock* also suffers from the same save/restore problem. We'll upgrade that free for you too!)

**Sherlock, Border Zone, Solid Gold Zork I, and Solid Gold Hitchhiker's on the Commodore 64/128** - Many people encountered save/restore problems with our first release of these games. We have released a new version which will save and restore with no problem. Send your original disk and a note outlining your problem. We'll send you a free upgrade.

### Egghead eggcerpted our contest

Eggads! In our Winter/Spring 1988 issue of *The Status Line* we requested photographs of people at landmarks holding one of our games, and we even promised a free set of games to the first person to send a photo of themselves on the Great Wall of China. We've received over 25 entries. Months later, while flipping through the July/August issue of *Egghead Discount Software's Egghead Magazine* looking for ideas to steal, InfoInformant Lori Hornung discovered they had in fact stolen one of our ideas! Glaring at her from page 27 was their "Eggheads Everywhere" contest which asks readers to send photos of themselves wearing Egghead clothing in "eggzotic" locations. And where was the example photograph taken from? That's right, from atop the Great Wall of China.

Well, to address our retailing chums in their own witty diction: What's your eggscuse for this eggcess, this des-egg-cration of that pillar of journalism, that media chef-d'oeuvre, *The Status Line* Landmark Photo Contest? That's right, I'm egg-

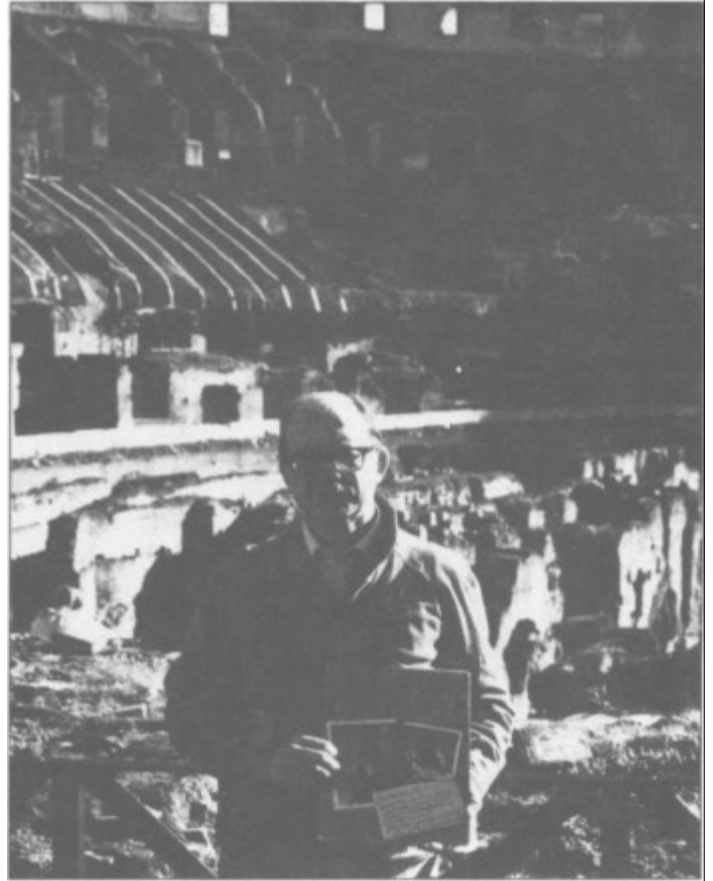
**Macintosh and the HFS** - All Infocom games for the Macintosh with an interpreter before "G" do not recognize the hierarchical file system. (You can find out which interpreter is on your disk by typing: \$VERIFY while in the game.) Therefore you cannot save/restore to the hard disk or an 800K disk. In this case you can either save to a single-sided disk (400K), or send in your original for a free upgrade.

**Infocomics - Lane Mastodon on the Apple II Series only** - Make sure your CAPS LOCK key is down to use your advance, reverse, and bookmark keys. This is not necessary for other Infocomics on the Apple.

**Infocomics on the IBM** - IBM versions of Infocomics are 5 1/4" disks and can only be booted from the A: drive. They also cannot be copied to a hard disk. So if your A: drive is 3 1/2", you will NOT be able to run Infocomics.

**Note to Cornerstone Users** - In this season of lightning storms make sure you always keep a good set of BACKUP ALL FILES of your database through Cornerstone's UTILITIES feature. We've had an increase in calls about damaged databases due to the weather which can only be fixed by RESTOREing a good working BACKUP or starting the database over from scratch. Remember, BACKUP SINGLE FILE will NOT do the trick.

### Rome, Italy



*Throwing Infidel to the lions? Tina Merola of Downers Grove, Ill. convinced her dad to pose with a copy of Infidel in the Colosseum in Rome.*

### Don't forget the camera and Beyond Zork!

Planning to visit Mount Rushmore anytime soon? Don't forget to bring along a copy of your favorite Infocom game and a camera whenever you go on vacation. If we use your photo, you'll receive a free game. Send your color slides or prints (no more black and white—see page 2) to: Landmark Photo, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

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But your education is violently interrupted by an enemy invasion, and then you're on your own to save your planet and your life.

*BattleTech* challenges your combat strategy skills, and lets you explore the more than 4 million individual locations of the game. Exciting graphics and animation show you everything, from your BattleMech's status to your immediate geography to closeups of the action. Learn strategy and accumulate supplies at "The Arena," a gladiatorial module you can play again and again. *BattleTech* is a fully-integrated part of FASA's BattleTech universe. (Requires CGA, EGA, VGA, MCGA or Tandy graphics and 384K.)

