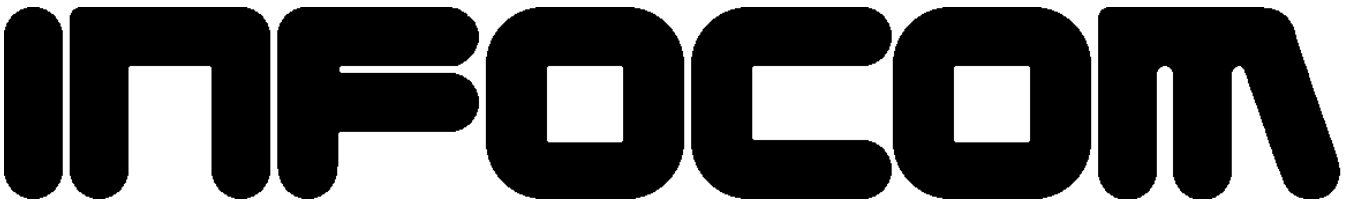
Behind the Scenes at



Welcome to the Realm of the Master Storytellers

From the “About” file in the VeryLost folder of *The Masterpieces of Infocom:*

Have you ever sneaked into someone's room, read their diary, and then left without a trace?

That is sort of what this folder is. It contains a series of files downloaded from the old Infocom UNIX server, which make it to Los Angeles but didn't quite make it to our new, spiffy, world-wide headquarters.

Mail messages, in particular, provide a glimpses into what was happening at Infocom at the time, and also some thoughts on Activision's acquisition of Infocom.

The politicking would have made many people proud. There probably could have been an adventure game just in getting a title produced back in those days.

The Infodope folder contains three issues of Infodope, INFOCOM's in-house newsletter. The Misc folder contains a great piece about writing Infocom fiction called The Implementor's Creed, notes on Infocom's favorite pastime, and notes from a Studio offsite meeting held by Infocom. The Aborted folder contains notes about several serious and not-serious ideas for games pitched around by the Infocom team.

Digging through this disc reminded me of leafing through old newspapers in your grandmother's attic. You know the kind where they are advertising a 1932 Ford coupe in cherry condition for only $600? I felt like I had been born too many years too late to enjoy the best times of the game industry. Even though I played all of Infocom's text adventures on my Atari 800, I couldn't help but wish I actually created those games. I hope that everyone who plays these games will enjoy them as much as I enjoyed putting together this collection.

Jason Kay
Activision Black Operations Team
June 1996

Addendum:

The VeryLost folder contains just a taste of what went on at Infocom.

You are about to read a detailed history of life at Infocom, gleaned from six years of Infocom’s e-mail and other sources. These messages offer insight into the many facets of Infocom: how The Imps brought a game from inception to finished story, the games they planned to make, important improvements to their development system, additional newsletter items that didn’t make it into *The New Zork Times/The Status Line* newsletter, and much more.

This is also a record of *what might have been*. Had Infocom never developed Cornerstone, or if Cornerstone had had better sales, they would not have needed Activision to buy them in order to survive financially. Though Infocom technically still exists as an Activision company, the “real” Infocom closed in 1989.

The messages start in 1983, during Infocom’s heyday, and continue until 1989, at which point Infocom was fully absorbed into Activision.

“If this company is sold, the buyer will say to us: ‘You will be the jewel in our crown and we won't change a thing.’ I think anyone who believes that is brain-damaged.” — Roger Straus III of Farrar, Straus

The Implementor's Creed 1
The Creation 2

Interactive Fiction

A Mind Forever Voyaging 5
Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur 10
Ballyhoo 35
Beyond Zork 36
Border Zone 55
Bureaucracy 73
Cutthroats 77
Deadline 78
Enchanter 80
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy 82
Hollywood Hijinx 86
Infidel 92
Leather Goddesses of Phobos 93
The Lurking Horror 102
Moonmist 105
Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It 111
Planetfall 117
Plundered Hearts 120
Seastalker 124
Sherlock: Riddle of the Crown Jewels 131
Shogun 140
Sorcerer 149
Spellbreaker 153
Starcross 155
Stationfall 156
Suspect 161
Suspended 162
Trinity 163
Wishbringer 165
The Witness 167
the Zork trilogy 171
German Zork I and Mini-Zork I 176
Zork Zero 178
Demos and Samplers 205

Works from different genres

Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception 208
Fooblitzky 210
Infocom's books 214
Journey 216
Infocomics 351
Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2 470
Quarterstaff: The Tomb of Setmoth 474

Unreleased Games

Animal House 477
The Abyss 480
Arena 484
Parody of "The Wizard of Oz" 486
Chameleon 494
Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I. 498
The Restaurant at the End of the Universe 505
Timesink 513

Game Ideas

Miscellaneous ideas 515
Collaboration discussions 522
CD-I, Videodisk and VCR games 526
Multi-player games 529
Plimoth Plantation 530
Joe Prosser's adult Infocomic thriller 532
Steve Meretzky's suburban comedy 534
Star Trek 536

Various & Sundry Game Information

Development system/parser milestones 538
Game systems in general 564
Infamous bugs 566
Miscellaneous game information 569
Notes on Infocom's competition 607
NZT/TSL newsletter information 612
Unpublished articles 627
Packaging, Manuals, Catalogs & Hint Books 647
Working Titles and Nicknames List 654

Life at Infocom

InfoDope, the in-house newsletter 657
Thomas Bok's "Police Reports" 659
Babies and Birthdays 669
Baseball/Softball info 673
Computer & Employee Nicknames 675
Games they played 677
Life at Infocom 699
Songs and Poetry 745
Employee information 751
Financial information 781
Sales information 794
The Infocom Timeline 803

Infocom's works of
Interactive Fiction

THE IMPLEMENTOR'S CREED

I create fictional worlds. I create experiences.

I am exploring a new medium for telling stories.

My readers should become immersed in the story and forget where they are. They should forget about the keyboard and the screen, forget everything but the experience. My goal is to make the computer invisible.

I want as many people as possible to share these experiences. I want a broad range of fictional worlds, and a broad range of "reading levels". I can categorize our past works and discover where the range needs filling in. I should also seek to expand the categories to reach every popular taste.

In each of my works, I share a vision with the reader. Only I know exactly what the vision is, so only I can make the final decisions about content and style. But I must seriously consider comments and suggestions from any source, in the hope that they will make the sharing better.

I know what an artist means by saying, "I hope I can finish this work before I ruin it." Each work-in-progress reaches a point of diminishing returns, where any change is as likely to make it worse as to make it better. My goal is to nurture each work to that point. And to make my best estimate of when it will reach that point.

I can't create quality work by myself. I rely on other implementors to help me both with technical wizardry and with overcoming the limitations of the medium. I rely on testers to tell me both how to communicate my vision better and where the rough edges of the work need polishing. I rely on marketeers and salespeople to help me share my vision with more readers. I rely on others to handle administrative details so I can concentrate on the vision.

None of my goals is easy. But all are worth hard work. Let no one doubt my dedication to my art.

THE CREATION

Infocom interactive fiction - a very old story
Copyright (c) 1985 by Infocom, Inc. All rights reserved.
THE CREATION is a trademark of Infocom, Inc.
Release 42 / Serial number 271828

Void
All is unformed and void; and darkness is upon the face of the deep.

>VERSION
This is the Authorized Version of King James.

>TIME
It is the beginning.

>WHO AM I
You are that you are.

>EXAMINE DARKNESS
You can't see the darkness without a light!

>LET THERE BE LIGHT
Okay, there is light.

>EXAMINE THE LIGHT
It is good.

>DIVIDE THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS
It is so.

>CALL THE LIGHT "DAY" THEN CALL THE DARKNESS "NIGHT"
Called.
Called.

>EXAMINE NIGHT AND DAY
night: There is evening.
day: There is morning.

>TIME
It is the first day.

>LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT
Okay, there is a firmament.

>FIRMAMENT, DIVIDE THE WATERS FROM THE WATERS
[Which waters do you mean, the lower waters or the upper waters?]

>LOWER
[Which waters do you mean, the lower waters or the upper waters?]

>UPPER
It is so.

>CALL THE FIRMAMENT "HEAVEN"
Called.

(continued)

```
>TIME
It is the second day.

>GATHER TOGETHER THE LOWER WATERS UNTO ONE PLACE
Gathered.

>LET THERE BE DRY LAND
It is so.

>CALL THE DRY LAND "EARTH" THEN CALL THE GATHERED WATERS "SEAS"
Called.
Called.

>EXAMINE ALL
It is good.

>EARTH, BRING FORTH GRASS AND HERB AND FRUIT TREE
grass: It is so.
herb: It is so.
fruit tree: It is so.

>EXAMINE ALL
It is good.

>TIME
It is the third day.

>MAKE TWO GREAT LIGHTS
Made.

>GREATER LIGHT, RULE THE DAY
Ruled.

>LESSER LIGHT, RULE THE NIGHT
Ruled.

>MAKE THE STARS ALSO
Made.

>SET BOTH LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT
Set.

>EXAMINE ALL
It is good.

>TIME
It is the fourth day.

>CREATE GREAT WHALES, AND ALL LIVING CREATURES IN THE WATERS, AND ALL WINGED FOWL
whales: Made.
goldfish: Made.
sea horses: Made.
...
rocs: Made.
emus: Made.

>EXAMINE ALL
It is good.
```

(continued)

```
>CREATURES, BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY AND FILL THE WATERS IN THE SEAS
"Okay."

>TIME
It is the fifth day.

>MAKE THE BEAST OF THE EARTH AND CATTLE AND ALL CREEPING THINGS
beast: Made.
cattle: Made.
zebras: Made.
yaks: Made.
platypuses: Made.
...
cockroaches: Made.

>EXAMINE ALL
It is good.

>CREATE MAN AND WOMAN IN MY OWN IMAGE
man: Made.
woman: Made.

>BLESS THEM
Blessed.

>THEM, BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY AND REPLENISH THE EARTH AND SUBDUE IT
"No problem."

>THEM, HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH AND THE FOWL AND ALL LIVING THINGS
"You got it."

>EXAMINE ALL
Behold, it is very good.

>TIME
It is the sixth day.

>REST
Time passes...

>TIME
It is the seventh day.

>BLESS THE SEVENTH DAY
Blessed.

>SANCTIFY IT
[Be specific: what object do you want to sanctify?]

>THE SEVENTH DAY
Sanctified.

>QUIT

Your score is 350 (total of 350 points), in 47 moves.
This gives you the rank of God.
Do you wish to leave the game? (Y is affirmative): >Y
```

Z

A Mind Forever Voyaging

by Steve Meretzky
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS5**

AMFV's inception:

Date: 2 Jan 1985 1058-EST
Subject: ANYCITY

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

I'm designing a generic small anywhere-USA city. It should be large enough to be called a city, but small enough to fit in a game. The time is around 75 years from now. What sort of things make up a city? Here's a list of everything I've come up with so far; can you think of some more?

Housing
*private nice
*private clone-ish
*apartment
*city-within-a-city-ish
Schools
Universities
Stores
*individual
*mall-ish
Restaurants (incl. Fast food)
Office Buildings
Factories
Warehouses
Hospitals
Hotels/Inns
Slum/Run-Down Section
*tenements
*pool Hall
*soup Kitchen
Deserted Section (South Bronx)
Waste Disposal Facilities
Auditorium/Convention Center
City Hall/Government Buildings
Police Stations
Firehouses
Courthouses
Libraries
Parks
Zoo/Aquarium
Museums
Theatres
Sporting Event Facilities
Churches
Cemeteries
Airport/Spaceport
Bodies of Water/Reservoir
Water Tower
Broadcasting Tower
Transportation Facilities
*roads/tracks
*terminals
*vehicles
Military Base
Historic Sites/Landmarks
Other Recreational Facilities

Working title of AMFV is "PRISM"

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1437-EST
Subject: CERVANTES

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

I've been reading through Bartlett's Quotations to try to come up with a title for Prism, and I'm amazed at how many popular phrases and clichés come from Cervantes' Don Quixote. Here are some examples (these are from the seventeenth century translation by someone named Peter Motteux):

- ...the sweat of my brows.
- No limit but the sky.
- ...out of the frying pan, into the fire...
- A finger in every pie.
- Every dog has his day.
- ...wild goose chase.
- ...all his eggs in one basket.
- ...split his sides with laughing.
- The proof of the pudding is in the eating.
- Birds of a feather flock together.
- ...a needle in a bottle of hay.
- Let every man look before he leaps.
- With a grain of salt.
- ...a word to the wise is enough.
- The pot calls the kettle black.
- Mum's the word.
- Walls have ears.
- Many count their chickens before they are hatched...

AMFV reaches pre-Alpha testing. It is also referred to here as "S5", its catalog number.

Date: 13 Mar 1985 1516-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: PRISM To: IMPS at ZORK cc: DA at ZORK

Okay, it's sorta just about kinda ready for a bit of the ol' pre-alpha testing. You'll find the following documentation in your mailbox: those sections of the manual that are non-standard, and a map-feelie.

You should read the browsie story before playing. If you didn't, and don't have the copy I gave out, you can find it in <S5>BROWSIE.RNO.

Despite the feelie map, if you don't map, you'll miss things.

Stick to compass directions for now; none of that ENTER THE BUILDING shit for a fragile embryonic game like this one.

The game is only there through the stage where you'll begin to try convincing everyone that the world is gonna suck. But unless I'm very much mistaken, you'll probably run into half a hundred fatal bugs before that point anyway.

Velvet gloves, please. I need overall criticisms; save AGAIN bugs for the testers.

Date: 3 Apr 1985 1005-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: ENTER/EXIT BLDG. To: IMPS at ZORK

Many of my room names are also building names, that people will invariably want to enter and exit without using compass directions (ENTER THE LIBRARY or LEAVE THE AQUARIUM). In previous games, I've always handled this by creating local-global objects for the building/room, with an associated routine.

There are so many cases in PRISM, I'm wondering if there might be a better general case way of doing it. The only thing I've been able to think of is:

- Give the various rooms SYNONYMs and ADJECTIVEs
- Have V-THROUGH, V-EXIT, etc. do a MOBY-FIND
- If MOBY-FIND returns one object, and that object is in ROOMS, do an OUT if you're in it and an IN if you're not.

Is this reasonable? Will it have gross side effects that I'm not thinking about? Is there a better way of doing it? Where can I get good drugs cheap?

Date: 4 Apr 1985 0913-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: ENTER/EXIT BLDG. To: SEM cc: SWG

The scheme you describe is exactly what Seastalker & Checkpoint do, except for the last part, where GO TO complicates matters. So it seems reasonable to me.

By the way, many verbs should allow a room as an object: SEARCH, EXAMINE, &c.

If you find good drugs cheap, let me know.

AMFV reaches Alpha testing:

Date: 4 Apr 1985 1622-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: PRISM To: DA at ZORK cc: Imps at ZORK

PRISM will be ready for alpha testing tomorrow (Friday) morning. Before a tester plays it, he or she needs the manual. I have copies in my office.

AMVF version 67:

Date: 25 Apr 1985 1759-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: PRISM To: IMPS at ZORK, SCF at ZORK, MAX at ZORK

A new release (67) is available. I don't entirely remember what new stuff is in it, because most of the new stuff was put it before the move.

Most of the non-hairy bugs to date are fixed. There are a lot of new objects, especially in the apartment.

There's a $CHEAT command, which allows you to access future simulations without going through the intermediate ones. For example, $CHEAT 2071 allows you to jump right in the 2071 Simulation. I will fix $CHEAT bugs as long as they don't get petty.

JW has installed a completely new AGAIN that should work in every case, even talking to characters! Keep an eye on it.

There's a new feature, also just installed by JW: OOPS. It works like this.

```
>LOOK AT THE TABLW
I don't know the word "tablw."

>OOPS TABLE
You see nothing special about the table.
```

Try to get into the habit of using it.

Another working title for AMFV: "In Worlds not Realized"

Date: 26 Apr 1985 1440-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: PRISM TITLE To: IMPS at ZORK

Comments on this as a title: IN WORLDS NOT REALIZED

It comes from Wordsworth:

> "Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings,
> Blank misgivings of a Creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized."

AMFV's final title is selected

Date: 30 Apr 1985 0934-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: S5 To: DA at ZORK, SCF at ZORK, MAX at ZORK

I'm going to take A MIND FOREVER VOYAGING (formerly PRISM) out of testing for a week or two until I finish writing the endgame.

Date: 23 May 1985 1739-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: VERITABLE ROACH MOTEL To: IMPS at ZORK

During the first four days of alpha testing, AMFV has produced 629 bugs, or about one every three minutes.

Date: 6 Jun 1985 0017-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: AMFV To: TESTERS at ZORK

...is now quite definitely too large for the old compiler. Marc is working on a new machineindependentmuddle (tm) compiler, but a spokesman for the Veep has described the progress as "slow" and "painstaking" and "moist." Why "moist"? Nobody can say. However, since I'm going away for the weekend, don't expect a new version until at least Monday. Meanwhile, try to avoid repeating bugs you've already reported, take two aspirin, and call me in the morning.

AMFV nickname: "A Mine Forever Ticking"

Date: 11 Jun 1985 0006-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: A MINE FOREVER TICKING To: TESTERS at ZORK

Sorry, out of testing.

Backlogged by hundreds of bugs, some dating back over a week. Can't even remember whether bugs are already fixed or not. Bug reports are swimming before my eyes. Communists have taken over my terminal, and one or two of them are hiding in my Rolodex. Giant, spiny aliens lizards with hundreds of mouths of massing outside the door and my pancreas has begun nibbling on my medulla oblongota. Aargh!....

AMFV version 73:

Date: 6 Aug 1985 0104-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: WHETHER REPORT To: TESTERS at ZORK

The Freeze is off; the Thaw is on. The new version is not ready; the game is out of release. Where's the ambiguity? In a box, in the corner. No one may touch the game, except for implementors like myself who speak very loudly and eat granola. When will V73 be ready? There's the question; where's the answer? In the box? No, there's no room, the ambiguity's been putting on weight. Lumber is just slumber without an "s". You CAN make an omelette without breaking eggs; it just wouldn't be a very good omelette. There is no truth to the rumor that one of our EZIP interpreters recently applied for a job at the U.N. Yesterday I saw a couple of clouds lying on their backs talking about what passing humans looked like. How come you never hear any good Rock-Hudson-Madonna-Reagan's-polyp-Live-Aid-Princess-Di-elephant jokes? If simplistic bumper sticker slogans were outlawed, only outlaws would have simplistic bumper sticker slogans!

Date: 23 Aug 1985 1502-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: AMFV Press Conference To: SWG

I think the overall idea is super.

Not what they were expecting...

Date: 5 Dec 1985 1647-EST
Subject: AMFV

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

At last! AMFV uncovers it first flaming cretin:

> "Documentation, packaging okay...AMFV is a 'game' I WON'T RECOMMEND anyone getting. I am totally unpleased with it! If all you can do is spread total misconception about churches, it's a wonder you stay in business. I do commend you for keeping the language clean though!"
>
> – Scott Purkerson
> Corvallis, Oregon
> (from warranty card)

A Mind Forever Voyaging
Working Titles & Nicknames List

PRISM
S5
In Worlds Not Realized
A Mine Forever Ticking

Z

Arthur: the Quest for Excalibur

by Bob Bates
***Living Literature* series, catalog #IL1**

Marc Blank and Bob Bates discuss reducing the "nothing happens" effect:

Date: 14 Jan 1988 1529-EST From: Cajan Lope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey, etc. To: MARC

It's interesting: I was discussing magic just yesterday with Bob Bates, whose next project is a game based on Arthurian legends. He said that he found it very frustrating in the Enchanter series when "nothing happened" when he cast a spell. ("Frustrating" is the wrong word; "disappointing" is the right word.)

In Journey, at least, you can reduce the disappointment by not making the spell an option at all times. To prevent telegraphing the solution to the player, you can make spells available often if they do something interesting. Very important: "interesting" does not mean "helpful." Certainly give players the option to "cleesh" another character anytime; seriously, why not? It's fun. (I'm using old spells just as examples, you understand.) On the other hand, "rezrov" might be available only if there's a locked object around.

So the story proceeds. Suddenly "rezrov" is an option, and the player thinks "Ah! A locked object is about! I'd better rezrov it!" But the object might be a locket worn around a maiden's neck, or a zipper; in either event, casting "rezrov" is embarrassing and interesting but unhelpful.

Another possibility is keeping the available spells two levels away from the player. Instead of seeing "CAST" as an option (a very tempting option), the player sees "READ"; amongst the things the player can read is a spell book, and within the spell book only interesting spells are legible. Frankly, I don't think this does a lot: it increases tedium.

Some amount of "nothing happens" may be inevitable, and a small amount isn't catastrophic.

Date: 19 Jan 1988 1739-EST From: CHALLENGE
To: JON Subject: Arthur schedule

Dear Jon:

The following is my interpretation of what we decided on with regards to Arthur development. Please let me know if it even remotely resembles what you think we decided on:

Alpha	4/18 - 5/27 (6 weeks)
Beta	5/30 - 7/15 (7 weeks)
Gamma	7/18 - 8/19 (5 weeks)

Release five weeks after gamma testing - 9/23/88.

If you prefer to round to 15's and 30's, I guess it would be

Alpha	4/15 - 5/30
Beta	6/1 - 7/15
Gamma	7/15 - 8/15

Let me know which way you prefer to look at it so I can used the accepted notation when referring to the schedule.

Thanks, Bob

Date: 26 Jan 1988 1255-EST From: Bob Bates et al. <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Arthur Illustrator To: JON cc: SWG, PDL

Dear Jon:

The Great Wallaby told me you were interviewing illustrators this week, and he asked me for my input with regard to Arthur.

In the notes below I have made a few general suggestions. However, pictures being worth a thousand words (which is what got us into this in the first place) I have Fed-ex'd two magazines to Carl with some appropriate samples picked out. (There are even a few oriental-type pieces that Dave might want to take a look at for Shogun).

I hope this helps. Call anytime.

Graphically yours,
Bob Bates

NOTES ON ILLUSTRATOR SELECTION FOR ARTHUR

The artist should be equally at home drawing landscapes, interiors, people, and creatures of fantasy. Although fantastic, the drawings should not be of the distorted, surreal type.

The pictures should use vivid, contrasting colors that will show up well on computer monitors. Good examples can be found in The Pawn and The Guild of Thieves.

My hunch is that we want an artist who can use blocks of color to achieve effect, rather than one who relies on a host of intricately drawn lines.

The artist whose style most closely fits what I see is Braldt Bralds (Communication Arts July 1987. Pages 17, 59, 61, 67, 89. Especially pages 59, 67, & 89)

Also good is Robert Giusti (CA JULY '87. Pages 7, 67, 75, 80. Especially page 7). I also like the snow landscape on page 48.

Coincidentally, both Bralds and Giusti are headquartered in Connecticut. They may be worth contacting, although I'm sure their rates are steep. I single them out for their style, rather than to suggest that we try to hire them.

(Incidentally, Dave Lebling may be interested in Page 47 #4; and Page 54 #1 for Shogun ideas.)

Another artist whose style I think would fit (but whose technique may lose something in the transfer to a computer monitor) is Douglas Smith (Headquartered in Boston) in CA SEPT/OCT '86.

(P.S. I had to steal these magazines from my wife's office. Please return them when you are finished.)

Date: 5 Feb 1988 1457-EST From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Arthur design To: Challenge cc: Tester.Jacob, SWG

While cleaning off my desk, I discovered a copy of ARTHUR.TXT, on which Jacob wrote a suggestion: that the "status" screen perhaps should be revealed only at certain points in the game, e.g. by a vision granted by Merlin, because how would a young squire know exactly what it takes to be king? Jacob's credentials include vast experience with role-playing games, both computerized and not, so I take his ideas seriously. In general, he liked the game's design, and he thought the "frozen words" puzzle rather cute.

Date: 3 Mar 1988 1651-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Art stuff To: CHALLENGE cc: Jon

1. The name of the program is Deluxe Paint II, for the Amiga, put out by Electronic Arts.

2. Jim Shook (the Zork Zero artist and the prime candidate, in my mind, for Arthur graphics) starts from scratch using the mouse. When I suggested he do pencil sketches first for some illustrations, he said it was easier for him to do it on the computer.*

3. It is certainly possible to digitize existing artwork, and in fact Jim has frequently digitized photos and then tweaked them on the Amiga to create surreal images. However, I don't know if it's practical to use this technology in Arthur. At least two technical issues come to mind: (1) Would a digitized picture take up much much more space than original art? (2) For porting/transferring reasons, we limit the Amiga artists to "low res" on the Amiga, which is 320 x 200. Can one digitize in low res, and if so, how does it look? (I will try to find out the answers to these two questions, anyway.)

Something interesting I learned when I talked with another artist we considered for Zork Zero: He showed me a pen-and-ink drawing, which we liked, but he said that it would look "completely different" on an Amiga. His reasoning was that things look different on different media: a horse done in watercolor won't look like a horse done in oil, and a wizard done in pencil won't look like a wizard done with bits. Seems sensible. So when Jim says it's "easier" for him to work on the Amiga and not do pencil roughs, he may be taking this into account. Since his roughs are done on the computer, we have a better idea what the final art will be like.

I won't be surprised if you have comments or other questions, so don't hesitate to send them!

Date: 11 Mar 1988 1235-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: Artist To: Challenge cc: SWG, Joel, Jon

A fellow named Brad Schenck sent us an Amiga disk on which are some very impressive pictures he drew. Brad was working on a game for/with Aegis Development; Aegis liked Brad's pictures, but apparently they want to do something more like Deja Vu (where the player clicks on objects in the images) rather what we're doing.

At any rate, I've shown the pictures to Stu, who agrees they are good. An on-line note indicates that some of the images are digitized; I'm thus assuming that some are NOT digitized. The images take up lots of space (between 60K and 95K each), but he's working in hi-res or interlace mode with gazillions of colors. I'll try to contact Brad (I have his address in California but not his phone number) and get more info.

As for Jim Shook, the Zork Zero artist: He would like to finish Zork Zero before he commits to anything else for us. He has another project already lined up: computer graphics animation for a German opera. (!!) Since we can't count on Jim, I'm investigating other possibilities.

Date: 11 Mar 1988 1756-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: More about artists To: Challenge cc: TAA, SWG, Joe at FRED, Jon, Joel

We have software that can port an Amiga image to other machines (IBMs, STs, Apples, etc.). You asked "Can you port the other way – i.e., take an image drawn on an IBM or Mac and port it to an Amiga etc.?" The answer, according to Tim, is yes if you do the right thing.

Tim asked "Does the artist have a color Mac?" I assumed no, so that's out. Tim then asked "What kind of IBM?" I said it had a resolution of 640 x 350 (or so). So Tim said, "Well, yes, that's OK if the art is stored in a reasonable file format that's well-documented." [I'm paraphrasing here; Tim doesn't really talk like that.] Joel pointed out that 640 x 350 is a "weird" ratio, but Tim seemed to think that we could surmount that problem.

Joel then opined that "STs are relatively cheap." Shocked, I asked Joel if he was thinking of giving STs to artists. Joel said "Lend – I was thinking of LENDING STs to artists." So you might want to see whether your contacts are interested in getting [MAYBE – no promises here] an ST on loan. They'd have to train themselves to use a new paint program, of course, but that shouldn't be TOO awful.

Oh yes: Amigas have the largest palette from which to choose colors. But if you see original IBM art that looks

good, then maybe we CAN "port backwards." I'm somewhat biased these days, believing that any computer artist worth anything would be working on an Amiga or an ST. But that's obviously not true.

No doubt you'll be getting clarifications and/or corrections soon from Tim, Joel, and Stu.

Date: 4 Apr 1988 1143-EST From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Amiga dreams To: jon cc: carl

Dear Jon:

I reviewed Brad Schenck's 'Amiga Dreams' over the weekend. I was particularly impressed with his pattern/border work, which had a very "Celtic" feel to it. Unfortunately, I don't think there will be much call for that kind of design work in Arthur (although you never know).

I also liked his tower, and his mountain landscape. The style seems perfect for Arthur. I anticipate that a majority of the screens in Arthur will be landscapes and architectures of one sort or another, and he seems fully capable of producing them and imbuing them with atmosphere.

My only hesitation lies in his anatomical work. While there will not be a great deal of it in Arthur, what there is of it should be well executed. The omission may be accidental, but he showed very little full-figure work, and that which he did include had a few technical problems.

I also note that he said that some of the drawings had been digitized, although he did not specify how many or which ones.

It may be instructive to ask him to produce a non-digitized drawing of one or two characters, using the limitations you have established for artwork (low-res, limited palette, etc.), and see what quality he comes up with.

Overall, I like his work, I like his style, and I think he can probably do the job. I think he bears a little more looking into before we sign him up, but if a decision is forced by our time-schedule, I would say let's give him a shot.

In the meantime, can you ship me a disk with the Shogun and/or Zork 0 graphics (or put the files on FRED if they're download-able)? It's clear that Brad Schenck was using a wider palette than we intend to allow, and I'd like to see what Jim Shook and your other artist were able to produce using low-res and fewer colors.

Thanks for everything.
Bob.

Arthur is ready for pre-testing

Date: 15 Apr 1988 0959-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Arthur pre-test To: Liz, Jon, TAA cc: swg

Arthur is installed on Fred as an official interactive fiction. You can type ARTHUR to run it, or if you want to be secretive, type DIRECTION instead; that way, FINGER will say you're doing an innocuous directory command.

I moved a lot of old Sherlock files from <CHALLENGE> to <SHERLOCK> so they wouldn't get in Arthur's way.

I tried to send an on-line bug report, but it hasn't been delivered yet. Tim, can you help?

Date: 15 Apr 1988 1015-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: talking out loud To: Challenge cc: TAA, SWG

By the way, the parser here now handles
```
>"HELLO"
```
and assumes the player meant
```
>SAY "HELLO"
```

Did Duane's scheme work in which the first word inside quotes could be unrecognized? If he's replacing it with a special word, then things work better if that word is in "miscellaneous" category:
<ADD-WORD "SPECIAL.WORD" MISCWORD>

Arthur reaches Alpha status

Date: 18 Apr 1988 1358-EST From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Alpha Arthur To: liz cc: jon, swg

Liz:

Here is the alpha game. (Modest fanfare)

The game can be played from start to finish, and most of the puzzles are in place. Some are more complete than others; three aren't in at all. They are:

1) The black knight. You are supposed to defeat the black knight in combat in order to cross the ford. Right now the coward won't even show up, although the room-desc says he is there.
2) The giant raven. You are supposed to do some fancy footwork with the brass egg in order to get the gold egg out of the raven's nest. Right now, that's not implemented. Instead, go to the clearing at the foot of the tree and follow the magic alpha instructions.
3) The kraken (underwater monster). The kraken is supposed to start off with the gold bracelet that you need later in the game. Right now there is no kraken, and the bracelet simply starts off in the shallows. (You will also note that you can freely travel through all the water-rooms without doing a shape-change)

Each of these three puzzles will be implemented within the next few days.

Naturally, there are lots of nice, juicy bugs that have made themselves a comfortable home within the nooks and crannies of the code. A particularly fun one is trying to "take all" when there is nothing there to take. Others include lack of rigorous checking for activities that can only be performed by particular animals (flying around and swimming come to mind); and also some curious repeat-messages that crop up every once in a while.

A few notes to help the poor tester:

A) When you want to say something to someone, it's safest to put the something in quotes.
EG `>SAY "PASSWORD"`
B) If you REALLY want an object, type `$Steal object`. It will pop into your hands.
C) Once you get all the way down to the very last move except for one, a small bug is preventing you from leaving the room you are in at the time to get you to where you want to go. When that happens, type `$STEAL LOT`. This has the esthetically undesirable side-effect of popping Lot into your hands, but it will allow you to finish the game.

I hope you enjoy Arthur. I am looking forward to your comments and suggestions when I see you on Wednesday.

Date: 22 Apr 1988 1329-EST From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Lot Poem & canonical hours To: eliz cc: jon, liz, amy, carl, swg, challenge

Elizabeth:

The following are the canonical hours:

MATINS	- Midnight (to 2:59 am)	SEXT	- Noon (to 2:59 pm)
LAUD	- 3:00 am (to 5:59 am)	NONE	- 3:00 pm (to 5:59 pm)
PRIME	- 6:00 am (to 8:59 am)	VESPER	- 6:00 pm (to 8:59 pm)
TIERCE	- 9:00 am (to 11:59 am)	COMPLINE	- 9:00 pm (to 11:59 pm)

****

The following is Lot's Poem:

The liege-lord of the land is Lot,
A mighty warrior among mortal men unmatched.
No sword there is so swift and sure as his;
No shield that shines so bright, No spear so sharp.

His vaults with valued silver overflow;
With jade, with gems, with jewels beyond number.
With fine-trimmed fur his coffers full are filled
With gleaming gold that daily he doth gather.

No king so fair
By maid begot
Was ever there
Than good King Lot.

****

If there's anything else I can do for you, just give me a call.

Thanks, Bob

Date: 22 Apr 1988 1618-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Hints To: Challenge cc: Liz, SWG

It was a productive two days. Spending time with you, discussing ideas for packaging and the game, is one of my more enjoyable duties.

We agreed that the player would have to go to Merlin to get hints. I think that's fine: it's a bit of a nuisance for the player (especially if the player is far away from Merlin), thus discouraging players from seeking a hint too soon, but it's not such a nuisance that a player would quit in frustration.

But Liz and I were discussing with Tim, Joel, and others about another idea you mentioned: namely, asking Merlin for the hint rather than the "old-fashioned" way of asking the game. Let me – let US – discourage you in the strongest possible terms NOT to do anything too radical. When a player is desperate for an answer, you don't want to further frustrate that player by making him/or play "guess the syntax." Also, given that we all want the game to come out as soon as it can, you are well advised to NOT push the new parser to its outmust limits yet.

I'm only trying to discourage you in this one area. Otherwise, I think Arthur is splendid.

Date: 28 Apr 1988 1535-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics reminder… To: MARC

Hard to say whether 100 pictures will fit. They may.

In the King Arthur game, we're assuming most of the pictures will be about half-screen high by high-screen wide; that is, quarter-screen. Stu figures that such graphics are 160 pixels wide by 100 pixels high, times 4 bit planes, equals about 8K. But we have can compress that quite a bit: how much exactly is unknown, and it depends on the picture, but on average Stu and Tim think "half" is safe. So 8K pictures become 4K; 100 such pictures would be 400K. No problem for an 800K disk, and probably no problem (space-wise) for two 350K (approx.) disks.

A concern I have is the aspect ratio of the images. On the 20 it looks like the area you left for graphics is taller than it is wide. I guess a standard ratio (for TVs and many other video displays) is 3 by 4. We don't HAVE to use a 3 by 4 ratio, of course, but it's pleasing to us. I'd guess square would be better than 4 by 3, say. What do you think? How flexible can you make Journey? (I recognize we wouldn't want to make the text window very narrow either.)

Date: 11 May 1988 1705-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Feelies To: eliz cc: carl, swg, jon

Dear Carl and Elizabeth:

I think our meeting last week was very productive, and I am excited about the materials you are planning for Arthur. When I got back, I wrote up a summary of what I think is going to happen, and I would appreciate it if you would review it for accuracy, and then let me know where (if anywhere) I have strayed from the path.

SUMMARY

There will be a book of hours, illustrated after the Celtic fashion. In this will be a separate page for each of the eight hours in the game, with an illustration on each of these pages. Below each illustration will be a short, alliterative poem which will be a description of what monks would be likely to be doing during that hour.