ITEM #1225 IBM

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NEW

**QUARTERSTAFF™: THE TOMB OF SETMOTH™**

Enmeshed in the roots beneath a large and ancient oak tree lies the labyrinth home of the peaceful Tree Druids. But that quiet colony, now deserted, hides the Dreadful secret of the Druids' sudden disappearance.

Parties of brave adventurers have gone in search of the key to the mystery—and no one has returned. Now you, and anyone you can find to help, are the Druids' last hope. It is your turn to descend into the dark, twisting underground caverns to discover the fate of the Druids.

When first developed, this fantasy role-playing game received a four-mouse rating from *Mac User* and a perfect five-star rating from *Dragon Magazine*. Now we've added a little Infocom magic, plus a spectacular Macintosh interface with realistic sound, sparkling color and black and white graphics, hierarchical menus, context-sensitive on-screen hints, and a dynamic map window. (Requires MacPlus, SE or II with 1 Meg of RAM. Color requires Mac II with 2 Meg of RAM and 16-color Video Card.)

ITEM #1223 Macintosh

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NEW!

**ZORK® ZERO**

Travel back through the mists of time to Dimwit Flathead's court in the very last hours of the Great Underground Empire, where you witness the powerful curse of Megaboz. You wake up years later as one of your own descendants

(isn't fantasy wonderful?) and embark on an adventure that tells the story behind the story of the classic *Zork Trilogy*. Larger than any previous Infocom story, *Zork Zero* is bursting with dastardly graphical puzzles, maniacal riddles, and more challenge than the other *Zorks* combined. An amazing and aggravating court jester pops up when least expected to tease and test you, and he takes your gaming skills to the limit in a devilish round of Double Fanucci. We keep the adventure going with on-screen hints, a friendlier parser, and on-screen maps. *Zork Zero* is the creation of the de-ranked Steve Meretzky. (Supports color on Mac II.)

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**ZORK® TRILOGY™**

Infocom's 3 most popular stories together at last! Your quest for the fabulous Treasures of Zork takes you further and further into the Great Underground Empire. You'll come to expect the unexpected—such as the Wizard of

Frobozz who specializes in materializing at odd moments and casting bothersome spells.

As the force of the Dungeon Master draws you deeper into his mysterious inner sanctum, nothing is as it seems. You'll need to summon all your courage and wisdom to prove yourself worthy of the Master's Great Secret—and of life itself.

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**BEYOND ZORK™**

Dread times have befallen the Kingdom of Quendor. The wizards have mysteriously disappeared and vicious monsters haunt the streets and wastelands. Now it falls on you, a lowly peasant, to unravel the meaning behind these

ominous events.

You start by designing your own character, blending attributes such as strength, endurance, compassion and luck. Your search for the answer will lead you deep underground, where unspeakable monsters guard the world's most fabulous treasure—the fabled Coconut of Quendor. Includes on-screen map. Written by Brian Moriarty. (All versions require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K. IBM version requires 192K.)

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"*Leather Goddesses of Phobos* is an uproarious role-playing romp that heralds a new breed of computer games."—Newsweek

How did you, a regular at Joe's Bar in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, end up on a Martian Moon? What

delights await you in the luxurious chambers of the Harem? Can you stop the Leather Goddesses' fiendish plot to turn the Earth into their own personal sex playground?

Find these answers and more in this titillating romp through the solar system. *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* features three levels of play, (Tame, Suggestive and Lewd) to satisfy all appetites. Written by Steve Meretzky. All versions but Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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**ZORK® I**

*Zork I* is "the program which all other computerized adventures are judged."—Playboy. In this story, a great starting point for first-time players, you travel into the Great Underground Empire in search of the fabulous Treasures of Zork.

All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. Written by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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**ZORK® II**

Journey to a long hidden region of the Great Underground Empire, dominated by the frivolous *Wizard of Frobozz*. Exiled years before, the befuddled Wizard is still a force to be reckoned with, materializing at odd moments to cast

bothersome spells. There are many curiosities to explore in his realm, including the garden of an elusive Unicorn and a maze of Oddly-Angled Rooms. Written by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank.

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For the ultimate test of your wisdom and courage, the *Dungeon Master* draws you into the deepest and most mysterious reaches of the Great Underground Empire. Nothing is as it seems—and the *Dungeon Master* embodies the

greatest mystery of all. To finish the story, you'll need to discover why you are in the perilous ruins of the empire and what you are supposed to be doing there. Written by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling.

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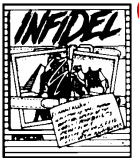
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The second in this fantasy series.

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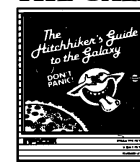
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**BONUS GIFT** Who better to guide you through the Hitchhiker's Guide than the man who created the concept and wrote the famous books and radio scripts? Douglas Adams himself recreates the Hitchhiker universe and sets

you free to roam at will. Of course, once Earth is demolished for an interstellar bypass, freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose. But chin up, you're headed for a hilarious series of intergalactic misadventures. So grab a pint of bitter and a couple for the road and join Ford Perfect, Trillian and friends on a cosmic jaunt into the outer reaches where anything can—and does—happen. Written by Steve Meretzky. All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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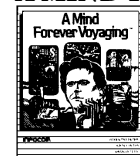
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**BONUS GIFT** Award-winning and ever-popular *Planetfall*, Steve Meretzky's first interactive fiction story, was called "just about worth the purchase of a computer" by Memphis Magazine. As the story begins 120 centuries in the future, you're a lowly deck-swabber in the stellar patrol. Then your ship explodes and you're jettisoned on a mysterious deserted planet. Luckily you have Floyd, a multipurpose robot with the personality of a mischievous 8-year-old who easily takes the prize for the best-loved Infocom character. Includes on-screen hints. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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One gilt-edged society dame is dead. And now it looks like some two-bit drifter is putting the screws to her multi-millionaire old man. Then you step in, and the shakedown turns ugly. You're left with a stiff and a race against the clock to nail your suspect . . . unless you get nailed first.