The front cover of the book will be a knock-your-socks-off illustration, which probably will identify the book as a book of hours. The back cover, or inside back cover, will be a rendition of Carl's drawing of the sun, moon, and stars as they pass through the canonical hours.

In addition to the above, there will be a separate piece that will be a map of the environment. This map, unlike the graphics in the game, will attempt to mimic the style of the period, or perhaps a slightly later period. Somehow, a lack of good perspective seems essential to this, but the degree of primitiveness remains to be decided).

On the back of this map will be printed the alliterative poem to King Lot, as modified by the poet.

In the technical manual may be a lead-off introduction in story-telling fashion that might be something like, "And in those times, Merlin and Nudd held sway each over his own domain.... And it is said that underneath the lake there sleeps Nimue, enchanted by Nudd. And she will be awakened only by the scent of the flower of the Holy Thorn, which blooms only on Christmas Day."

HERE ENDETH THE SUMMARY

Some random thoughts:

Have you folks done a map on cloth yet? Would you like to? Is it outrageously expensive? (Is a wild bear Catholic?)

We should probably have some back-and-forthing on the actual features of the map. There are some features that live mostly in my mind that you don't know about (unless you consult Nancy Reagan's astrologer). You may not know, for example, that surrounding the town is a town wall.

Elizabeth, did you get Gawain & the Green Knight, and does what I was trying to do make any more sense to

you now? (Even though that one couplet is seriously brain-damaged?)

That's all for now.
Bob

Date: 2 Jun 1988 0751-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: New Arthur To: CHALLENGE cc: SWG

Arthur seems to have arrived okay.
I'm sure you folks have worked mighty hard during the last couple of weeks. I hope it pays off!

Date: 3 Jun 1988 1556-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: GRAPHICS COMMENTS To: jon cc: SWG, CHALLENGE

GRAPHICS COMMENTS

What I did here was to go through everything and make my comments, and then come back here to the beginning to write a little introduction. I think it may be time for me to come north once again. The session we had last time was so good and productive, that I think it may be time to have another one on the graphics that remain. This is especially true in the case where things are kind of nebulous, and what we really need is a back-and-forth, how-'bout-this-well-no-but-how-'bout-this type of session. That having been said, here goes:

NEW GRAPHICS

1) The type-style selection for the title screen is good. At one time, we had discussed placing this on a scroll-type background. Has this idea died, been vetoed, or is it simply lying fallow.
The organization of the words on the page seems a little confusing. It reads to me "Arthur: for the Quest Excalibur." The layout above the frame seems clearer, but less interesting. Can something be done to clear this up a bit (perhaps color might help).
(I especially like the 'L' of Excalibur being the sword and having it pierce the Q with the light coming from it.)

2 & 3) Excellent

79) Good, but not great. This is our final, climactic picture, and it doesn't seem to have any drama in it. Perhaps we could ghost in an image of a smiling Merlin in the sky. Perhaps we could pull the point-of-view back a little, and show the top of the stone, and perhaps some people kneeling?

46) Both are fine. I tend to prefer the first one, both because it is a close-up that shows the knight's features a little better, and because it has more of an immediate feeling - as if the knight is just about to knock you off your horse.

5) OK

In response to your questions:

#32 The personality of the Red Knight has indeed developed. Think of him as one of the guards at Buckingham palace who do nothing but stare straight ahead, no matter what you do to distract them.
In this particular guard's case, he is supposed to be thinking pure thoughts as he stands his motionless

vigil. You can dress him all in red, and if somehow you can evoke the costume of one of the modern-day guards, so much the better.

#66 The Black Knight has undergone a personality change. He is much better suited to his name now. He is a Darth Vader type - mean and nasty. He is a minion of the evil demon and you can make him as dark and sinister as you can manage.

Note that when the Black Knight is defeated, he now collapses into a pile of armour, which means we will need a separate view of this room. (The armour can't be moved, so the graphic can focus on this pile of armour that is heaped on the ground next to the river.

#65 Thorn Island does exist. When you emerge from the badger hole, you find yourself in the middle of a hawthorn bush. You are in the middle of the bog, so everything around you is very foggy, but the thorns on the branches are quite visible.

#76 The guard is a pleasant-looking man who seems quite comfortable here in spite of all the heat. He is standing in front of a door, which is always closed. It would be nice if this whole room can give the impression of being hot (glowing red?).

#25 The Invisible Knight remains a problem. I can talk a little about his personality, but it is hard to tie this into a graphic image.

He is a likeable rogue. A con man. Sort of like Robert Preston in the Music Man, or Paul Newman in the Sting. Sure he goes around stealing from people - but he doesn't mean anything by it, and besides - how else do you expect him to stay in business?

#51 There are two possible views of the Leprechaun. The first shows him simply walking across the glade. Darrell's first sketch for this is fine.

The second is when he stops in the clearing long enough for you to catch him, i.e. when he is looking at the bottle. To avoid the problem of scale involved with him holding the bottle, it might be good just to show a close-up of his bearded face looking down at something (off-screen) that he is holding in his hands.

#27 Merlin can be wearing the same clothes you have on him in the opening scene, only with the hood back. He is sitting (the text says cross-legged on the ground - but perhaps it would be better to put him on a rock) outside his cave.

Here he is mild-mannered, scholarly, and friendly. There is nothing of the awe-inspiring wizard about him. You have come upon him in a moment of relaxation and quiet reflection.

The mouth of the cave (if shown) should give an impression that there is an eerie light coming from within it. This is not your basic cave carved out of solid rock. Its walls are made of crystal, and therefore smooth and light-giving.

#3 & 4 I believe that what we need here is one additional shot where Arthur is standing in the churchyard, not behind the gravestone, and with the stone gone. I don't think it's necessary to show the spot where the stone used to be - We have already seen that in the behind-the-gravestone shot. This additional picture might show the wrought-iron gate in the church wall.

#19 & 20 The solution that occurs to me is to not show the door at all. Simply show the smith chained to the wall, or the chains hanging down, and then leave it at that.

#77 & 78 I think the sequence here will have to be one of three consecutive graphics. The first two are half-screen, only the third is full-screen. The first is of the girl. The second is of the demon. Both of these shots should be high and tight enough that the wrists are not seen where they are shackled to the arm of the throne.

The third shot is the full screen shot, and that is only seen when the player has solved the puzzle (opened the second manacle). The sequence is that he opens the manacle, the picture goes to the full

screen screaming shot, then he presses a key to get the text that blows him out of the castle back to the dragon ledge, and this is the picture that is now on the upper half of the screen. (Note that at this point, the mouth of the cave is closed off by a landslide of rocks, something to keep in mind when drawing the dragon.

I hope all this helps. As I have said, I think it may be best for another face-to-face session where we can run through lots of different approaches and try out different ideas.

Good Luck, Bob

Date: 8 Jun 1988 0921-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Arthur Ship Date To: Challenge cc: Jon, Joel, SWG

Bob:

We have decided to release Arthur in the January-February timeframe. The reasons for this decision are:

1. We don't want to release Zork Zero, Shogun, and Arthur all before Christmas.
2. We feel that Zork Zero and Shogun are further along in development than Arthur.
3. We feel that Zork Zero and Shogun use the graphics capabilities better (more innovatively) and thus make a better introduction for Infocom's new graphic interactive fiction line.

This last point – the use of graphics – can be addressed now that we have more development time. I'm pleased to tell you that Arthur will be the first Infocom game to have (drumroll, please) animation! (Specifics of animation are yet to come, but we certainly won't be animating every picture. More likely, we'll animate only occasionally: perhaps Merlin's appearance and disappearance, the trees throwing conkers, etc.)

I do not believe that Arthur's long-term sales will suffer from a post-Christmas ship date. (Sherlock, for instance, sold better than three out of four pre-Christmas titles.) If you have a cash-flow problem, Joel may be willing to consider changes to the advances schedule.

I hope that any disappointment you feel with a January-February ship date is offset somewhat by the inclusion of animation.

I'll follow up this message with a phone call.

Date: 10 Jun 1988 1150-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Yesterday's visit To: jon

Jon:

Time passes so quickly. It seems like only yesterday that I last saw you....

Normally I'd call you, but I recall how busy this morning is going to be for you so I decided to drop you a quick note.

I thought yesterday went very well. The comments in the pre-beta session all had merit, and I will try to solve each of the problems that were brought up.

I am impressed with Darrell's work. I agree with your efforts to spice up the pictures by avoiding static scenes, and I am very willing to try to bend the text around to do so, should you come up with other suggestions. (I think Liz should be shown the graphics as soon as possible. She seems to have good ideas for jazzing them up).

I stayed on a little after you left to continue talking with Joel. Although obviously I wish the decision about Arthur had gone another way, I appreciate Infocom's efforts to minimize the trauma to Challenge.

With Liz being gone for a while I have three questions for you:

1) Do you want to keep getting games twice a week, or is that a waste of communications time? Will anyone be testing them?
2) When should we transfer Arthur from XZIP to YZIP? Is now a good time because Liz is gone and no testing will take place? Or is it a good idea to hold off and send some XZIP copies out for beta?
3) Where on the yellow brick road of testing does Arthur officially stand? Have we entered beta? Will we not officially enter beta until Liz returns? Will we not officially enter beta until the YZIPS are ready? (When will that be, anyway?). This has internal implications within Challenge, and it would be helpful for us to know.

Thanks for all your help, Jon. With so little time and so much to do, we didn't really get a chance to talk, but I do appreciate all your efforts to make the game as good as possible.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1406-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Yesterday's visit To: CHALLENGE cc: jon

I'll try to answer your questions:

1. No one will be testing Arthur this week. I asked around in the Testing Department, and each tester seems to be working on one or two games coming out this fall.
2. I think it makes sense to make the XZIP to YZIP transformation sooner rather than later – this week, even.
3. We will NOT be sending Arthur out for beta in XZIP: first, because we want to suggest to the world that the graphics are an integral part of the game; second, because we have a limited number of outside testers.

I think showing the graphics to Liz is a good idea – I'll do that.

Date: 14 Jun 1988 0950-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Graphics To: Challenge cc: SWG, Joel, Jon

My major concern about the Arthur graphics has been echoed by several others here who have seen them: namely, that they're static and boring. I'm convinced we have to do something different, maybe dramatically different. Unfortunately, I'm not sure yet WHAT to do, or whether Darrell will have the time to do it, or whether it adversely affects the schedule. But something must be done.

Amy suggested to me that maybe we could sometimes see the player: and there's no question in my mind that people (or animals) are more interesting than landscapes. (Originally we planned to show none of the main characters in the Journey game, but fortunately the artist convinced us of our folly.) Now of course there are some difficulties, since the player isn't always a human. But maybe we can work around that problem.

For instance, we could see the player as a badger in the badger hole. We could see the player as an owl as he flies. We could see the player as Arthur in the churchyard before he finds Merlin. (Amy suggested that we see Arthur's head peeking out from behind a tombstone, looking at whatever.) Maybe in some particularly bland pictures, we could make use of "stamps": in the Meadow, for instance, we could ask Darrell to draw an Arthur walking along, an owl, a badger, etc. (A salamander might be too small to see.)

I like some of the ideas we came up with at our last discussion with Darrell: putting a face in a door, making the invisible knight transparent, etc. I wish I could think of a lot more of those, but I don't think there's anything so magical or interesting that we can do in most of the geography.

I'm not really sure what to do at this point. Darrell is plugging along, but I can't give him new directions until I know where I want him to go. Do you have any thoughts on the matter?

Arthur is ready for an upgrade to the YZIP system:

Date: 14 Jun 1988 1833-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: xzip to yzip conversion To: pdl cc: swg, jon, challenge

Greetings

The innermost council has met and decreed that it is time for the game known as Arthur to undergo the conversion ritual from XZIP to YZIP. We appeal to you, the high priest of the ritual, to guide our unsteady hand, that we may not royally fuck it up.

Duane, the acolyte, will be performing the ceremony. Would you wish him to call you for an oral passing on of the traditional procedures, or would you like to inscribe the ritual on a more permanent medium for the benefit of future generations?

Bob, the obscure.

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1041-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Package Poetry To: eliz cc: swg, jon, challenge

Dear Elitznya:

Lot's Poem

One of the functions of Lot's poem is to emphasize his greed. It is essential for this personality trait to be firmly established in order for the player to win the fight with Lot at the end of the game. Characters in the course of the game say things like "'E's right greedy, y'know. They say 'is knees gets weak wen 'e sees silver, an 'e'd sell 'is soul for an ounce of gold."

Because of this need, I think it's a mistake to say that he cherished his wife more than tons of treasure.

In addition, the character Margawse isn't in the game, and it might be just as well to delete any reference to her altogether.

Matins

Might I suggest a hyphen between the words candle and flames? As I read along, I take flames to be a verb, and consequently am confused when I get to the word light.

Overall

Overall, I am concerned that we do not have enough variety in the activities described, and that an artist might have difficulty differentiating between some of the hours. Currently, it looks as if the graphics for Matins, Lauds, and Vespers would all show monks praying. Of these, the most evocative image to me is the light on the monks' faces while they are praying during Matins, so perhaps Vespers could be re-written to emphasize the (choir) sing-ing, (voices raised in God's praise, harmonies, chords, music, etc) and another activity could be found for Laud.

If that were done, I gather the general scheme would be something like:

Matins:	Monks praying in the candlelight
Lauds:	?
Prime:	Poor people lined up for help
Terce:	Scriptorium scene
Sext:	Refectory scene
None:	Baking in kitchen, or mixing medecines in apothecary
Vespers:	Choir
Compline:	Sleeping monks

Is this what you guys are thinking, or am I wandering around in left field someplace?

P.S. The spelling should probably be British rather than American, so in Terce (Tierce?), colors should probably be spelled colours.

Also, please note that Vespers precedes Compline.

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1225-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Thoughts on static graphics To: jon cc: swg, joel, challenge

Thoughts on static graphics:

Jon:

I agree with you that several of the graphics for Arthur are static. But while I think it's a good idea to try to re-think the problem and to be more creative about our approach, I don't think it's quite as serious a problem as you do.

I think the function of a landscape graphic should be to give the player a sense of where he is. And just as "empty" rooms sometimes fill out the feel of the environment, the landscapes may become a welcome visual respite from the tight shots that we have to use so often. Furthermore, if we add "interesting" elements to what is essentially a transitional room, we run the risk of making the player think he should try to interact with whatever we are drawing his attention to.

Perhaps the solution lies not in trying to jazz up unjazzupable landscapes, but to make the places where something IS happening as interesting as possible. I think this is what we have done with the examples you mentioned (face in the door, shimmering knight, etc), and perhaps what we should focus on are the other rooms where there something interesting is going on, but where we haven't been very creative in the graphic design.

At this point the word animation springs to mind. Can we take some of these less-creative-but-should-be-more-interesting graphics and add some motion to them? (When will we know more about the type of animation that will be available to us?) Adding motion to some of these pictures might avoid the problem of totally re-designing them.

Apart from animation, I think we should try to go back to the same creative well that produced the face in the door and the shimmering knight. The problem may be finding that well.

With regard to your suggestion about showing the main character, I think it would be a mistake to show a full-figure Arthur in the meadow, or anywhere else except for the last picture. My inclination as a player would be to say, "Here's a character who isn't described in the text. I wonder who he is and how I can talk to him."

The same problem applies in the badger hole: "Oh. Here's another badger (quite natural, since I'm in a badger hole) Why don't I say hello to him."

Even if this were not regarded as a serious objection, I still think showing Arthur damages the sense of first person involvement. Right now, everything you see is what you would see through Arthur's eyes. If you show Arthur in the picture, the player becomes a spectator rather than an actor. (The more I think about that, the stronger my opinion becomes. To turn the player into a spectator would be a serious mistake.)

If, after all this, we still have the feeling that there's not enough interesting stuff for the player to look at, then perhaps I should add a few more puzzles to the game. I don't really want to do that, so I think I'll end this message here and wait for your reaction.

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1447-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Darrell's latest thumbnails To: jon cc: swg, challenge

Jon: I will be away on vacation next week while Duane labors to switch the game over to YZIP. Before I go, I wanted to send you my reactions to Darrell's latest sketches.

32) Red Knight

The knight doesn't seem "knightly" enough to me. I think this is because of what he is wearing, which

sort of looks like a T-shirt with chain-mail over it. Perhaps a cloak or cape might help (like the one on the guard outside the castle gate). In addition, the facial expression seems to be more one of anger than aloofness. This may due to the frown.

66) Black Knight
This is a good interpretation of what we talked about. However in light of our ongoing conversation about static graphics, I wonder if there is something we can do to jazz it up.

65) Thorn Island
Same comment as 66

77) Demon-lady
Ample. Bodacious. Full. Bountiful. Abundant. I can't seem to put my finger on the right word. (Is there such a thing as too much?)

76) Demon
Good. Don't forget that we need the key stamp for him as well. (And perhaps he should glow red)

27) Outside Merlin's Cave
OK, but not much personality here. Could we come in tighter on kindly old Doc Merlin and only suggest the cave in the background (if at all)?

79) End of game
Very nice. Would making the sword absolutely vertical really hurt the picture?

78) Demon screaming
How about some bulging eyes. More of sense of him sticking his face in yours and screaming. (Sort of like a demented drill sergeant)

76) Hot room
Again, this is just what we asked for, but somehow it doesn't have much "oomph" to it. (Would the original idea of the casual guard be better?) For reasons known only to the gods of unreasonable clients, the irregularity of the rivets and panels on the door seems to bother me.

51) Stamp of Leprechaun
Very good

25) Invisible knight
OK. He seems a little more cartoony than everyone else. Another problem is that he looks as if he is offering you a choice of goods here. Perhaps we should remove the hand.