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The pulse-pounding tension of espionage is heightened by the addition of real time, which ticks on regardless of your actions. As you race against the clock to complete your missions, you'll find yourself caught up in an incredibly suspenseful and spine-tingling adventure. Includes on-screen hints. (All versions except C64/128 require at least 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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"There's no better introduction to the richness of adventure-gaming experience than this beautiful, imaginative game."—inCider

When the story begins, your life as a postal clerk in the seaside village of Festeron, is quite ordinary. But

when you're asked to deliver a strange envelope to the outskirts of town, things become quite extraordinary. All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. Written by Brian Moriarty. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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Written by Dave Lebling.

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**BONUS GIFT** In the 17th century, the seas are as wild as the untamed heart of a young woman. But as you set out for the West Indies, your thoughts are only of your ailing father awaiting your care.

Your innocent journey turns dangerous as you barely survive an encounter with pirates and other obstacles you must overcome with your cunning and agility. True, it's not easy; but at least you can control your fate. What you cannot control is much more dangerous: your passion for Nicholas Jamison, the handsome pirate captain.

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**BONUS GIFT** If you're looking for a fun way to spend an evening alone or with friends, *Nord and Bert* could be just the ticket.

*Nord and Bert* takes you to the mixed-up town of Punster, where nothing is quite as it seems. It's a place where you really can make a mountain out of a molehill, where "the fur is flying" is taken literally and where a happy Sam is transformed to a sappy ham.

Each of the eight short stories involves a different type of wordplay. Includes on-screen hints. (All versions except C64/128 require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

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## TRINITY®



**BONUS GIFT** It's the last day of your London vacation. Unfortunately, it's also the first day of World War III...

Author Brian Moriarty has created an epic odyssey across the borders of reality, in a world reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Twilight Zone*.

"*Trinity* mixes logic and magic with history and fiction. Often poetic in its imagery, the evocative prose is as entertaining to read as the puzzles are to solve."—Family Computing

(All systems require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

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*Enchanter* is the introduction to the highly acclaimed *Enchanter Trilogy* which takes you to a world of magic, where spells are power and magicians rule the land. As a novice magician, you are sent to do battle with the warlock Krill.

To succeed in your quest, you'll need to use all the cunning you can muster, along with spells acquired on the way. By Dave Lebling and Marc Blank.

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ITEM #1461	IBM	\$14.95
ITEM #1462	Amiga	\$14.95
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ITEM #1465	Atari XL/XE	\$14.95
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**BONUS GIFT** In Steve Meretzky's *Sorcerer*, you have advanced to the illustrious Circle of Enchanters. Now you must show an even greater command of magic as you attempt to rescue your mentor Belboz and defeat the evil demon Jearr. "The world of *Sorcerer* is rich in detail and wonderment. The final solution is like a delicate orchid achieving full bloom. Long after the game is over, the heady fragrance stays with you."—St. Game.

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ITEM #1469	IBM	\$14.95
ITEM #1470	Amiga	\$14.95
ITEM #1471	Macintosh	\$14.95
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## SPELLBREAKER™



As leader of the Circle of Enchanters and the most powerful magician in the land, you face a crisis in *Spellbreaker*. Magic itself is failing, and you must save the kingdom even as your own powers fade. Author Dave Lebling has

created a complex story with some of the hardest puzzles in interactive fiction. *Spellbreaker* is sheer joy... It's the perfect conclusion for the *Enchanter Trilogy*, which can now join the classic *Zork Trilogy* as a must-have for all fantasy gamers."—Computer Entertainer.

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*Fooblitzky* is a unique graphics strategy game for 2 to 4 players. It's a dog-eat-dog world, as you rove the crowded streets and busy shops of *Fooblitzky*, trying to deduce and obtain the four objects needed to win the game. Victory depends on how well you use funds, keep records and outsmart your opponents. (Requires 128K, IBM version requires Graphics Card with Composite Monitor recommended.)

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**BONUS GIFT** Ever since you arrived G.U.E. Tech, you've heard stories about the creepy old campus basements and storage rooms. Until now, you've kept a safe distance. But tonight, something draws you down into the mysterious

depths of the institute. Suddenly, you're in a world that rivals your most hideous visions, a realm of horror lurking beneath the calm corridors and study halls.

Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so horrifying that they will feed your nightmares for weeks. Written by Dave Lebling.

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## DEADLINE®



**BONUS GIFT** A classic! The first computer mystery.

As the chief of detectives, you're up against a 12-hour time limit trying to solve a classic locked-door mystery. A wealthy industrialist is dead of a drug overdose and you've been called in to determine whether it's suicide or murder. To learn "whodunit", you must sift through a myriad of clues and motives. No easy feat, for all six of your suspects exercise free will—coming and going, scheming and maneuvering independently of your actions. Written by Marc Blank.

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**BONUS GIFT** Douglas Adam's interactive version of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was a runaway success. Now the distinctive humor that made *Hitchhiker's* a #1 best-seller will keep you in stitches in *Bureaucracy*.