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1115-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Thoughts on static graphics] To: JON

Maybe one way to add more interest while not bringing in Arthur (I can see Bob's point on that) or close-ups of the animals you become (such as the badger in the badger hole) is to add people and animals in the background, more as atmosphere than as something players might feel they can react with. Peasants toiling in a field in the distance, a flock of birds flying overhead, a squirrel perched on a branch of a tree in the middle ground, etc. Of course, the problem is to add something that looks relatively insignificant, yet is atmospheric, while using only 14 colors in low resolution in a pretty small picture.

(That paragraph must rival Henry James for long, convoluted sentences.)

It still seems to me that there's no point in having some illustrations that are not interesting. I would rather see all the illustrations be mildly interesting, than have some be fabulous and others boring.

Maybe you'll never get these just the way you'd like them to be, but at least you have a better idea of what kind of input to give artists in the future.

Date: 17 Jun 1988 1838-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Arthur Poems To: Challenge cc: SWG, Jon

I've had Antonio rewrite the Lot poem to accommodate your concerns (which are certainly valid ones). Here's the revision of the second stanza:

Lot had his heavy chests of gold,
envied by every earl and king.
Pure pelf he did pursue with pleasure;
His greed grew greater with each day.

I still don't think this is quite right. Since the poem is apparently written for Lot's pleasure (or by his court poet), it doesn't seem that we should be so blatant about his greed. I would like to go back to something closer to your original poem. Perhaps we could do this ourselves if we all put our minds to it. Or we could go back to Antonio. Comments?

Another thought, in looking over the original poem. Do we want this to be in the present tense? I think yes, as it is contemporary.

Regarding the Book of Hours, I would like to show the poems to the illustrator before asking Antonio to change them. I personally like them all very much, and hope that Ed will be able to think of diverse images for each of the three prayer-related ones. I think the illustrations will then tip the poems in somewhat different directions. If we go with the choir idea for Vespers, then Matins and Lauds might be differentiated by having one be midnight and the other "a new day dawning."

Date: 17 Jun 1988 2309-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Arthur poetry To: eliz cc: jon, swg, challenge

Dear Elizabeth:

I think you are exactly right about being too blatant about Lot's greed in the poem. It is a problem that I tried to avoid in my version. The tone to strive for is that the bard is quite naturally proud of the grandeur of his lord and his court; but what he sees as a perfectly acceptable acquisitive streak in Lot, is seen through our eyes as greed.

I also agree that the poem should be in the present tense.

I would be very happy to continue working on the poem ourselves. I don't know Antonio, and I don't wish to upset him. I don't know if he would be insulted if we didn't use his poem, or outraged if we tried to alter it without his consent. I also don't know at what point he would tire of repeated requests for him to change it himself. I guess I don't know much at all.

With regard to the Book of Hours, I think it's a fine idea to talk to the artist before we change the poetry. But I think we should remain sensitive to the problem. I really like the Matins poem, but am less wild about Lauds. If we go to the choir idea for Vespers, I think the poem should be rewritten to emphasize the musical aspects of the activity shown.

I hope this helps.

Arthur reaches version 42:

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1120-EDT From: Try Algae Lust! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Arthur #42 To: Liz, Kurt cc: Eliz, Jon, Raiser, SWG

"The game is winnable, but we have noticed the following two bugs that you should know about:

1) When you try to put the peat in the fire, you must refer to the fire as the HEARTH.
2) You cannot talk to the kraken."
– Bob Bates.

Another revision to Lot's Poem:

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1218-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Arthur poems To: Challenge cc: Jon, SWG

Antonio rewrote the last stanza of the Lot poem over the weekend (without any input from me regarding the greed stuff). Here's the latest version:

Lot's heavy coffers held much treasure
Envied by each earl and king,
But he pursued gold with a passion.
Gold was his God, and greater grew his greed.

This still doesn't seem right to me. Let's work on it ourselves over the next day or two. Any ideas?

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1044-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Lot's Poem To: JON

I haven't tried yet, but I will today. If you have the time and inclination to see what you can come up with, I don't think it would hurt. Maybe we could merge our two attempts into something we can use.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1257-EDT From: Marjorie Gove <MARGE at FRED>
Subject: Poem for Lot To: challenge cc: Jon, SWG

Hi. I'm Marjorie, the "new" Elizabeth. I've taken a stab at the second verse of the Poem for Lot for Arthur. The whole poem now says:

No worthier warrior was before
Lot became Lord of all the land:
With sword so sharp and shield that shines...
Proud Paladin beyond reproach.

He hoards heavy chests of gold.
Exults in gems acquired with care.
Soul stirred by silver, by precious stones,
Fortune is Lot's flame of life.

No king so fair
By maid begot
Was ever there
Than good King Lot.

Comments? Suggestions? I'm not on the mainframe myself, so send your message to me via Elizabeth, who is now an imp.

Date: 27 Jul 1988 1552-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: MAP!!! To: JON cc: LIZ

Jon, I could make you a map pretty easily, but I need a better version of Arthur. I talked to Bob about the gamestopper and he said he'd have another version by tomorrow afternoon. Is Friday too late for a map?

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0947-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: schedules To: joey

I've worked a schedule for games shipping this fall. (Have I already sent you this mail?) Anyway, the schedule DOES NOT have anyone testing BattleTech or Arthur. You and I need to determine priorities and realities. Zork0, Journey and Quarterstaff are the definite shippers, right? Where does Shogun really fit in, and what of the impossible dream dates set for BattleTech? In the second place, we should be testing Arthur, but I don't know where to put that on my schedule either.

Date: 24 Aug 1988 1425-EDT From: Sultry Gelata <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: arthur To: LIZ cc: SWG, TAA

Well, neither "HIT GUARD" sentence will work for you.

"HIT GUARD OVER HEAD WITH STONE" has one too many nouns in it.

"HIT GUARD ON HEAD WITH STONE" will produce something like "You can't see any guard on your head." That's because the parser treats it like "HIT GUARD ON FLOOR WITH STONE", that is, the floor (or the head) is treated as the guard's location.

Remember the standard example in a manual: "PUT THE SOUP IN THE BOWL WITH THE LADLE"? The new parser still can't handle it. Sigh.

Date: 26 Aug 1988 1210-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: New Arthur Game To: tester.jacob cc: swg, liz, challenge

Jake:

The new game (that you should have received by Fed-ex this morning) is distinguished by our first shot at mapping in the upper window. You can get to this wonderful window either by using the F4 key, or by typing $MAP.

The fact that we forgot to include any mention of this with the disk itself should not be taken as a sign of impending mental collapse.

Date: 1 Sep 1988 1327-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Acting Producer Stuff To: swg cc: challenge

Stu: I sent the following message to Marge yesterday, and got the following following response. Because she copied only Eliz on it, I thought I'd send both msgs to you in an FYI sort of way so that you were up to date on it.

> Dear Marge:
>
> Your life probably isn't difficult enough yet - so I'm assuming it's up to me to create problems for you.

I'm really not too wild about the direction this poem has been taking, so I've done a little more than just look at the second verse.

What I have done is to develop two separate versions for you to consider. The first is very like the original that I wrote back in the dark ages. I've tried to fix the problems of the original using ideas from subsequent versions:

The liege-lord of the land is Lot,
A warrior among mortal men unmatched.
With sword so sharp and shield that shines,
His battle-deeds by noble bards are sung.

His vaults with valued treasure overflow -
With jade, with gems, and jewels beyond number.
His soul is stirred by precious stones and silver
And gleaming gold that daily he doth gather.

No king so fair
by maid begot
was ever there
than good King Lot.

Realizing that I'm probably prejudiced in favor of the original version, I then tried to work with Antonio's version (which is probably what you wanted me to do in the first place). The result is something which I like less, but which may appeal more to others:

No worthier warrior was before
Lot became Lord of all the land:
with sword so sharp and shield that shines...
proud Paladin beyond reproach.

He husbands heavy chests of treasure.
The envy of every earl and king
His soul is stirred by precious stones and silver,
And gleaming gold which daily he doth gather.

No king so fair
by maid begot
was ever there
than good King Lot.

Why don't you show these to a couple people (including Elizabeth and Stu) and see what they think. Somehow I have the feeling that I haven't seen the last of this.

Date: 1 Sep 1988 1026-EDT From: Marjorie Gove <MARGE at FRED>
Subject: Our dear friend Lot To: Challenge cc: Eliz

Bob: Just wanted to let you know we got your Lot poem comments. I haven't been able to talk about it with anyone else, but my personal preference is for the second version ("worthier warrior" sounds more like a macho conceit than "Liege lord" but then I'm not a 5th-century lesser king). Anyway, we have a new product manager –

Rob – who needs to get familiar with Arthur before he can start having opinions. I will let you know the consensus from this end as soon as there is one.

Perhaps we could rename this The Poem that Would Not Die.
Yours in rhyme, Marjorie

Date: 6 Sep 1988 1352-EDT From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: ARTHUR To: CHALLENGE cc: JOEY, SWG

Since we have never officially met (although I have partaken of your free donuts many a visit) I thought I would take a moment to introduce myself. I'm Christopher Erhardt, producer here at Infocom on outside development projects. Seeing as how John Palace is no longer here to handle your program (and to make sure that we stay on track with Arthur) we will now be working together on Arthur.

Fortune has smiled upon me, however, in that Stu Galley has offered to continue to work with us on the project (thanks again, Stu).

I would like to arrange for your next visit to fall somewhere between Sept. 26th and 30th. By then I should be fully up to snuff on both the graphic work that has been done, along with the program itself. Some questions you might want to think about are:

1– Are sounds going to be incorporated (like Sherlock)?
2– How close to done (mons. Pictures) do you feel you are?

Look forward to talking with you soon ...
Regards, Christopher Erhardt (x301)

Date: 7 Sep 1988 1328-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Book of Hours Art and Poetry To: carl cc: Erhardt, swg, marge, eliz, challenge

Carl:

I have looked over the Book of Hours sketches and am impressed and delighted with them. Overall, I think the choice of style is great, and is well-suited to the period we are dealing with.

The comments and questions that follow are mostly minor in nature. They should not be construed either as criticism or directives, but rather as me throwing in my two-cents' worth so I can feel that I've contributed.

1) I really like the bottom border, side columns, and the sort-of triple arch on the drawings of the individual hours. However, the "pointiness" of the top corners seem a little out-of-period to me. (Perhaps it's because they are reminiscent of a fleur-de-lis.)
   The design fits into the arch so well that perhaps a more circular or rounded design would be out of place and nothing can (or should) be done about it. But I thought I'd mention it anyway.

2) In the cover-drawing, will the names of the hours be written in the spaces so thoughtfully provided for them? Will there be a poem below it, or some kind of script title that identifies this as a book of hours?
3) Typos: Martins should be Matins. Laboring (in the Sext poem) should be labouring. Colors (in the Terce poem) should be colours. Labor (in the None poem) should be labour. In the Matins poem, I'd vote for putting a hyphen between the words candle and flames (because an implied parallel structure from "tocsin tolls," and "voices vibrate" leads me to read "flames" as a verb). But then I'm hyphen-crazy - as Gary will be happy to tell you - so what do I know.

4) Assuming it's not a typo, the archaic spelling of prayuers is so neat that I wonder if there are a few other words that could be singled out for similar treatment without gumming up the works.

5) The Matins, Lauds, Terce, None, and Compline poems and drawings are all very good, with my vote going to Matins as being especially wonderful.

6) Prime: This is certainly alright, however it does look as if the monks are barricaded behind their walls, with nothing to offer the poor except a blessing. The poem implies (I think correctly) that the monks should be taking a much more active role in helping the poor. Perhaps the scene could be moved to outside a monastery wall, with one monk pouring soup (gruel?) into the outstretched cup of a peasant, another monk bandaging an broken arm, and a third monk saying a blessing (Or something like that).
   This is not a big deal.

7) The Sext drawing is fine. The poem seems a little confused (but only a little) in that it says that laboring is prayer, and they long to linger at it, but what they are actually lingering at is the table. If getting a rewrite of the poem is easy, perhaps we could have them long to 'return to' their task of love, instead of 'lingering' at it. However, if doing a rewrite is a major pain, I'd forget it.

8) The Vespers poem and drawing are both very good. However, it looks as if the poet has assumed that Vespers is the last of the canonical hours. With this in mind, he has written a very fine last line which leads from the "in dedication" to the "Laus Deo." This is nice, except that Compline is the last hour (and should appear as such in both the cover drawing and the order of placement within the book).
   I like ending the book with the "Laus Deo," and if the poet has no objection to having those words appear after the last line of the Compline poem, it's OK with me.

9) Is the poem for Lot still going to go on (or inside) the back cover? Do we need to do any additional design work to explain why it is there? Could (should) we put an "ex-libris Lot, Rex Lothian" type bookplate inside the front cover? Or instead, should we mention something about it in the instruction manual?

*****

That's everything, Carl. I think the whole project is really good, and has the potential to be very, very classy. Thanks.

Date: 8 Sep 1988 1420-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Arthur status & related stuff To: erhardt cc: swg, challenge

Chris:

I was glad to get the chance to talk with you yesterday. Your points about establishing a consistent atmosphere throughout Arthur are extremely well taken, and I will keep them in mind when I undertake my next major rewrite (which is due to take place next week).

Rather than use several hours of phone time discussing the status of the game, I thought I'd make a few notes here and send them to you to read at your leisure.

1) We have addressed 468 of the 480 bugs that Liz's testers have reported, plus several hundred of our own.

2) Number 1 sounds a lot better than it is. I don't think the game has received nearly enough testing. I am especially interested in uncovering any "conceptual" problems that may be lurking below the surface. Good examples of this are the questions you have raised about the tone of the "grey bar" messages and whether or not splitting the point system between various attributes helps or hinders the game.

3) The text in the game needs a major overhaul. As I mentioned above, I hope to start this next week, and I anticipate that the work will take at least a full week to complete. Included in this rewrite will be efforts to enhance the atmosphere, tighten up sloppy writing, remove programmer-written messages, and improve the

quality of the humor. (I don't intend to change any of the puzzles or game-structure on this pass through, but you never know).

4) In the technical area, we have been hampered by the lack of a working IBM interpreter. Scott has had much higher priorities than implementing the various features we are using - which is quite understandable, given the games you're trying to get out the door this fall - but the result is that further development of the game's interface is pretty much stalled. The good news is that Scott has been manufacturing time to help us in bits and pieces. Unfortunately, much much more work remains.

   Stu thinks it's a bad idea to stop work on interface development and debugging, and I agree with him. However, I don't see a solution to the problem, short of a restructuring of Scott's priorities. Suggestions to solve this most pressing problem are welcome.

5) The instruction manual hasn't really been addressed by anyone yet. We've sort of agreed that I should take the first crack at it, but all I've done is to identify some of the things that must be included as anti-piracy. Developing a schedule of when various drafts need to be done would probably be a good idea.

6) I think the graphics in the game are in pretty good shape. I have seen most of them in person on the Amiga. We had a few suggestions for minor changes of existing art; there are a couple rooms for which Darrell has done thumbnails but nothing more (Chasm rooms); and there is at least one drawing that we haven't even asked him for yet (West of Ford - after Black Knight is killed). (I say "at least one" because playing of the game after the graphics are included may reveal one or two more spots that we've just plain overlooked.) Stu has been the go-between with Darrell since Jon left, and that's been working well.

   I have no idea whether anyone has started to transfer the graphics to micros other than the Amiga, or when that is scheduled to happen.

7) The packaging seems to be coming along well. You got my memo to Carl on the art for the Book of Hours. The artist will be giving us a rough draft of the map very soon. I assume the arrangements have been made for the Hildebrandt art for the cover. All-in-all, it looks as if the artwork for the game will be stunning. So stunning in fact that I think you and Rob might consider trying to use it beyond just the packaging. I suggested as much to Carl back in May (see attached memo), but I don't know whether the idea ever got off the ground.

8) I haven't seen a development schedule for Arthur in a long while, but it would be nice to have one again.

9) I haven't brought this up to anyone before, but now seems as good a time as any. I think we should consider releasing Arthur in a text-only version for those whose machines don't support graphics. All of the features of the game except the pictures should work - even the on-screen map can be done in a character mode. There are no graphical puzzles such as the ones in Zork 0. The game can be enjoyed perfectly well as a text-only adventure.

   The scenario I have in mind would be to release the graphic versions of the game and if they do well, follow up with a text-only release. Deep down in my money-grubbing soul I think that there are a lot of people out there who don't have graphics cards but who would still shell out the bucks to buy a King Arthur game.

*****

Switching to the business front, I will get back to you on the financial problems that Challenge will face if Infocom delays the release of Arthur past January. I appreciate your offer of support should that happen.

Something to keep in mind while we ponder juggling the schedule is that we have already started work (at Joe Ybarra's request) on the sequel to Leather Goddesses of Phobos. The essence of the mutual obligation between Challenge and Infocom is that we're supposed to develop two games a year for you for the next several years. I think it would be an excellent idea for the two of us to sit down and pound out a development schedule that everyone can live with in order to make that possible.

Thanks, Chris. I hope this isn't too much of a buzz-saw for you to have walked into all at once. Stu knows pretty much everything about everything, and he's been an enormous help to us, so if you have questions he's

probably a good place to start looking for answers. And of course you can always give me a call.

I hope to see you soon. Bob
*****

[5/13/88 MEMO TO ELIZABETH AND CARL]

The artwork that is contemplated for Arthur sounds like it will be of such high quality that it's a shame to consign it to the permanent oblivion of being contained in a box.

The only time the player will see it is when he looks at the actual box (Hildebrandt cover) or open the package (Book of Hours, Map)

What if we re-thought the presentation somewhat to include a poster. This could have not only a more lasting value to the player (the poster might be good enough to frame), but it might also have promotional value for the game itself (dealers might display it, Infocom could post it at trade shows, etc).

This seems especially true if we can use the Hildebrandt art in this fashion, although having it both on the cover and in the package creates an additional cost.

Perhaps the book of hours might be re-designed into some sort of sectioned poster, with an illustration and a poem for each panel.

My point here is that it looks like we are going to be creating some very exciting pieces of art, and I think they deserve to be presented in a format that the purchaser can derive maximum pleasure from.