Everyone, at one time or another, feels bound up in an endless swathe of red tape. In *Bureaucracy*, you'll find yourself in the midst of a bureaucratic muddle so convoluted that you can't help but laugh.

You've just landed a great new job and moved to a spiffy house in a nice little town. You're even being sent to Paris this very afternoon for a combination training seminar and vacation. What could possibly go wrong? The answer, of course, is everything.

(All versions require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

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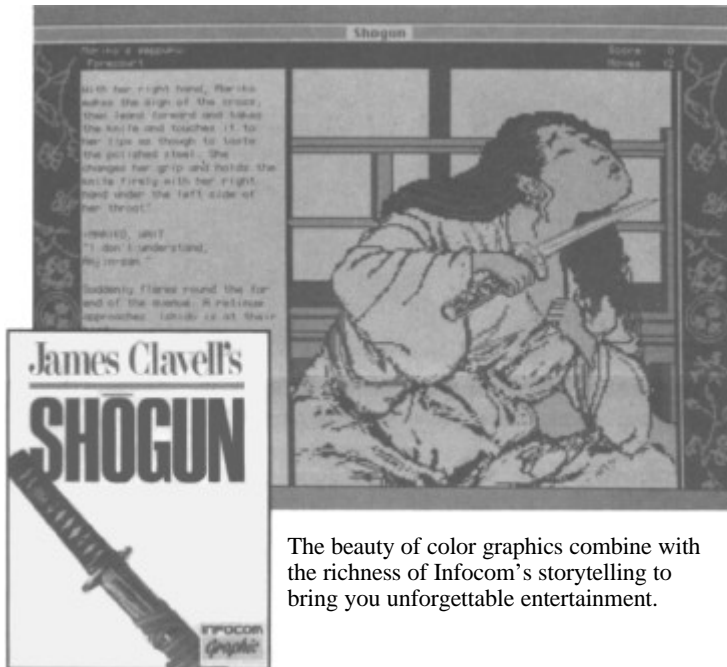
# The Status Line

Volume VIII Number 1

Formerly The New York Times

Spring 1989

## James Clavell's Shogun comes alive



The beauty of color graphics combine with the richness of Infocom's storytelling to bring you unforgettable entertainment.

## Journey: Enter a new realm of storytelling

*A great evil has fallen over the land. Your town, suffering from five years of blighted crops, sickness and contaminated water, begins to lose all hope. It is then that a small group sets forth in search of help...*



These words send you on your Journey. Subtitled *The Quest Begins*, this classic narrative, in the exciting tradition of J.R.R. Tolkien, plunges you into an uncharted world of dwarves, elves, nymphs and wizards.

*Journey*—the first in our new Role-Play Chronicles series—takes you through a world ruled by magic and inhabited by mythical creatures you may befriend or battle. And, because you control the actions of the party, you must be physician, magician, combat

strategist, and character judge while pursuing the defeat of the evil which has infested the land.

The party sets out from your home town of Lendros. You leave your town for the very first time and are astonished by the legendary wonders you encounter in your adventure. Your quest leads over mountains, through underground caves, across the plains and over the sea. Clashes with the forces of evil are fought with unexpected allies, and you must decide who are friends and who are messengers of the Dread Lord.

*Journey* breaks into an exciting new genre of computer games that draws from the best features of **Continued on page 2**

First, there's the sick, mutinous crew to deal with. Then there's your own exhaustion and illness. Plus the stormy sea and the treacherous reef to navigate. But all that pales in comparison to the challenge of surviving your abrupt entrance into a culture totally foreign to you. Your training has prepared you for everything... everything but this.

Dave Lebling has taken the adventure, intrigue, and excitement of James Clavell's classic novel, *Shogun*, one step further in a masterful new work of interactive fiction. The seven million *Shogun* fans who enjoyed James Clavell's book and the tens of millions who watched its television adaptation can now explore the world of feudal Japan, with its labyrinthine palaces, rank jails, serene teahouses, and equally fascinating and complicated inhabitants.

The adventure begins on the

*Erasmus*, the only ship of five to survive a dangerous journey through uncharted seas. At last on the unknown shores of The Japans, you face a barbarian's welcome of torture and imprisonment. To keep your life, you must identify who can hurt you and who can help you. At first, you know very little about the world in which you find yourself. Exploring, asking, learning, testing are all crucial to your survival. Death is always the merest whisper away.

In James Clavell's *Shogun*, you will meet Toranaga and Ishido, vicious enemies who take the lives of thousands of men in their struggle for the coveted title of Shogun. You also meet and fall in love with Mariko, your translator and initiator into undreamt-of mysteries.

The key to success in the interactive *Shogun* is the ability to act as the British pilot-major Black

**Continued on page 3**

## Introducing Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur

Imagine sitting in your London flat, sharing a Sunday meal with your family, when... poof! ... you turn yourself into an eel. Your Aunt Rose faints dead away into her mashed potatoes as your mischievous little brother runs to capture you in a mayonnaise jar for hideous biological experiments. Although it seems like little more than a neat party trick, you'll take this special power seriously in *Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur*.

Infocom's newest Graphic Interactive Fiction story casts you as the youthful Arthur on a quest for the legendary sword in



the stone that will make you King of England. You meet up with Merlin, the most famed of magicians, who give you insight into both the world of nature and the nature of man. But equally as precious a gift is the power

to turn yourself into several different animals. This allows you, as eel or owl or salamander, to get into places and perform heroic deeds impossible for a mere human.