What do you think?

Date: 23 Sep 1988 1929-EDT
Subject: Beta-play instructions for Arthur

From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
To: Testers at FRED, Erhardt at FRED, Swg at FRED, Kirsch at FRED, Rob at FRED, Challenge at FRED

At Stella's request, I have created a file called Beta-ins.txt in the Challenge directory that contains the anti-piracy information needed to play Arthur.

Happy hunting! Bob

Arthur now incorporates graphics:

Date: 12 Oct 1988 0050-EDT
Subject: New Arthur
cc: challenge

From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
To: swg

Stu,

I sent all the latest ZIL files via FedEx tonight. They were not compiled when I sent them, but they have since been compiled and seem to work fine. Scott is also expecting a new game for debugging purposes, so please let him know.

Bob told me you wanted to make a prototype of Arthur with graphics. The ARTHUR.ZPIC file should tell you what picture names are expected. Right now, the pictures are only handled in the town area. If you need me to add the code for all the pictures and stamps, let me know.

Also, I seem to be having trouble with owners being recognized for the object TH-HUMAN-BODY. It has an owner property which points to a pure table of the people in the game. When I get the owner property in ZDDT, however, it says that it is zero, and when you refer to so-and-so's body-part it says that you don't see any. The object TH-NAME also has a table owner property, but it works fine. Any ideas?

Date: 16 Oct 1988 1529-EDT From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: New Arthur To: CHALLENGE cc: SWG, TAA, Gandalf, Erhardt

Okay, I got the newest Zil files compiled, after fixing an error in the Raven file, where quotation marks were used inside a comment.

Scott: You can get the newest game from <CHALLENGE>ARTHUR.ZIP.

Darrell has finished all the graphics now and has returned the equipment he borrowed. All the graphics have been copied to Fred for safekeeping.

Tim: I made a first draft of the "build" file in <CHALLENGE.PIX>ARTHUR.MPF. See if that's enough for you to carry on from. Pictures after #31 are commented out, since the game doesn't display them yet.

Date: 16 Oct 1988 1540-EDT From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: New Arthur To: CHALLENGE cc: SWG, TAA

Duane,

The problem with TH-HUMAN-BODY is that it has one too many nouns. You are allowed only 31 nouns per object. Too bad Zilch didn't warn you!

Date: 26 Oct 1988 0754-EDT From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: my schedule To: SWG

Thanks. Had an idea on 'Arthur' screen layout. Instead of the banner philosophy what do you think of presenting the whole story as if it was a Shakespeare Play. We create a procenium arch over a wood stage; and the banner/pic window become the base of the stage. We introduce Arthur (the lad), Merlin (the mighty), and King Lot (the villain).

Just another 4 am idea of how to not look like Magnetic Scrolls.

Date: 1 Dec 1988 1107-EST From: "Read my bits!" <SWG at FRED>
Subject: new Arthur To: Erhardt at FRED cc: Bugcorps at FRED, TAA at FRED

Arthur revision 94 is now available on Fred. – Stu.

Arthur undergoes 32 revisions in one month:

Date: 3 Jan 1989 1551-EST From: "Read my bits!" <SWG at FRED>
Subject: new Arthur To: DA, Joe

Release 116 is now available on Fred.

Date: 13 Jan 1989 1243-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Visit agenda To: Mikek cc: JoeY, swg, erhardt, challenge

Mike:

I thought I'd send you some notes about some of the broad topics that I think need to be discussed during my

visit next week.

I ARTHUR

Arthur seems to be floating in limbo. We have received no bug reports in over a month, yet we haven't gone into beta testing. I'd like to nail down what Infocom thinks remains to be done and get a firm idea of the schedule that will take us to release.

II THE ABYSS

The first thing I would like to do is show you our progress to date on the general interface. This will be the first fully-parser-capable game that can be played quickly and conveniently from the mouse. We have already implemented "smart" menus that put up appropriate prepositions when the player selects a verb. Over the week-end we hope to get the object menus working in a similar fashion.

The next issue is the schedule. When I spoke with Anne-Marie Stein earlier this week, she told me that although they had a lot to get done, they still think they will make the July 4 release date. I asked if there was to be a delay, would the film be pushed back to a Christmas release? She said that The Abyss is definitely a summer movie, and if it was delayed, it should only be by a few weeks.

Our schedule currently has the following milestones:

Alpha Testing	2/24 - 4/7
Beta Testing	4/7 - 5/12
Gamma Testing	5/12 - 6/2
Code Release	6/2
Ship	7/7

We are on schedule so far, although things have been hectic and a lot of midnight and weekend oil has been burned. If we are going to fall behind, it will be evident by the Feb 24 Alpha date.

Finally on the Abyss, we need to talk about finances. We have received no advances to date, even though we reached an agreement on the figures back in November. This is a problem that must be rectified immediately.

III GENERAL

Joe has mentioned that he is interested in re-structuring our contract. I'm not sure exactly what he has in mind, but I'm certainly willing to talk about it and I think we should block out some time for the two of us to do so.

He has also mentioned that you have acquired new game-writing technologies from Mediagenic. I would like to talk about these and take a look at them if possible.

PS As you think about making up a schedule, it might be a good idea to allow some time first thing Monday morning for Stu and me to try to make up a Macintosh version of the Abyss. I understand that the Mac interpreter has fewer bugs than the IBM, and things should go more smoothly if we have some time to look at it on the Mac.

Thanks for everything, Mike. I look forward to meeting you.

Date: 30 Jan 1989 1309-EST From: "Read my bits!" <SWG at FRED>
Subject: new Arthur To: MikeK, DA cc: Joe, TAA, Challenge

Revision 126 of Arthur is now available on Fred in <CHALLENGE>.

Arthur passes into Alpha or Beta testing:

Date: Fri, 7 Apr 89 12:01:22 EDT
Subject: new Arthur
From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
To: jon@spike, patti@spike
Cc: wood@spike, challenge@spike

Arthur revision 27 (dated 890406) is now available on spike.

Date: Fri, 14 Apr 89 12:42:41 EDT
Subject: new Arthur
From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
To: jon@spike
Cc: wood@spike, patti@spike, challenge@spike, taa@spike

Revision 31 arrived this morning. It's on spike and Jon's Mac.

Date: Mon, 8 May 89 16:29:22 EST
Subject: New Arthur files
From: challeng
To: jon
Cc: challeng

Jon,

In ~challeng there are two new files: joust.zil and defs.zil. If you recompile Arthur with these files, it should solve the joust problem.

– Duane

Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Ballyhoo

By Jeff O'Neill
***Mystery* series, catalog #IM4**

This space intentionally left blank

(no additional information)

Ballyhoo
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Beyond Zork: The Coconut of Quendor

by "Professor" Brian Moriarty
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ8**

Beyond Zork's inception:

Date: 8 Oct 1985 1054-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Query To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

Does anybody NOT know what a "dust bunny" is?

Date: 9 Oct 1986 1025-EDT From: Chat on a jean lap <JON at FRED>
Subject: Your game To: PROF cc: Jon

Concerning your "report" on Tuesday, here's what I think:

1. It's too early to be arguing about a final title. Use whatever working title you want.
2. I like the way you plan to use split/multiple screens. Having the room description always visible is a definite feature. And I agree that our text descriptions of exits are uninteresting; so SHOWING where they are is also a feature. And I agree that showing adjacent room names is desirable, but I don't think it's as crucial as PDL thinks.
3. If an inventory window can be included, that would be nice; but I wouldn't sacrifice the features you already have to get it.
4. I don't understand why you're leaning toward a fixed geography. The idea of a random geography would make it appealingly different from our existing games, and would give the game obvious replay value. (I hope you're not discarding the idea because "it's too much like Rogue.") You said it's frustrating to die on (say) level 18 and be forced to play levels 1-17 again. Allowing SAVE and RESTORE addresses that frustration head-on; a fixed geography may reduce the frustration, but increases repetition and, therefore, boredom.
5. You mentioned the game would have "super-hard puzzles, harder than Spellbreaker." I hope not! Extremely hard games appeal to hard-core gamers, but ONLY hard-core gamers. One of the features of any good game, of course, is its ability to hook players; that requires some level of simplicity, at least early on. Perhaps you mean it would be extremely difficult to completely FINISH the game?

In general, I like your ideas most when they depart from our traditional games. I hope, then, you'll do more than design a game that looks different and has different mechanics but is, fundamentally, more like IF than RPG. I like your goal: to design a game that YOU can play. (To me, that means there WON'T be traditional IF puzzles, and randomness WILL play a very large part.)

Anyway, that's what I think. I'd be interested to know what you think about what I think.

A "Bag of Many Holding":

Date: 14 May 1987 1016-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Version 21 To: TESTERS at FRED

Bugs fixed. The pack no longer has infinite capacity.

Official title is selected:

Date: 14 May 1987 2156-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Beyond Zork V.23 To: TESTERS at FRED

- BEYOND ZORK: The Coconut of Quendor is now the Official Title.
- The weirdnesses with the arch and minx are fixed.
- The function keys are fixed. Maximum size is 24 bytes instead of 16.
- EMPTY probably works better than before.
- Inventory is now given in sentence form instead of a laundry list.
- Many other fixes and clarifications.

Date: 28 May 1987 1036-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.32 To: TESTERS at FRED

- So, John Calvin isn't good enough, eh? How about some Cotton Mather? No more SAVEs or UNDOs when a monster's about! Discipline! DISCIPLINE!
- The eldritch vapors will now show you the value of wielding a weapon.
- Rat-ants make the wine cellar more lively than ever. More monsters to come!
- Many bugs fixed. A new monster machine is in place. All ZIP20 warnings squashed.
- Can you stand the excitement?

Date: 29 May 1987 1311-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.34 To: TESTERS at FRED

This fixes a subtle but dangerous bug in the Monster Machine.

Date: 1 Jun 1987 1044-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.35 To: TESTERS at FRED

- A couple more monsters. Those of you who subscribe to the "whack and flee" theory of monster-fighting are in for a surprise.
- A new (easy) puzzle. If you don't think you have to solve it, think again.
- No more free rides on the molten rock. Problem: Why don't the Christmas trees burst into flame?
- I'm working on the sphere. For a sample of what will happen if you use it in most locations (and survive), try using it anywhere in Grubbo except the tavern.
- Bugs fixed.

Preliminary copies of the official Monster Lore are now available in my office. Suggestions are welcome.

Date: 2 Jun 1987 1215-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v. 36 To: testers at FRED

New monsters. Simplified geography. Sphere works in Accardi, around tower and in moors. Bug fixes.

Date: 2 Jun 1987 2012-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.37 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Various scoring and display bugs fixed.
- And other things.

Date: 4 Jun 1987 2225-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.39 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Many bugs fixed, including most known crashes and garbage.
- Slight geography changes; more on the way.
- And other things.

Date: 7 Jun 1987 2224-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.40 To: TESTERS at FRED

This is a major new version.

- I've streamlined the geography, throwing away useless rooms and rearranging others. Some of the changes qualify as radical.
- There are now 3 ways to get away from the bridge (which has been moved). The math associated with this area is fixed.
- The Frotzen Fields now occupy 25 rooms instead of 49. This makes them easier to search; and it's now more important to search than ever.
- Flying is not as straightforward. Unless you have a deck of Lore Cards and a map, getting to the castle (or anywhere) is going to be very difficult. This "puzzle" probably requires tuning. (Preliminary maps are available in my office.)
- The drunk and the lout have been folded together into a Drunken Lout. Visit him in the Broken Lantern.
- A minor new puzzle involving the minx.
- And so many other wonderful features and bug fixes.

Date: 8 Jun 1987 1052-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.40B To: TESTERS at FRED

A slightly revised 40.

Date: 10 Jun 1987 1526-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: BZ v. 42 To: testers at FRED cc: jdarnold at FRED, prof at FRED

Once again allows you to pass through doorways.

Date: 12 Jun 1987 1108-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.43 To: TESTERS at FRED

New technology is in place for generating maps and mazes and for moving monsters. Please keep an eye out.

Date: 15 Jun 1987 1019-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.46 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Check your inventory.
- Salt's role has been simplified.
- Cook's role has been expanded.
- To set function keys, just type DEFINE. The rest should be obvious. Please don't type beyond the right edge of the box; a ZIP20 bug will cause problems. Field size is now 36 characters.
- If you don't want the endurance bar to pop up during combat, use the MONITOR command.
- The state of most system commands (MODE, SUPERBRIEF/BRIEF/VERBOSE, SCRIPT/UNSCRIPT, NOTIFY, PRIORITY and MONITOR) can be examined and modified with the mega-command SETTINGS. (The ZOOM command will appear tomorrow.) If anyone has better names for any of the new commands, speak now! The tech manual is being written.
- And other changes.

Date: 18 Jun 1987 1305-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.48 To: TESTERS at FRED

Sorry for the delay.

- Compass roses are no longer a luxury. They're a necessity. See the latest version of the Lore Cards (now a Lore Book, and available in my office) for details.
- No more polite conversations with the unicorn. Now you must use Magick to get what you want.
- You can now open the chest without dying. Try it.
- The levitation wand works on many more things now.
- And bug fixes.

Date: 19 Jun 1987 1223-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.49 To: TESTERS at FRED

Bugs fixed.

Date: 20 Jun 1987 1851-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.50 To: TESTERS at FRED

- You can do many more things around the stable now.
- It now understands the idea of "gloops" a bit better.
- Other bug fixes.

Date: 23 Jun 1987 1008-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.51 To: TESTERS at FRED

- You can now read the palimpsest on the Plane of Atrii. (I had no idea this wasn't working!)
- Many, many bugs fixed.

Date: 28 Jun 1987 2114-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: The Next Version To: TESTERS at FRED

I'll have 54 up as soon as I find out why it doesn't work.

Date: 29 Jun 1987 1049-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.54 To: TESTERS at FRED

- You can now set up characters on the VT100/Apple // cruftoid version.
- New monsters!
- New (minor) plot elements!
- A fully-stocked boutique! I hope to have all the stores stocked, and a bartering system in place, within the next few days.
- Even a few bug fixes!

Date: 29 Jun 1987 1507-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.55 To: TESTERS at FRED

Sorry for the cruftiness of 54. This one fixes most of those bugs.

Date: 30 Jun 1987 1148-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.56 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The weapon shop is stocked. Browsers only, please.
- Hourglass is back in the case. If you get the gloops, the old woman will give it to you.
- Bugs fixed.

Date: 30 Jun 1987 2040-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.57 To: TESTERS at FRED

- It should now be impossible to visit the castle without the compass rose.
- Steve's jungle bug should be fixed, along with other bugs.
- If you fail to assign all of your Potential during character setup, the remainder is evenly distributed among the six attributes.
- The status bars are now scaled to 100. An attribute of 33 will fill 33% of the bar, a 50 will fill half the bar, etc., regardless of the bar's physical width in pixels (which varies between machines).

Date: 30 Jun 1987 2043-EDT
Subject: Luck

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: IMPS at FRED

What things do you associate with good and bad luck?

So far:

GOOD: Knocking on wood, horseshoes, throwing salt over shoulder, rabbit's foot (but not for the rabbit), 4-leaf clover.

BAD: Black cats, walking under ladders, opening umbrellas indoors, smashing mirrors, 13.

Date: 2 Jul 1987 1116-EDT
Subject: BZ v.58

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

- Yesterday's display and scoring bugs should be working.
- I dare anyone to visit the castle without the compass rose!
- You no longer have to solve the Thriff puzzle to get the vial. But you still have to solve it to win.
- Ask the old woman about the goblet.
- Other bugs fixed.

Date: 2 Jul 1987 1315-EDT
Subject: v.58B

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

This version corrects a problem with the north wall in v.58. All your save files from 58 should still work.

Date: 6 Jul 1987 1140-EDT
Subject: BZ v.59

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

- Major renovations in the caves.
- New monsters.
- New objects.
- New bugs.

Date: 6 Jul 1987 1405-EDT
Subject: BZ v.60

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

- The endless loop in Frotzen should be gone.
- The castle should be inaccessible with the rose. I know I said that before.
- You are no longer "likely to be eaten by a shadowy form."
- And other minor bug fixes.

Date: 6 Jul 1987 2342-EDT
Subject: BZ v.61

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

For your viewing pleasure.

Date: 8 Jul 1987 1222-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.63 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The code that prevented you from reaching the castle accidentally also prevented you from reaching it deliberately. This is fixed.
- You can now drop things from the sky (or Atrii) into a maze and visit the maze without weirdness.

Date: 8 Jul 1987 1405-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Another Further Different BZ To: TESTERS at FRED

Discipline crabs got you down? Can't graduate to Level 5 Peasant? This is the version for you.

Date: 8 Jul 1987 2207-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.65 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Now with MiniBars(TM)! No more rounding errors. Of course, the screens don't look like the ones on the package anymore ...
- Your Compassion and Luck no longer change when your level rises. Should Intelligence also be excluded?
- Anyone who proves he/she can visit the castle without the rose wins a candy bar from the lobby shop.
- Several other bugs fixed.

This version should be brought down to micros. Many things changed when I added the MiniBars, so breakage is possible.

Date: 7 Jul 1987 2143-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.66 To: TESTERS at FRED

For your dining pleasure.

Date: 13 Jul 1987 0012-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.66 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The wands are now "working."
- PARRY and THRUST are installed.
- WIELD is now fully installed.
- The theory of runes is different. Instead of printing ASCII "garbage" on crufty machines (Apples and VT100s), you get text which DESCRIBES unreadable runes. When your intelligence gets high enough (>50%), you see the runes as plain English. Please check this out.

- Various attributes adjusted.
- Some bug fixes.

Date: 13 Jul 1987 1046-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.66B To: TESTERS at FRED

This rare variant of v.66 is sure to be worth thousands in the rare game market. In it, you can use Magick in all the usual places, and carry more things.