The legend of young Arthur comes alive as never before through the graces of Infocom's **Continued on page 3**

## The Status Line

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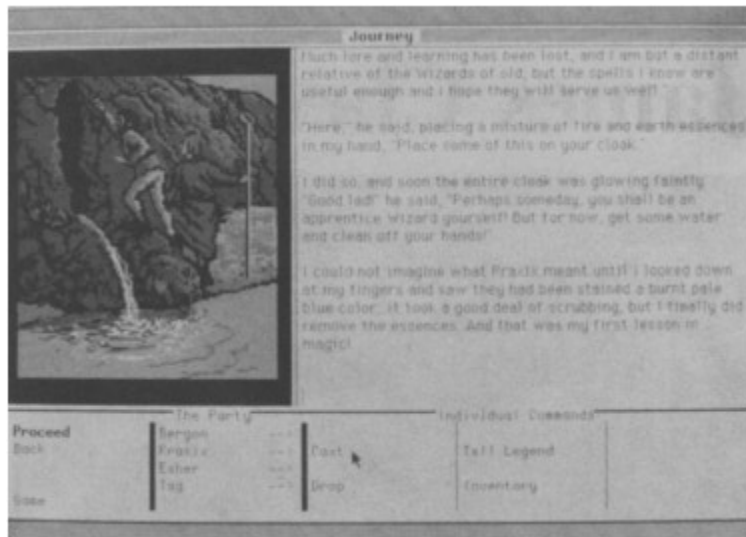
# The first Role-Play Chronicle

Continued from page 1

interactive fiction, role playing games and traditional fiction to create a game with rich prose challenging puzzles, and a diverse group of characters. Over 100 beautifully rendered graphic images add tone and depth to the tale.

*Journey* departs from other games in its format as well. You interact with the story through menus which provide individual and group options. That means you spend more time enjoying the story and less time trying to figure out where you can go and what you can (or can't) do. With the new menu interface you don't need to be a typist to play. Simply hit the first letter of the option you desire or use the arrow keys, and *voilà*, you're on your way. Or, should you prefer, you can just use a mouse or a joystick. This simplicity lets you get into the story quickly. If you're a seasoned player, you'll love how fast you can make progress on your trek.

*Journey*, itself a new exploration in the field of computer storytelling, was written by Marc



*Journey* combines the challenge of interactive fiction, the adventure of role-playing, and the enchantment of an epic chronicle.

Blank, a pioneer in the creation of interactive fiction. Marc co-authored the original mainframe version of *Zork* and the personal computer versions of *Zork I, II*, and *III*, and *Enchanter*. Also to his credit are *Deadline*, the first interactive mystery, and *Border Zone*,

Infocom's first story of intrigue.

*Journey* is now available on the Macintosh and Amiga, and is scheduled for release on the Apple II, IBM and 100% Compatibles in May. All versions of *Journey* will retail for \$49.95.

## PARSER ?? by Stu Galley

What is a parser anyway, and why should it matter to you? Almost any dictionary can answer the first question, and I'm here to tell you about the second one.

As the dictionary states, a parser is something that takes apart a sentence, word by word, and determines what the words mean, and then what the sentence means. If you ever diagrammed a sentence for an English class, then you were parsing. But it's a lot easier for you to parse English than it is for a machine, because you've had a lot more practice at it, and you started life with a certain natural ability to do it.

At Infocom, I've been working on a program that will parse your commands and pass on their "meaning" to an interactive story. This program is a part of *Zork Zero*, *Arthur*, and *Shogun*, as well as future Infocom products that may want to understand more complex sentences. In a way, I'm like the recording engineer for

your favorite rock album, because my job is to make sure that the artists' talent comes through to you as clearly as possible. If the guitarist wants more reverb... I mean if the implementor wants adverbs to work in his story, then I provide it. The better I do my job, the less you notice it!

Almost anyone can write a simple parsing program, just as almost anyone can make simple recordings on their boom box. A simple parser could parse any two-word sentence, by calling the first word a verb and the second one a noun. If it didn't know the verb, or if the noun wasn't the name of something in the room, then it would give up. Some simple adventure games work exactly that way.

Until now, Infocom's thirty-odd interactive stories have all used the parser that evolved from *Zork I*. But each new story needed some new features in the parser, and so it grew more clever, but also

harder to fix and improve. Eventually we decided to build a new parser from scratch, using the theory of computational linguistics. (Technically speaking, we used an ATN algorithm with a LALR grammar and one-token lookahead.)

So what does this mean to you? It means that you can converse with our interactive fiction more simply than ever, and we can easily add features that you've never seen before. For example, *Zork Zero* notices if you seem to be having trouble with the parser, and it offers helpful suggestions, such as sample commands. And in *Shogun*, you can use a wider range of sentences, including statements and questions, to converse with the characters you'll meet. In the future, we may develop new kinds of products, able to "talk" with you about many topics; our interactive fiction could become much more than mazes and mysteries!



# Arthur: it'll bring out the animal in you

Continued from page 1

newest-generation parser (see page 2). Communicating with the story is now easier than ever, and mercifully, we decided not to require you to use Olde English. Nearly 100 pictures enhance your adventure with vivid scenes of medieval England. For the less aesthetically inclined, the graphics may be set aside in favor of on-screen mapping, your inventory, or your score.