Date: 13 Jul 1987 1047-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: And by the way … To: TESTERS at FRED

Your saves from 66A will still work.

Date: 14 Jul 1987 0028-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.67 To: TESTERS at FRED

- More scrolls are scattered around.
- PARRY and THRUST actually work.
- It is now possible to view and, like unto God, ADJUST the attributes of the monsters to facilitate balancing. See me if you're interested.
- Various bugs fixed.

Beyond Zork reaches Beta testing:

Date: 15 Jul 1987 0202-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta v.0 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Bugs fixed.
- Shop proprietors know more.

One more pass will probably be necessary before we can inflict this on Tom Veldran.

Date: 15 Jul 1987 2000-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 1 To: TESTERS at FRED

Just think! You can experience the SAME version our outside Beta testers are yawning over right now!

Date: 22 Jul 1987 0247-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta v.4 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Many duplicate monsters are gone. This is part of my new (and long overdue) campaign to reduce the tediousness of combat. The space saved will allow me to make the survivors more amusing. (The experience you get for each monster must be adjusted to keep your experience rising at the required rate.)
- Most of the mazes are smaller. This reduces tedium even further, and saves lots of code space. In fact, version 4 is >5K smaller than 3.

- The monkey grinder is no longer a “Ha-ha, You’re Dead” situation. But you’ll still need to kill him eventually.
- And other bugs fixed.

Skeptical about removing monsters and rooms? Check out the new, streamlined wine cellar.

Date: 23 Jul 1987 1139-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 5 To: TESTERS at FRED

The same as 4, except that the Barrel Bug and Missing Skeleton bug are fixed.

Date: 23 Jul 1987 2330-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ 6 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Rooms desced, bugs fixed.

Date: 27 Jul 1987 1711-EDT From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: SAMPLE MAP To: JON

Do you have a rough of the sample map for the Beyond Zork Manual?

Date: 27 Jul 1987 1115-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 7 To: TESTERS at FRED

The Fields of Frotzen have been completely rewritten.

- Fewer locations.
- Randomized geography.
- Things to see in every room.
- No random tornados. The important one is hard to miss.
- Corbies are less annoying ... and you can fight back!
- The cost? 2000 bytes LESS than the old version.

This needs to be checked out thoroughly.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1949-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 8 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Many new room descriptions, especially in and around the jungle.
- Bug fixes.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 0026-EDT
Subject: Re: Query…

From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
To: MARC

I hate the role-playing elements: the tedium of fighting monsters, the random geography, not knowing what spells are until you cast them, and the quantification of things like endurance and luck. (There is ONE roll playing element I like, which is buying and selling items at shops.)

The setting is fun and very consistent with the previous GUE games. The puzzles are mostly excellent, though most are still too hard. If the role playing elements were removed, it would be one of my favorite games. Unfortunately, there's no chance of that, since it's already been marketed and P/Red as an IF/RPG hybrid.

It's also pretty buggy for a game in beta.

Have you played Nord and Bert? I just played it last week, and it's possibly the most fun I've ever had playing an Infocom game.

"That's the most fun I've ever had without laughing."
-Alvy Singer

Date: 30 Jul 1987 2312-EDT
Subject: BZ Beta 9

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Room descriptions, bug fixes.

Date: 3 Aug 1987 1051-EDT
Subject: BZ Beta 10

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

More room descriptions and bug fixes.

Date: 4 Aug 1987 0922-EDT
Subject: BZ Manual

From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
To: DA

I can certainly check it after lunch, if that's OK. I may be in a meeting all morning, but if not, I'll check it before lunch.

Date: 4 Aug 1987 1907-EDT
Subject: Christmas Carols

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I need hacked-up titles of Christmas carols for the Christmas tree monsters to sing as they pummel you with ornaments, packages and artificial pine scent. Non-religious songs like "Jingle Bells," "White Christmas" and "Winter Wonderland" are preferred. The hack versions should be Zorkian in flavor; e.g., "Walking in a Winter Bozbarland" (Steve's suggestion).

Date: 5 Aug 1987 2313-EDT
Subject: BZ Beta 11

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

- The Christmas tree monster puzzle has been completely rewritten. The new version is perfectly solvable, but a few story elements will be obscure until I put in Orkan's hut.

- The Frotzen puzzle has been made fairer. You cannot get to Froon until you have enough information to pick the correct key. You don't have to examine the scarecrows; everything you need to know appears in the room description.
- Speaking of room descriptions, many more have been added around the city, forest and ruins. Watch for the pterodactyl scene in the Savannah! (A corresponding scene for the Moors will be added soon.)
- And bug fixes.

Make a list of bugs for me to fix before we send Version 12 off to the second wave of Beta testers.

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1832-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 13 To: TESTERS at FRED

Sorry for the farmhouse bug. The fix was quite trivial, and is incorporated in this version, along with the word "moss" where it belongs.

Date: 7 Aug 1987 1328-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Beyond Zork Reference Card To: TAA cc: CLR, Prof, Liz, Jon

We'll use the existing EZIP reference card, even for the IBM. If there's room, we may want to include a READ.THIS file on the IBM disk, to tell IBM owners how to turn off UNDO (if they want to speed up the game play), how to change colors, etc.

(The EZIP IBM reference card doesn't tell the user to copy ANSI.SYS; it appears on the ZIP reference card. This is NOT a problem, I believe.)

Date: 10 Aug 1987 1215-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 14 To: TESTERS at FRED

Bugs fixed.

Date: 11 Aug 1987 1016-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 15 To: TESTERS at FRED

More bugs fixed.

Date: 11 Aug 1987 2313-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 16 To: TESTERS at FRED

Still more bugs fixed.

Date: 12 Aug 1987 2333-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 17 To: TESTERS at FRED

Still more bugs fixed. The problems with the minx, gondola and farm house have been corrected.

Date: 14 Aug 1987 1155-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 18 To: TESTERS at FRED

The pterodactyl works again.

Date: 17 Aug 1987 1131-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 19 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Orkan's cabin is now installed. It, along with other changes, makes the situation in Thriff much clearer.
- Scrolls work differently. Reading one gives you an elliptical synopsis of its function, and (if you're intelligent enough) the Word of Power you must invoke to use it. At present, all scrolls require only 8 points of intelligence (the default); later, they will be graded. Bugs likely.
- A new wand has been added.
- Wands and scrolls no longer appear as "You see a scroll here." You now get a description appropriate to the place where you found it.
- And bug fixes.

Tim's new version of ZIP20 should correct the inverse video bug.

Date: 17 Aug 1987 1954-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 20 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Magic words should now behave themselves. The parser pretends not to know the ones you haven't seen yet.
- The placeholder scroll now has a nifty purpose.
- Several bugs fixed.

Date: 18 Aug 1987 1349-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 21 To: TESTERS at FRED

Fixes the problem that prevents you from leaving Froon, among others.

Date: 19 Aug 1987 1109-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 22 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Both you and the monsters hit more often now. Let me know if you think it's often enough.
- Magic words should now work properly, including MACUGA.
- You can DIAGNOSE monsters to determine their condition; this does not cost you a turn. EXAMINE gives the same info, but you lose a move.
- Bugs fixed.

Date: 20 Aug 1987 1054-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 23 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Monsters now recover while you're running away.
- The cellar has been made easier. The lantern you find still has a bit of life in it; the descriptions of the bottle and amulet practically shout the answer to the puzzle. The match, no longer needed, is kaput.
- The "gloops" puzzle has been axed because 1) it had too many arbitrary restrictions, 2) the parser couldn't handle many reasonable syntaxes, and 3) it ate lots of space. For now, just take the hourglass off the Magick Shoppe floor. Later you'll have to buy it (at an exorbitant fee).
- The vial is still in place, and easier to find than ever. I'll think of something to do with it later.
- Several new room descriptions are in place. Pay attention, as some mention new items.
- And the usual bug fixes.

I need a list of missing character responses (things a character should probably know about). On a separate ream, I need a list of missing objects (things mentioned in a room description that seem significant, but aren't handled).

Are you hitting the monsters enough now? Are they hitting back?

Date: 20 Aug 1987 2159-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 24 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The prologue is in.
- Scrolls and wands identified by the old woman now change their descriptions to match. Check this thoroughly.
- Bugs fixed.

Date: 21 Aug 1987 1121-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 24-B To: TESTERS at FRED

- The shillelagh appears now.
- Scrolls work again.
- Your old v.24 saves should still work.

Date: 24 Aug 1987 2204-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 26 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The opening prologue/character setup sequence is now in its final form:
- You can restore directly from the boot screen.
- A new menu lets you choose what flavor of character setup you want.
- There are now 6 predefined characters instead of one. Their names are generic and temporary; suggestions for amusing names are welcome.
- You now supply the name and sex of the character last instead of first.
- More chances to change your mind are provided.
- You're given a chance to save your character before starting.
- All duplicate monsters have been banished to the Plane of Good Riddances. No more infinite Shapes or Skeletons. And no more corbies to fight off!
- The mystery of the invisible crocodile is solved.
- And other bug fixes.

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1503-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Beyond Zork To: prof cc: clr, jon

Brian, apparently bugs aren't being fixed at a very expedient rate. In fact, it seems that they're not being fixed at any rate. According to the testers, there are still bugs in the alpha bug book unfixed and you're adding new puzzles. I'm at my wit's end.

I know you realize that this game is supposed to ship in two weeks, but it doesn't seem to show. I thought we'd agreed that you would balance fixing bugs with adding text where it's needed. What's this about new puzzles and changing some old ones around?

I respect the part of your personality that prefers every little detail to be in its place, etc. This quality definitely shows in the finished product of the previous two games you've done. But I feel that your compulsiveness in this case is being more destructive than positive. I've read the gamma reports, and those from this past weekend, and although they all like the game, almost every one said that it needed more work. That bothers me. And worries me. I can't tie your thumbs together, and I certainly can't freeze the version that's currently up. And I'm angry because you're doing just what you said you were going to do - implement up to the last minute.

By not keeping to the schedule, and doing these things the way you damn well please, you're showing disrespect to me and my group. Your job is to write games and fix the bugs that turn up as it progresses; our job is to find bugs and hone the game so it fits into its next stage. So far you've done both our jobs, forcing the schedule — and forcing us to perform out of preference. (We don't care for games to have two betas and no gamma—for example.)

In case you skipped over the previous paragraphs, I've had it. There's no point for your game to be in testing right now, because no bugs have been fixed therefore, no real opportunity for new bugs to be found. I'd just as soon have the testers working on projects that need their attention. Let me know when you've fixed some bugs.

Date: 27 Aug 1987 1153-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 27 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Fewer monsters. The likelihood of running into more than one at a time is much lower. If you "surprise" a monster, its attack is delayed.
- No more hiding in vehicles to escape attacks. The pterodactyl is no haven, either.
- Placeholders squashed.
- Lots and lots and lots of bugs fixed.

Date: 28 Aug 1987 1155-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 28 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The bartering system has been completely revamped. Instead of that crummy credit system, which people had trouble understanding, you now have cold, hard CASH, which everybody understands. Sorry to introduce such a major change so late, but the improvement is dramatic.
- Several bugs fixed.

Date: 30 Aug 1987 2316-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 29 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Billyuns and billyuns of bugs fixed.
- Many placeholders axed. The big ones have to wait till I can find more room.
- Potions!

- Some monsters require special equipment to handle.

The only story elements still missing are a riddle for the pool of radiance, and a proper ending. The grues and lucksuckers also need adjustment.

Date: 31 Aug 1987 1141-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 30 To: TESTERS at FRED

The same as 29, except now the vague outline stays dead. Your saves probably won't work.

Date: 1 Sep 1987 2346-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 31 To: TESTERS at FRED

- The potion of Forgetfulness now unmakes the entire map. You also forget how to draw glyphs. Hee.
- The caves are more or less complete.
- The hourglass can be bought with the Crocodile's Tear.
- The default characters and random generator have been tweaked.
- Many bugs fixed.

Squeezing has begun. Beware!

Date: 2 Sep 1987 1121-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 32 To: TESTERS at FRED

Fixes a few embarrassments.

Date: 4 Sep 1987 1103-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Beta 33 To: TESTERS at FRED

- Placeholders filled.
- Bugs squashed.

Date: 8 Sep 1987 1122-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ 38 To: TESTERS at FRED

- All placeholders gone, except for the fireworks scroll, which may be deleted to save space.
- You must have lots of IQ to use the Scrystone. Unless you built a super-genius character, the only way to get enough is to eat the fish cake, drink the IQ potion and wear the Pheehelm (which now boosts your IQ as well as letting you "see" grues).
- A candy bar to the first tester who sees the ending. Can YOU make it to Level 0 Novice?

Date: 8 Sep 1987 1138-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ To: testers at FRED

Another candy bar to the tester with the best typo. The decision of the judge (me) is final.

Date: 8 Sep 1987 1215-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Oops To: TESTERS at FRED

The technical nymph is version 38 has been scolded and sent home. I tried to save your SAVEs, but no dice. Sigh.

Beyond Zork reaches the first Freeze:

Date: 10 Sep 1987 0214-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Freeze 0 To: TESTERS at FRED

Quick! Play it before it melts!

Date: 10 Sep 1987 2156-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ Freeze 1 To: TESTERS at FRED

Measurably less crufty.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1136-EDT From: Elitzna Langizi <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: CARL'S BEYOND ZORK AD PROOF To: EVERYBODY at FRED

To whoever stole Carl's Beyond Zork ad proof off his door: If I don't get it back and I found out who took it, I will kill him. I need it now. You have until 1:30 to return it.
Carl

Date: 14 Sep 1987 1142-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Gary & visiclues To: da

Gary's the primary person on Beyond Zork - which is shipping today. This means that visiclues will have to sit in the rumble seat for a day or so.

Date: 14 Sep 1987 1239-EDT From: Captain Bug <GARY at FRED>
Subject: VIVICLUES To: DA

IT'S SOUP. <GARY>VISICLUES.TXT.0

Date: 16 Sep 1987 0658-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.47 To: TESTERS at FRED

Oh? Is it done? I'm just so used to sending these things ...

Thanks, everyone.

Date: 29 Sep 1987 1705-EDT From: ecalaP noJ <JON at FRED>
Subject: Hintbook copy To: DA cc: Jon

The final copy for Plundered Hearts and Beyond Zork Hint booklet is in:

<INTERLOGIC.HINTBOOKS>PH-AND-BZ.HINTS.1

Formatted as I mentioned earlier: .b for bold, .p for plain, .i for italic.

Date: 17 Dec 1987 1020-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: BZ v.54 To: TESTERS at FRED, TAA at FRED

This version is EXACTLY the same as 53, except that the code has been rearranged to run faster on Apple //s, C128s and any machine that hits the disk a lot.

An early ad for Beyond Zork

Ten years ago, in June of 1977, *Zork I* was born. Since that time, it has, along with its popular sequels, *Zork II* and *Zork III*, 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 and we have introduced many new and exciting games which have met with critical acclaim both from you and from our peers in the industry. But it has always been "the Zorks" that have drawn the most favorable and evocative comments. The phrase "give us more Zorks" has appeared in many times.

However, we have been cautious about writing a new Zork game, with the feeling that any game with the Zork 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. Well, we are now confidant that we have taken that step and therefore we would like to give you a birthday present; 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 throughout Quendor (also known as the Great Underground Empire). 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*.
****

Beyond Zork is set in the southlands of Quendor. But the upheaval caused by the passing of the Age of Magick has plunged the once-peaceful region into total chaos. With monsters of all shapes, sizes, and cunning running amok, it looks like 966 is shaping up to be a whole new Frobozzball game.

In *Beyond Zork* you're an 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.
****

And that light is self-improvement.

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.

Your newly created "self" will have to solve many fantastic new puzzles involving many wonderous 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 successful 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 (see side bar) 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.

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 … _____

"Sales blurb" for dealers

Package Elements

The *Beyond Zork* diskette; the handsome, lavishly-illustrated *Lore and Legends of Quendor*; and a fabulous map.

Features and Benefits

Beyond Zork casts you back to the universe of the *Zork Trilogy*, the best-selling entertainment software of all time! The nearly 1 million owners (and lovers!) of *Zork* are sure to make *Beyond Zork* a best-seller.

The enhanced features of *Beyond Zork* offer gaming customers new vistas in interactive fiction. The addition of programmable function keys, on-screen mapping, a convenient display window, and character attributes, are exciting innovations that will entice Infocom faithful and novices alike.

Beyond Zork expands the interactive fiction market. Mixing elements of role-playing adventure games with interactive fiction, *Beyond Zork* attracts role-playing gamers as well as those intrigued by the alluring new concept of the combination.

Beyond Zork is written by Brian Moriarty, whose award-winning titles include *Trinity* and *Wishbringer*. His name-recognition with gamers is attributed to his powerful writing and clever puzzles.

Availability

System	Product #	ISBN #	UPC #	Price
Apple II series	TD-IZ8	0-87321-352-1	0 51051 01352	$39.95
Macintosh	ID-IZ8	0-87321-358-0	0 51051 01358	$39.95
Atari ST	SD-IZ8	0-87321-367-X	0 51051 01367	$39.95
Commodore 128	DD-IZ8	0-87321-371-8	0 51051 01371	$34.95
Amiga	WD-IZ8	0-87321-374-2	0 51051 01374	$39.95
IBM series and 100% compatibles	PD-IZ8	0-87321-389-0	0 51051 01398	$39.95

Beyond Zork: The Coconut of Quendor
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Border Zone

by Marc Blank — initial game design by Stu Galley
***Espionage* series, catalog #IE1**

Border Zone's inception:

Game Ideas

SABOTEUR (similar to *Border Zone)*
This is a puzzle-oriented ToA with a James Bond theme. You parachute into the Amazonian jungle to destroy the deadly MacGuffin Ray being built by a mad scientist for an evil South American dictator. Little does the dictator know that the scientist plans to RULE THE WORLD! Cackle, chortle. Treacherous guides, nubile young ladies, pits full of crocodiles, great gadgetry, and all that yummy stuff.

First working title of Border Zone:

Date: 23 Jul 1984 0809-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: SPY and TRINITY To: SWG

Read SPY.MSS, sounds like fun. Maybe the player could locate the Good Spy's room and/or luggage, and find some interesting Q-type gadgets like a flamethrower wristwatch or something.
Let me know what you think of <IDEAS>TRINITY.MSS.

Date: 23 Jul 1984 0908-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: SPY To: SWG cc: JON

Perhaps as soon as next week, we'll have to give to G/R the initial input for their "creative focus." One thing I'd like us to think about — and maybe everybody at Impy's lunch could consider — is the use of the "browsie." Personally, I think the browsies work best when they're integrally tied to the game (the new SUSPENDED and SEASTALKER packages) or accurately reflect the tone of the story (HITCHHIKER'S). We should also think about appropriate internal elements ("feelies"). (You may have thought about these already.)
G/R will almost certainly suggest other ideas for the browsie and feelies; and we certainly don't have to make any final decisions yet. But we should give G/R our ideas so they have a starting point.
In what files, by the way, can I find your spoiler and non-spoiler SPY synopses?

Date: 26 Sep 1984 0854-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: SPY Testing To: SWG cc: DA

Hollywood says the Quality Assurance Department won't be ready to test your spy thriller until Oct. 3 or 4. I'll plan to start playing it on Oct. 1 (Mon.).

Date: 5 Oct 1984 0950-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Browsie To: SWG cc: Jon

Your browsie sample is wonderfully written — you have a real ear for Frotzenish English. I laughed out loud at a number of phrases: the "platform, where you say hello and goodbye"; "cars for dining as much as you feel"; etc. If we (you and G/R and I) can find enough material to talk about ("Our Beloved People," "Our Beloved Anthem," ...?), I'd like to maintain the style you've set. To keep the browsie airy-looking, every page, I think, should have at least one photo.

Date: 12 Oct 1984 1418-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: What's in a name? To: swg

I liked CHECKPOINT a lot better than any other I've heard mentioned.
-marc

Date: 12 Oct 1984 1456-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: What's in a name? To: BLANK cc: SWG

Yeah, me too. Except I'm also attracted to STEAM AND VARIATIONS.

Date: 18 Oct 1984 1454-EDT From: SWG
Subject: CHECKPOINT To: SCF cc: SWG

Release 18 is ready for testing now. (My pile of bugs is empty!)
The next "feature" I'm planning is the CHECKPOINT itself, at Grnz station.

Date: 11 Nov 1984 2037-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: From SPY.... To: imps at ZORK

```
>KISS GIRL
The girl kisses you right back. Wow, is your face red!
```

There must be some mistake. I'm not Dornbrook!

(Does Mike Dornbrook blush when kissed?)

Date: 21 Nov 1984 1140-EST From: SWG
Subject: CHECKPOINT To: EFY,LARRY,MGQ cc: SWG

I gave you access (I hope!) to my "spy thriller" Checkpoint.
To run it, just type CHECKPOINT. Have fun!

Date: 4 Dec 1984 0949-EST From: SWG
Subject: Checkpoint testing To: SCF cc: SWG

Is Checkpoint off your priority list or something?
Nobody in your group has tested it significantly since before Thanksgiving.
What's the story?

Date: 24 Dec 1984 0926-EST From: SWG
Subject: need to talk To: BLANK cc: SWG

I'd like to talk with you about Checkpoint and other possibly depressing things. How about lunch together, or at least a coffee break?
-- Stu.

Date: 24 Dec 1984 1025-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: need to talk To: SWG

Your wish is my command. How's about in about 10 minutes (10:35).
-marc

Date: 24 Dec 1984 1407-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Chickpeas To: swg

Let me know as soon as you've decided what you want to do so that Jon and I can make plans. Thanks.

Excerpt from a message about Bureaucracy:

Date: 28 Dec 1984 1655-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Jerry & Douglas To: MD

At any rate, I think things are working out here. I asked Marc today if he WANTED to work on CHECK-POINT. His answer was NO: rather, he's WILLING to work on it if Stu can't. So I'm still not sure what he WANTS to do.

Date: 23 Jan 1985 1802-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Chase… To: SWG

I don't know if you ever saw my ideas (partial though they are) for a chase scene. I have copied the file CHASE.TXT to your directory. Feel free to ignore it.

Date: 18 Feb 1985 1439-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: an idea To: blank, jon cc: swg

I had an idea last Friday night for Checkpoint.

As I develop "scripts" for the "bad guy" in each variation, I realize that an important part of the player's goal is to deal with the "bad guy" as an opponent in a crowded maze of train compartments and station platforms.

Then the idea struck:

Would it be fun to have another variation where TWO players each take one of the opposing roles and play against each other? This would certainly be feasible in the PLUS environment, since the program could clear the screen for each player's turn and show each one only the info that s/he ought to see.

(To be truthful, I've been hoping to conceive some innovation that would justify using the PLUS system, beyond the looser limits on size and so on.)

The programming would be straightforward, I think. The question is: would it be fun? Would it be too tedious for two people to swap the keyboard often and to avoid looking at the screen half the time? If not, I think this would be an exciting innovation to try out.

Recap: The player(s) would choose, at the very beginning, whether or not the program will control one opponent, and if so which one. If not, the players would get to play against each other, two characters involved in one story.

(If Checkpoint is not a good vehicle for this idea, I still think it's worth considering for another product.)

Comments?

Date: 18 Feb 1985 1455-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: an idea To: SWG

My answer to both questions is "yes": it WOULD be fun, and it WOULD be tedious to swap the keyboard and look away from the screen half the time. (In Fooblitzky, players look away only once, at the very beginning of the game. Even that one time seems annoying and unnatural.)

Taking turns at the keyboard isn't great, but the looking-away idea REALLY bothers me. I think the SPY vs. SPY idea is good, but with one terminal I think it's impractical.

-Jon

P.S. I've got (finally!) some story ideas, which I'll give you shortly.

Date: 18 Feb 1985 1546-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Multi-player Checkpoint To: SWG cc: jon

My reactions are:

1) It is an interesting concept, similar in some ways to the old multi-player Zork we were thinking of implementing back at the lab. It adds the additional dimension of directly competing, though, which could turn out to be pretty interesting.
2) The passing of the keyboard and waiting for the other player to finish his move is a DISASTER as far as game play is concerned. I don't see any reasonable way of making it fun for the players to interact (and that's what this whole thing is about).
3) The idea may have a lot of merit if/when modem-controlled multi-player games become technically/economically feasible.
4) There is no fourth reaction.
5) The last reaction is correct.

Date: 18 Feb 1985 1634-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: CHECKPOINT To: SWG

Some random ideas:

You can hold 1 person at gunpoint. The person will give you what he or she has. If you try to DO anything while holding someone at gunpoint (OPEN CASE, TURN LATCH, etc.), the person will escape and you'll be arrested. Also, every time the train goes through a dark tunnel, the train goes dark and the person escapes. You have to HIT (PERSON) WITH THE GUN (or some other suitably hard object — any coconuts?) to knock them out, or kill the person (but killing is messy and, as you'll see, no good).

You can get the uniform from the waiter (the best place to do this would be in the pantry, where you might hide the body in a cabinet or under a tablecloth or something). POINT GUN AT WAITER (he gives you apron, pen, lighter, whatever), HIT WAITER WITH GUN, UNDRESS WAITER, PUT ON WAITER'S UNIFORM (if you killed the waiter, the uniform would be too bloody), PUT ON APRON, GO TO THE CORRECT BOOTH, WAIT FOR THE INNOCENT BYSTANDER (who, upon arrival, orders purple wine), PUT POISONOUS TABLET (or SLEEPING TABLET) IN WINE, GIVE WINE TO INNOCENT BYSTANDER (who pours some wine on the scarf but also sips a little*), TAKE FILM/DOCUMENT (whatever) FROM INNOCENT BYSTANDER.

*Maybe when YOU are the innocent bystander, you have to sip some wine before pouring it on the scarf; otherwise the waiter gets upset. If you sip the wine the waiter leaves.

You can get the key from the conductor (the best place to do this is in a restroom, where you can lock up the conductor). POINT GUN AT CONDUCTOR (he gives you the ticker puncher?), HIT HIM WITH THE GUN, TAKE KEY, GO TO Nth COMPARTMENT (it's locked), UNLOCK COMPARTMENT DOOR WITH KEY, POINT GUN AT INNOCENT BYSTANDER ...

or (once you have key) GO TO LUGGAGE CAR (it's locked), UNLOCK LUGGAGE DOOR WITH KEY, FIND SIMILAR BRIEFCASE (or OPEN BLUE SUITCASE and find a film canister), GO TO Nth COMPARTMENT, HIT BYSTANDER WITH GUN, SWITCH BRIEFCASES (or SWITCH FILM)

Dangers: If you're doing all this knocking out nonsense before the Checkpoint, you'll be caught by the authorities. Or, if you're caught with bodies red-handed, you'll be arrested. Or, knocked-out people can "wake up" and turn you in. So timing is essential.

Thought: If you could get rid of the body (or bodies) by throwing them off the train, you'd be safe. But it's pretty unlikely that you could get a body from a compartment to a rear vestibule without being seen. (But maybe you COULD do it, especially with the conductor or the waiter).

Hitting is still violent, which I don't like; but at least it's better than killing.

Date: 19 Feb 1985 1440-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Chickpeas To: IMPS at ZORK

Per Dr. Wolper's suggestion, I have created EZ:DIRECTION.EXE, which starts up Checkpoint with automatic transcript.

Border Zone reaches Alpha testing:

Date: 11 Mar 1985 1328-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Checkpoint To: SCF at ZORK, DA at ZORK cc: IMPS at ZORK

... is ready for alpha-testing (again!). To run it, type SPY.

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1655-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Checkpoint To: INFOTESTERS at ZORK cc: SWG

Please stick to the traveler's viewpoint for the time being. I'm working on changing the plot to alter the spy's goal.

Discussions begin on when Border Zone can ship:

Date: 28 Mar 1985 1302-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Checkpoint To: SWG

When will the spy versions be ready to go back to testing? Obviously the sooner the better. Early next week? I need to know how likely it is that Checkpoint is coming out this year.

Date: 28 Mar 1985 1344-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Checkpoint To: JON cc: SWG

Yeah, early next week is a good guess. I consider it 99% likely that Checkpoint will be shipped this year.

By the way, the testers haven't run it at all in the last week. I guess they're too busy with Wishbringer and Sampler.

Date: 29 Mar 1985 0847-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Checkpoint To: JON cc: swg

As I recall, the last thing you said to me yesterday was that the testers are "not enthusiastic" about Checkpoint. Since then, I've been wondering what you (or they) meant.

Let's talk.

Date: 20 May 1985 1455-EDT From: SWG
Subject: a gentle reminder To: BLANK cc: JON,SWG

If "Bureaucracy" gets bogged down (Is that a tautology?), and we're not prevented by agreement from postponing it, let's not forget that you could revive "Checkpoint" and probably finish it this year.

Date: 20 May 1985 1458-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: a gentle reminder To: SWG

I appreciate the reminder; the problem, however, is that it's not clear which would take longer to do. On the one hand, Douglas is somewhat of a pain to work with, but on the other hand, I would have to stop in my tracks (ha, ha) and change my train of thought (ugh). My worry is that derailing Bureaucracy might cause the Douglas Adams timetable to be upset, leading to our missing a chance at Hitchhiker's II next Christmas.

No, really.

Date: 16 Jun 1985 0838-EDT From: SWG
Subject: new games To: BLANK cc: SWG

Too bad you had to miss the "re-budgeting" meeting on Friday. It went well, I think, with lots of ideas brought up.

In the Imps' group, we'll probably concentrate on ensuring the timely release of new games until Christmas. And I've been wondering about both my role and your role in that. We could help Steve & Dave fix bugs, etc. What about Bureaucracy and/or Checkpoint? I wonder if you & I (& Brian?) could work together to finish something this year. As Joel said, another game in the autumn won't help us thru summer — but if we defer a lot of current expenses till autumn, it would be nice to count on more revenue then, too.

Date: 16 Jun 1985 1841-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: new games To: SWG

Bureaucracy is totally hopeless and I wouldn't even bother giving it a moment's thought. Basically, since Douglas is in the critical path and he is uncontrollable, we can't EVER be sure of when it will be done.

Checkpoint is worth a little consideration, but I really don't believe it's salvageable without a LOT of work. This corresponds to a LOT of time, the quantity of which is short. In order to get it out this year, it would need to be in beta-test within a month or so. My gut tells me we'll put out an inferior game on that timetable, but I wouldn't mind arguing about it a little.

My current best idea for a "new" game is to polish up, re-write, and EXTENDEDify DEADLINE and then push it as if it were a new game. I've mentioned this to Jon, and he sounded pretty enthusiastic. You've got to admit, it would be cheap and doable!

Thanks for the note. I hope to be at the continuation meeting on Monday, whenever it is.

June 17, 1985 - April 20, 1987 — no information on Checkpoint, except for a mention in Stu Galley's "Ideas for Next Project" on 10-20-86:

CHECKPOINT *(Border Zone)*:

You, an innocent train traveler in a foreign country, get mixed up with spies and have to be as clever as they to survive. Or, you take the viewpoint of a spy in a similar scenario. Much of the groundwork for this product is already laid; what it needs is some "flash" in the style of 007 movies, and a more varied and/or interesting plot.

What happened that caused Checkpoint to be set aside for 1½ years? Working on Bureaucracy seems to be the most likely culprit.

Date: 21 Apr 1987 2206-EST From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: DA

First, I just called Tim about the SS problem, and I fixed it (with coaching from him...) - it works now, so now excuses, get back to work or you're promoted...

Things are OK here. I'm trying to get an alpha'ish version of the 2nd scenario of SPY up and running by May 1, and I think it's possible...Lots of coding (as opposed to writing), so it will be fun to debug.

I hadn't heard about any move ... details.....

Date: 11 May 1987 1824-EDT: From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: SPY To: Marc cc: jon

I've had a tough day. I've been shot at, I've been arrested, I practically bled to death, I got lost in the cold — you think it's easy evaluating games when you're constantly fighting for survival?

Some thoughts, in no order of importance:

1. I like the "real-time interrupts" (maybe I'm misusing terminology?), where something happens even if I do nothing. It works very well in making me feel like I better keep moving and do something!
2. Of course, it's messy when these interrupts interrupt when I'm typing, so I get something that looks like this:

```
>TAKE T
 You hear an automobile in the distance.
       HE BOLT-CUTTERS
```

   Messy, but I can live with it. Chris and Tim scratched their heads when I mentioned this problem — maybe they can "fix" it?
3. I'm somewhat embarrassed at my lack of progress in the game. (If you read my scripts, you'll probably think "Hasn't this clown ever played an Infocom game before?") So what if I didn't do well? I enjoyed myself, dammit, and that's what's important, right?
4. I can't figure out how to get past the searchlights. I did actually get past them, twice even: but it was a fluke. I don't know "how" I did so. I tried deduction first. I figured the left searchlight was northwest of me, the right searchlight was northeast of me, and the center searchlight was north of me. So I figured, I said to myself, I said, "Jon, old boy, you're freezing to death, but if you wait 'til that left searchlight is pointing away from you, that is, pointing northwest, AND the right searchlight is also pointing away from you, that is, pointing northeast, AND you can maybe somehow figure out when the center searchlight is pointing away from you, well then old boy maybe there's a tiki bowl at the end of the adventure." But NOOOO ... The left searchlight "caught" me when it was pointing northwest. Now, maybe there's a bug; or maybe the text description needs to be clearer. As I said, trial-and-error got me past the searchlights — but I'm sure that's not meant to be the only solution.
5. Call me a pest, call me wimp ("You're a pest!" "You're a wimp!"), but I'm not crazy about "guess what puzzle the author's going to throw at you." By luck, I got past the searchlights (see #4 [four] {IV} above) only to discover that I need the bolt-cutters and the rubber gloves. Now, yes, a good spy/adventurer takes everything he or she finds, just in case. But I don't think I have enough time to take everything in the shed (do I?), so guessing the bolt-cutters and rubber gloves instead of the hammer and saw isn't deductive, just guesswork. Right? Or am I supposed to have enough time to take everything? (Maybe the other tools are useful later on ...?) A small point, in any case.
6. Should I be mapping? I usually don't, unless I have to (of course, in most games, you DO have to). I seem to be getting by without a map. Then again, I don't seem to be getting very far ...
7. Overall, I'm enjoying myself. I'm not reporting bugs (much), for a variety of reasons, including: (1) I'm still unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the on-line bug-reporting system (I reported a crash to Tim) (2) I'm not finding a lot of bugs (3) I only bother reporting big ugly nasty bugs at this early point (4) there is no 4 and (5) I don't like slowing down or stopping to report bugs when I'm "caught up" in the excitement you're trying (rather successfully, I think) to build.
8. Apologies in advance: I'll only be playing the game a few hours a day, at least in the very immediate future, since I have to attend to other important (and often less interesting) duties.
9. Is any of this feedback useful? I'll try to keep in touch.

Good job!

Date: 13 May 1987 1318-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Schedule To: Marc cc: CLR, Liz, jon

Chris, Liz, and I looked at your schedule. We have no problem staggering the alpha dates (as long as you don't think that reported bugs will slow your progress on unfinished scenarios), and the dates you proposed are fine. However, for your information, we won't be staggering the beta dates. We'll be sending the "complete" game on one disk to many outside testers at once, rather that sending three disks at three different times. You MAY (though this is up to you) want to tweak your implementing plans as a result, so that scenarios 1 and 3 enter alpha closer together.

In answer to your question about advances: we'll pay the alpha advance in 3 installments since the game is entering alpha in 3 installments.

I hope to get back to SPY tomorrow, if only for a short while. I've reminded Mike about your travel arrangements.