*The Quest for Excalibur* is a three-day crusade with a finite number of moves, so don't waste them trying to cultivate a meaningful relationship with the kraken you hook up with in the lake. And not even a future king gets something for nothing, so be prepared to offer gold or good deeds as needed to move along in your quest. You'll need to keep your eyes and ears open to find the treasures for your trades and the tools for your good deeds. And you can hone your wits with the riddles sprinkled throughout the game.

Arthur lived in the Age of Chivalry, a time when virtue was rec-



*Arthur* adds an exciting new dimension to the timeless Arthurian tale while preserving all of its original richness and grandeur.

ognized and rewarded. Your accomplishments will also be rewarded, earning you points for Chivalry, Experience, Quest, and Wisdom. All are needed as proof that you have what it takes to be a righteous king.

You'll meet many intriguing characters, some nice, some needy,

and some downright nefarious. Included from the classic Arthurian legend are the evil King Lot, your archrival for the throne, and the mysterious Lady of the Lake. You'll encounter a spectrum of knights—blue, black, red, and colorless (but not dull)—whose zeal for their knightly activities saddles

you with roadblocks. There's a peculiar dragon, a spicy leprechaun, and even a drooling village idiot. But especially beware the evil demon Nudd, whose powers rival those of Merlin.

Arthur offers all the features you've asked for in adventure stories. Merlin's crystal ball lets you take advantage of on-screen hints. The Undo command makes it possible to rescind even the most foolhardy of decisions. And the mouse option offers you flexibility you've never had before.

*Arthur* is Infocom's second collaboration with game designer Bob Bates, eloquent author of *Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels*. Fans of fantasy artwork will immediately recognize Greg Hildebrandt's exquisite style in the package cover illustration. Within, you'll find an illuminated Book of Hours.

*Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur* will be available in June 1989 for the Macintosh, Apple II series, IBM, and Amiga computers. Retail price is \$49.95 for the Apple II version, and \$59.95 for all others

## Clavell's Shogun

Continued from page 1

thorne would. Handsome, cagey and self-assured, his confidence is matched only by his talent to navigate a ship through the trickiest of waters. To survive and succeed in this new world requires thorough observation, quick thought, and careful action. Lebling's puzzles should be attacked in Blackthorne's character, and they rely on Blackthorne's personal knowledge to be solved.

James Clavell's *Shogun* ushers in a new era of interactive text adventures. Immersing you in the world of the game, *Shogun* sets the scene with richly detailed graphics drawn in the style of 16th-century Japanese court paintings. It is one of the first games to use our newest parser (see page 2), which makes communicating with the game even easier. Written in the novel's rich, descriptive prose, the game is as engaging as

James Clavell's original. James Clavell himself feels the tone of his work has been so well captured, that he claims Dave Lebling is "the person who knows the most about *Shogun* in the entire world."

Infocom's *Shogun* is the perfect marriage of the talents of two extremely prolific and popular authors. James Clavell's other novels include *Tai Pan*, *King Rat*, *Noble House* and *Whirlwind*. Dave Lebling is the author or co-author of nine works of interactive fiction, including *Zork I, II*, and *III*, *Enchanter*, *Suspect* and, most recently, *The Lurking Horror*.

*Shogun* is now available for the Macintosh, Amiga and Apple II series. A version for IBM and 100% compatibles will be available in May. Apple II version retails for \$49.95; all other versions retail for \$59.95.

### Winners of InfoGrammy Awards

A plethora of Infocomposers wrote Debbie Gibson's *Army* in response to the Infocom Songwriting Contest. While this was highly flattering and entertaining, it left us at a loss to choose the single, most perfect company ditty. Therefore, our only course of action was to select THE BEST in appropriate categories. We do thank all of the entrants for their submissions, and we recognize the effort—and sometimes talent—evident in all of them.

Here, then, are the six winning entries, which we've taken the liberty of titling or retitling as deemed suitable. Each winner will receive an audio cassette taped with all the winning songs and an Infocom game of choice.

#### The Best Infocommercial

Jamie Amos, Culver City, CA, won hands down in this category with *Infocom, You Put the "If" Back in Life*, a slick, lively marketeer's dream.

#### The Best Infocom Anthem

Doug Benson, Dallas, TX, was chosen as the recipient of the coveted Infocom Game Testers' Choice Award for *My Heart Belongs to Infocom*, a wry, dark march.

#### The Best Inforap

Mina and Beth Atanacio, Buffalo, NY, charmed us with *Lots of Games in Hundreds of Piles*, an innocent, postnasal-dripping performance with winning lyrics.

#### The Best Inforock

Nick Ruth, Ellicott, MD, wants us to *Cross the Line* in his rockin' plea for an Infocom world and a top 40 single.

#### The Best Infolk Song

H. Goodman, New York, NY, strummed *The Grues Have Taken Over* for us, a gruevy tune with clever lyrics.

#### The Best Adaptation of a George Michael Song

Bob Roeh, Victoria, TX, whose offering was *Game*, was "faith"ful to the diet soda hawker's sexy style.

# Helpful Hints from Customer Support

So, you've gotten all kinds of neat new Infocom games, but now realize that they're no longer just interactive fiction. Here are a few clues to help you out with our new brand of entertainment software. If you have any other technical questions, *not hint requests*, or need to upgrade your disk for any reason, please send all correspondence to: Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140, Attn: Customer Support.

## BattleTech

- In the first of our series of *BattleTech* releases, you can only have three mechs and four other people in your party.
- When you get to the map room, don't despair. Touch the seven planets that are listed in the dark green shaded area on page 14 of your manual. You'll be surprised as to what happens next.
- When you get to the Inventor's Hut, you don't exactly feel welcome? Simple solution: make sure you have a tech and a medic in your party and that they are both trained to excellent level. Bring them to the Inventor's Hut with you, and the red carpet will be rolled out.
- If you're playing *BattleTech* on a Tandy 1000 with 384K of mem-

ory, you *must* use DOS 2.11. Any other DOS will take up too much memory and crash *BattleTech*. Remember, you can always add more memory. Then you won't have to worry about which DOS you're using!

## Quarterstaff

- It's unanimous — no one knows what the heck to do with the coin and parchment. So we'll tell you:

On the lower portion of the parchment, there are four cryptic messages surrounding a compass rose. These four messages are instructions for deciphering four different "magic words." Each magic word, when used in conjunction with the magic Identify Wand (the one depicted on the upper portion of the parchment), will reveal the nature of potions, scrolls, keys, or other wands.

1. The first step in deciphering a magic word is to place the coin on the compass with the coin's arrow pointing in the prescribed direction. For instance, the cryptic message on the lower left corner of the parchment begins with "Peering South." You would then place the coin on the compass rose with the coin's arrow pointing South.

2. Next the message says, "let your mind's eye *opposite journey*."

Therefore, you begin deciphering at the North point, keeping the coin fixed in place, pointing South.

3. The message next specifies "four steps to the *East*." This means you'll be obtaining a four letter word. Each "step" (or in some cases, "pace") equals one letter in the word.

4. Proceeding around the compass from North to East, the first letter would then be "G." The G is on the parchment. When deciphering the other magic words, the 1st letter may appear on the coin. However, in all cases, each "step" will alternate between the parchment and the coin. So, if the first letter is on the coin, the second letter will be on the parchment and so on.

5. Moving from the compass to the coin in our example, the next letter would be U.

6. Then, moving back out to the compass, the third letter is R.

7. Finally, the fourth letter, going back to the coin, is Z. You then end up with GURZ.

8. Now you can identify the nature of an old key and let "no Lock be your barrier." Simply hold the Identify Wand and type GURZ OLD KEY.

9. If you're still having trouble, write to Customer Support at Infocom for directions enhanced with graphic illustrations.

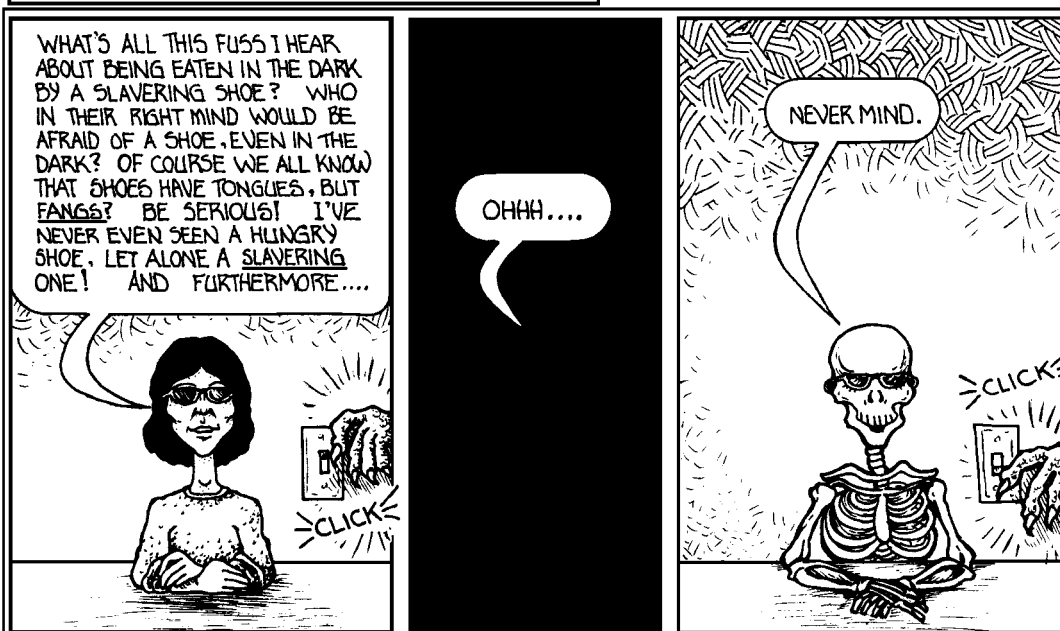
You've tried to burn some thing and your machine crashed, right? Or you walked into a particular location and your Mac froze up for an eternity? You've had the privilege of encountering the dreaded BURN bug in *Quarterstaff*. To avoid the crash, *never* burn anything that has a sub-menu (for instance, any creature carrying an item or any item that acts as a container). Stick to burning torches and doors. When you get to the Charred Room, don't linger there. The room is so hot it will set your party on fire and, eventually, crash your machine. So, go through in just one turn. (The only item in the room is a BRONZE SEAL. Once you get the BRONZE SEAL KEY, send one party member back to unlock it. That will eliminate problems there.) Finally, on the second level of the dungeon, the region with areas A1 through AS, etc., contains land mines which will also set your party on fire. If you stick to the D's and the S's, you'll avoid the mines and the crashes.

Did you start to load the game only to have it inform you that your System and Finder are too old? You need to use System 6.0 or higher and Finder 6.1 or higher. The game comes equipped with the necessary versions. Simply boot up off the *Quarterstaff* System Disk and you'll have it made. You might find that you have the most recent System on your disk and it still has problems. In this case, you're running out of memory. Again, boot your machine from the System we've supplied.

## Solid Gold *Planetfall* for the Commodore 64/128

If you have the Solid Gold version of *Planetfall* for the Commodore 64/128 and it keeps asking you to turn the disk over to side 2, don't panic. Our disk manufacturer copied side 1 onto both sides of the disk by mistake. You can send your disk only to Infocom Customer support along with a letter explaining the problem, and we'll send you back a corrected disk with our apologies.

MISS EMILY 'FLATHEAD' PATELLA WITH AN UNBIASED REBUTTAL:



Miss Emily 'Flathead' Patella with an unbiased rebuttal

Brad Schenck





Holmes!

Charles S. Hayes

# Good-Bye to the Status Line, Hello to ZQ

Here it is — the 21st edition of *The Status Line*. Well, of course, most of those editions were called *The New York Times* until a “major metropolitan newspaper marshalled their cadre of lawsuit-thirsty lawyers.

After 21 newsletters we think we have somewhat perfected the medium. Our combination of news features, nutty contests and puzzles has been praised by many, including our competitors. So as we are reshaping the world of interactive fiction and other forms of storytelling, it is time for us to push back the publishing envelope once again. We have decided to retire *TSL* and replace it with a full color magazine called **ZQ**.

Don't Panic. We will still be the same publication we have always been, but now in color with more detail about storytelling in general. And don't worry about *TSL*, it is going to Florida to join the *NZT* at the retirement home for leading-edge publications

And just think, now you won't have to take black and white film on your vacation anymore for those Landmark Photos!

Here is a sample of what to expect in the first edition of **ZQ**:

Steve Meretzky will entertain you with the first in a series of open-ended interactive stories. In each issue of **ZQ**, Steve will write

a segment of a story that ends with a number of choices. Your vote will determine the direction of the plot.

We'll tell you about a variety of new storytelling products, including the latest releases from Infocom.

George Alec Effinger, acclaimed sci-fi author of *When Gravity Fails*, has written an original short story especially for this premier issue of **ZQ**.

Plus puzzles, cartoons, contests, and much more!

## Solution to Puzzle #18

In Puzzle #18, we asked you to use a series of clues, all based on *Beyond Zork*, to replace the letters in a mathematical equation with numbers, and then to solve the equation. The correct answer would be a positive integer.

Here are the intended answers to the clues: A. 200 B. 103 C. 3 D. 41 E. 120 F. 811 G. 9 H. 0 I. 3 J. 877 K. 30 L. 843 M. 2 Plugging these into the equation, we get:

$$\frac{\left( \frac{200}{100-3} + \frac{41 \times 120}{811+9} + 0 \right)^3}{2} = 64$$

877 + 30 - 843

However, there were two snags. Clue M was “The number of room names in *Beyond Zork* which contain the word EDGE.” We meant 2— “Edge of Storms” and “Moor’s Edge.” However, many entrants pointed out that the location called “Ledge” contains the word EDGE, and therefore M should equal 3, and the final answer should equal 128. Since the clue was ambiguous enough to allow either interpretation, we have decided to allow both 64 and 128 as correct answers.

The other snag was caused by Clue H: “The number of locations in the Ethereal Plain of Atrii whose names do not begin with the letter O.” In the game, all the rooms in the Plain of Atrii begin with “Above...” However, the *InvisiClues* map was incorrectly printed with all the names beginning “Over...” Unfortunately, your lazy Puzzle Editor used the *InvisiClues* map rather than the game in arriving at an intended answer of 0 for Clue H. If the actual number, 13, is used instead, the equation solves to the non-integers 1157.625 or 2315.25 (depending on one’s interpretation of Clue M).

Apologies to everyone confused by this shoddily-constructed puzzle, and thanks to everyone who wrote to point out the errors. Recapping, we accepted the following answers: 64, 128, 1157.625, and 2315.25 (rounding was allowed in the last two cases). There were a total of 174 entries, of which 109 (63%) had one of the correct answers. (If you care: 74 people said 64, 31 guessed 128, and four had one of the non-integer answers).

The drawing picked these 25 lucky winners: Christine Crocket, Hacienda Heights CA; Dave Hrencecin, University Park PA; Matt Roos, St. Louis MO; Mitchell Megaw, Spring Hill KS; Marcia Cutler, Greenwich CT; Michelle Perry, Sacramento CA; Craig Dohmen, Apollo PA; William Carnell, South Portland ME; Leroy Haugen, Belfair WA; Andrew Rezvani, Wyncote PA; Michael Brill, San Jose CA; Dan Spitzley, Gross Pointe Park MI; Jeffrey Shaw, North Attleboro MA; Rudy Montero, Miami FL; Robert Rhode, Davis CA; Eugene Foss, Flora IL; Julia White, Mebane NC; Jerry Wang, Cincinatti OH; Stephen Schneider, Amherst MA; William Randall, Barberton OH; James Kuivenen, Claremont CA; Jon-Paul Ward, Bronx NY; David Lee, Saskatoon SK, Canada; Jason Riedy, Tampa FL; and Angela Sandelius, Cadillac MI.

In the international competition for Puzzle #17 (answer: Leather Goddesses of Deimos) we had entries from, as usual, every corner of the world: Mexico, Germany, Thailand, and so on. There were 17 entries, of which 12 were correct. And the winner is: Kalman Tanito, of Finland!

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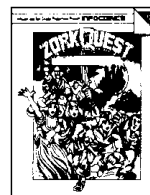
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\*C128 ONLY Macintosh and Amiga versions require 128K. Apple and IBM versions require 128K.

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