Date: 8 Jun 1987 0114-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: SPY To: TESTERS at FRED

For some unknown reason, IN (as a direction) doesn't want to work. Try using the real direction until I figure it out.

Date: 8 Jun 1987 0132-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spy… To: TESTERS at FRED

Ignore previous message. Also, ignore next message.

Date: 13 Jun 1987 1152-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Film / Scenario 1 To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED

I have removed the 'sliver of film'; it is now impossible to pull the film back out of the old roll. The parser problems are horrible and not prone to solution (Which film do you mean, the old roll, the color roll, or the piece of film?), etc. Ambiguities everywhere. Sorry.

Date: 14 Jun 1987 1033-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Also… To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED, ELIZ at FRED

Also, I've incorporated the dynamic movement descriptions in scenario 1 for the same reasons.

Border Zone will now have a real-time clock as the game progresses:

Date: 14 Jun 1987 1031-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spy To: TESTERS at FRED cc: jon at FRED, eliz at FRED

I've decided to put the real-time element into all three of the Checkpoint scenarios, for the following reasons:

1) The first and third scenarios have relatively few interrupts anyway, so the difference is slight.

2) The player will get a chance to ease into the new scheme in scenario 1 before having it hit him/her in the head in scenario 2.
3) The manual will not have to explain two completely different systems of interrupts, and how they work.

Credit for this wonderful idea goes to Gary, by the way.

Date: 17 Jun 1987 0037-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spy To: TESTERS at FRED

I have put an entirely new description module into the game, so you can expect description bugs. Please don't report the same thing a million times; just one example of each type of lossage will do. Thanks.

Date: 11 Jul 1987 2255-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Real-time vs. Checkpoint To: LIZ, JON, PDL

There is a command, $REAL, that turns off the real-time interrupts, using ONLY "game time". It is certainly easier to play the scenarios through for the first time that way, so that you don't lose time reading things.

I wonder if there should be two different modes of play - realtime and not realtime; the former being more of a challenge for those who want the additional tension. The only problem would be in the 2nd scenario; the entire concept of WATCHing requires the real-time stuff to be on.

I'd be interested in your comments, or those of the other testers, regarding the whole real-time business. I happen to like it, though I can see wanting it the other way too.

Play around and send comments. Thanks.

BTW- $REAL toggles the real-time mode, in fact.

-marc

Date: 12 Jul 1987 2147-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Bio To: jon, eliz

I've updated my bio; it lives in BIO.TXT in the I1: directory. Feel free to improve/butcher it; I did.

Date: 13 Jul 1987 1056-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC

Hi,

We are still very interested in further games from you. The main issue is what genre make sense for the next game and are you still interested in possible collaborations? I asked Cindy Weiss (PR person) to look into spy authors. No response yet.

The real-time stuff in SPY is a good hack and will serve to differentiate the game. It would be optimal if your next game (or games) also broke similar new ground (either genre, technological or collaboration). Send me any current ideas you have for future games.

As far as the deal is concerned, are you looking for a contract to cover multiple games? What kind of other twiddles are you interested in?

Finally, your modem lossage seems very similar to problems I have when my phone line gets excessively noisy. Is that a possibility? Do you hear static when you make voice calls?

Cheers, Chris

p.s. We ran SPY on the Atari ST (one of the working XZIPs) and it seemed to work. Not so lucky on the C128 and Apple II but should work soon.

Date: 24 Jul 1987 0313-EDT
Subject: Hints in SPY

From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: JON at FRED, TESTERS at FRED

At the moment, the hint mechanism is totally dead, thanks to a problem with the new compiler. I have Tim working on it; with luck, it will be better later in the day. Sorry.

Date: 24 Jul 1987 0330-EDT
Subject: Spy Hints

From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: LIZ at FRED, TESTERS at FRED

Now working again (i.e. never mind).

Date: 27 Jul 1987 1155-EDT
Subject: SPY

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: IMPS at FRED

Marc has a bug, for which he couldn't find any retrofixes. Can you help?

The bug:

```
LOOK AT POST
Which post ... the northeast post, the northwest post, etc.
NORTHWEST
```

[Sends you in NW direction instead of supplying the adjective NW.]

Date: 27 Jul 1987 1846-EDT
Subject: Hi

From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: JON

How's it going? I'm working my way through the dozens of bug reports that appear every day; thankfully, most of these are nits or bizarre inputs (put wound in wound, cover blood with me). Sigh.

Any idea on when we'll go for beta? Any packaging news? And what about Naomi?

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1503-EDT
Subject: Re: Real Time

From: Assertive Klan Newt <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
To: JON

Adding time when the player has to read large amounts of text sounds like a good idea. How about three "excitement" levels. The levels would be directly linked to the persons reading/typing ability. Level one wouldn't add any time to the original game, level two would add ten seconds and level three would add about 20 seconds. I don't know, to accurately gauge a players abilities would be very difficult.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1505-EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Real Time To: JON

I like the idea of a "slower clock" but in some respects, this would be like "disabled real time" since people who played through it with the slow clock would have no incentive to try again with the faster one. Of course, people who were frustrated with the faster time would probably try it again with slow time. I personally don't think the timing is a problem in the 1st scenario. In fact, I Zed through a lot of it. I also don't think it's a problem in the 2nd scenario. The only place where time is tight is when you must attach the pen to the post, climb up the tower, and get rid of the guard before the tower falls and/or the guards get you. But this puzzle involves a lot more than time. It involves the location of the guards, the moment at which you set the explosive, etc. The only scenario that REALLY has a problem with time is the third one. My vote is to have no options — just give the player (every player) more time in the 3rd scenario. Then if you do manage to solve it 5 or 10 minutes before the ceremony starts — great. You'd still have a sense of urgency. But I bet most people will still prevent the assassination just in the nick of time.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1541-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Real Time To: JON cc: LIZ

Jon, for all your stated reasons, I agree. I wholeheartedly support a slow-mo clock, where players do have some sort of "chance". I feel people will want to read the colorful text, and they lose a lot when the real time kicks in and they're dead before they've finished the paragraph. Also, for slow typists like Joe, a slow mo would be helpful.

These are things we've mentioned before, and unfortunately I feel that the discussion could quickly turn to a philosophical one as soon as people start discussing how real, real-time should be. In playing the game, I've felt handicapped because the game knows how to play... This is something that I can usually take a long time talking about, and I know in this sitting my fingers will wear out. Let's make time to talk about it instead.

liz

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1511-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Real time changes To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED, CLR at FRED

As an experiment, I have added two new commands to CHECKPOINT.

SLOW - Slows the real-time clock to one tick per three seconds (I have made this the default; is that right?)
FAST - Speeds up the clock to one tick per second (this is the way it's been working).

Let me know that you think (clearly, the parameters can be changed arbitrarily, but one has to start somewhere...)

These commands will be in the next version (due in about 30 minutes). Have fun.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1542-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Ready… To: JON at FRED, TESTERS at FRED

New version (with FAST/SLOW) is ready.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1015-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Spy To: JON cc: LIZ

Yup, I officially declared it in alpha, and Steve has been diligently checking bugs. (I'm sorry, I thought I'd told you.) Yesterday Steve told me that there aren't a whole lot of bugs and that beta couldn't be far off. He'll be checking bugs - I'd guess beta to be at latest 8/13. Does that fit with the schedule? What is the schedule, by the way?

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1054-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Spy To: JON cc: LIZ

I expect next week to be fairly hectic busting Brian's chops toward gamma (Wednesday the 5th). Certainly I'll aim to get Spy out to beta by the end of the week. I don't think 6 weeks of outside testing is too short for Spy because it has on-line hints and really isn't as "big" as other games.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1458-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Real Time To: JON

I'm very sensitive to the issue (I suggested the $REAL command myself, sensing the frustration.) Let me, rather than gobble up bytes, log out and think about it for a few hours and try to find a more optimal solution (I'm not ruling out your suggestion, by the way; I just need to think out the ramifications...)

As I think of it, the SLOW option would only change the amount of "waiting time" that the game believes is one second (i.e. it might tick one second every three or four REAL seconds). This would have no ill effects or side-effects that I can think of, and can be installed in about 2 minutes. As an initial attack, should I install a SLOW command that, say, makes each game second be three real seconds?

Date: 29 Jul 1987 0114-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Have you ever tried...? To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED

I've including some of these things in the invisiclues. Suggestions are always welcome.

Date: 29 Jul 1987 1155-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Real-time, etc. To: JON

Just a few thoughts before leaving for the morning. There are three generic ways of mitigating the real-time problems.

1) Make the problems real-time resistant. An example is the bomb/guards/searchlights problem which is completely real-time, but has enough flexibility that YOU can set the timer, move, etc. at your own pace; slow typists will just set the timer differently and have no more trouble than a fast typist.

2) Slow down real-time (like our current experiment).

3) Loosening the problems themselves. This can be done, of course, but each problem will have to be dealt with separately, leading to a greater likelihood of bugs cropping up. Also, if every problem were stretched by x time, then over-arching time issues crop up (for example, if ten problems in scene 3 were

extended by one minute, the assassination would have to be delayed ten minutes). For fast typists and proficient players, this would just be boring, reducing the tension and adding lots of WAITs to their play.

Does any of this make sense? If not, ignore it. Just wanted to let you know some of my thinking. Pass the note around if you wish.

Aloha.

-marc

Date: 4 Aug 1987 0922-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: BZ Manual To: DA

I can certainly check it after lunch, if that's OK. I may be in a meeting all morning, but if not, I'll check it before lunch.

Border Zone's final title is chosen:

Date: 4 Aug 1987 1805-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: SPY package To: Testers at FRED, Marc at FRED cc: Eliz at FRED

The title is BORDER ZONE. The package elements currently planned are:

- A guide book called "Spotlight on Frobnia" (or "Floodlight on Frobnia" — not "Gunsight on Frobnia"), which would include a section called "Say It in Frobnian." There's some anti-piracy here, since players need to know a few Frobnian phrases to finish Scene 1.

- A plot plan of the forest/swamp area south of the border zone. This "map" of minimal detail belongs to the owner of the Hut in Scene 2, and is printed by the Frobnian government, and tells him where his land ends. The guard towers are noted on the northernmost portion of the plot plan, and the hut, the train tracks, the road, and the swamp are all where they should be.

- A business card from Riznick's (sp?) Antique Shop in Scene 3. It will include the address of the shop (perhaps it just says something like "at the southwest corner of Ostnitz Square"?) so players may stumble upon it less randomly. We CAN include a "message" on the back of the card, if anybody can think of good or useful one. (A password is an obvious choice — you have to say "grandfather clock" to Riznick — but there's already a password puzzle in the scene.)

- A matchbook. Best idea I've heard: They are Frobnian National Railway matches. They appear in Scene 1 — maybe Topaz drops them accidentally drops them; maybe you have them and they get confiscated by Viper; maybe Viper has them all along. In any event, you have them in Scene 3, and you must use this instead of the cigarette. No need to worry about players setting things on fire: the matches don't work very well, like everything else in Frobnia (also like The Witness matches ...).

We have decided AGAINST using an Evatone record in this package. Some people feel that such a record should not contain anti-piracy material. Rather, it should be an atmosphere piece; and with the Firesign Theatre doing it, the record would be humorous, which isn't the right atmosphere.

One more thing: "Mumblevania" is no more. The neutral country is "Litzenburg."

All comments and suggestions are welcome.

Date: 5 Aug 1987 0144-EDT
Subject: Answer?
From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED

Is there an answer to the fast/slow issue, regarding defaults, whether it's a good idea, etc?

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1519-EDT
Subject: Fast vs. Slow
From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED

Here are the current results:

	1	2	3
Joe	Slow	Fast	Fast
Gary	Slow	Slow	Slow
Steve	Fast	Fast	Slow

What's an implementer to do?

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1340-EDT
Subject: Fast/slow time
From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: JON at FRED, TESTERS at FRED

Right now, the default is SLOW time for all scenarios. Is this right? Is there a consensus?

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1603-EDT
Subject: Fast vs. Slow
From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED, JON at FRED

It has been decided: SLOW for the 1st scenario, FAST for the 2nd and 3rd scenarios. The speed can always be changed with the FAST and SLOW commands.

Date: 7 Aug 1987 0154-EDT
Subject: Matches, map
From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

The matches and map (two feelies for the game) have been added to scenarios 3 and 2, respectively. Just warning you in case you bump into them.

Date: 10 Aug 1987 1353-EDT
Subject: Next version of SPY
From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

The next version will have new status line code to handle narrower screen widths. This could have any number of disastrous effects (though I'm fairly optimistic). Don't say you weren't warned!

Date: 10 Aug 1987 1528-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spy vs. C64 To: TESTERS at FRED, CLR at FRED, JON at FRED

I've updated the status line code, which appears to work at any width greater than 39 characters. Amazingly only one small bug appeared during the changeover, and it's not serious. Yow!

Date: 11 Aug 1987 1404-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Oops To: LIZ at FRED, TESTERS at FRED

Sorry about that; the newest version dies horribly from the first move due to a TYPO in the code; I've fixed it, so it should be working now.

Date: 12 Aug 1987 1853-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Desc Too Long To: TESTERS at FRED

If you ever see this in SPY, it means that the "short description" of the room you're in is too long to fit in the status line area allotted for it; naturally, this is crucial for machines with narrow screen displays.

To get the offender, just do a LOOK and report the description that caused offence.

Thanks.

A game-stopping bug is fixed:

Date: 13 Aug 1987 1124-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Oops! To: TESTERS at FRED

Scenes 1 and 2 of SPY are again playable. Oops!

Date: 14 Aug 1987 1537-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: c64-spy To: clr, taa, jon

Steve Watkins looked at Spy this morning on the 64 and had the following comments. It was returned to JD for more work.

Real time is off by 3 seconds a minute (loses every second turn-on the turn the disk isn't accessed).

Some timings:

```
>PUT DOCUMENT ON FRONT BENCH     25
TAKE PICTURE OF DOCUMENT         25
REWIND FILM                      20
OPEN CAMERA                      17
TAKE COLOR FILM                  25
TAKE TOWEL                       15
```

Prompt didn't appear after command

```
>OPEN WINDOW.
>TAKE DOCUMENT
>THROW DOCUMENT OUT WINDOW
```

The prompt is gone but comes back after a few moves

Status line wrecked after save

FYI- liz

Date: 18 Aug 1987 1545-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spy (Scene 2) To: TESTERS at FRED

Oops. In fixing a bug, I fucked up the wound/left arm stuff. I'm making a new version now; should be ready in about 20 mins. Sorry.

Date: 18 Aug 1987 0917-EDT From: Chaaa on Planet J <JON at FRED>
Subject: Spy manual To: DA

The spy manual, in <JON>SPY.MANUAL, is ready to be downloaded to MacWord. Can you download it? Then I'll "format" it (put in the boldface and italics etc.).

Date: 19 Aug 1987 1327-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spy To: TESTERS at FRED

I've done the following, based on suggestions from testers and beta people:

1) Bloodstain now visible on floor.
2) Shed description somewhat updated to make tools clearer.
3) Some help in the game for how to use binoculars (i.e. the right syntax)
4) Descriptions of the boots/work shoes that indicates why one is better than the other (i.e. what the soles are like).
5) L AT guards and searchlights now recommend watching them (so people don't forget it exists; and for people who won't read the manual.)

More to come.

Date: 25 Aug 1987 0903-EDT From: Chaaa on Planet J <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: brief To: DA

No. No brief mode in Border Zone.

Date: 27 Aug 1987 1206-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Scene 2 To: testers at FRED

The OUTSIDE SHED location is currently messed up. New version to follow soon.

Date: 29 Sep 1987 2013-EDT
Subject: New Features

From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: JON at FRED, LIZ at FRED, TESTERS at FRED

I've made a few mew things work:

1) WAIT X MINUTES
2) PAUSE

This latter command has me worried, since it isn't documented in the manual. On the other hand, everyone seems to want it. Opinions are sought.

Date: 7 Oct 1987 1244-EDT
Subject: Minor changes…

From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED, LIZ at FRED, JON at FRED

I've made the following minor changes, based on Gamma reports:

1) Changed some of the defaults from old games that aren't appropriate to Spy.
2) Made the "man falling off the train" more noticeable in the text.
3) Added "O" as a synonym of OOPS (nobody will know this, of course...)
4) Some text has been mildly rewritten.

These changes will be reflected in Release 2.

Border Zone
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Saboteur
Spy
Steam and Variations
Checkpoint
Chickpeas

Z

Bureaucracy

by Douglas Adams, W.E.B. "Fred" Morgan, and "the staff at Infocom"
***Comedy* series, catalog #IC2**

Bureaucracy's inception:

Date: 28 Dec 1984 1655-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Jerry & Douglas To: MD

Though Douglas did express some disappointment that he wouldn't be working with Marc (at least not immediately), he said he'd be happy to work with someone else. He doesn't remember Jerry, and would most like to meet him at CES (since he doesn't plan on being in or near Boston soon). So, sure enough, Jerry is flying out to Vegas on Saturday. Pat will arrange for the two of them to spend most of Sunday together, and Jerry will fly back here Monday.

Since neither Steve nor I will be in Vegas, I've asked Marc to "monitor" their discussions (make sure they do meet, do talk, do like each other, do decide to meet soon again with each other, etc.). Basically, I see Jerry and Douglas's meeting at CES as the honeymoon period — out of it will come, we hope, a happy marriage. Since you too will be in Vegas, please see if you can help JW and DNA get off to a good start.

Steve is quite willing to participate in the design stage of BUREAUCRACY. He suggested that he, Jerry, and Douglas meet fairly soon (within a month, say) for several days, to work out the beginning. Jerry will then go to work on the beginning. Then, a month or so later, they should meet again to work out the rest. I think that's a good plan, and mentioned it to both Jerry and Douglas, who too like the plan.

I never used the words "total creative control" when discussing Steve's role. Rather, I've been calling him "chief critical evaluator," and everyone seems happy with that. It will be Steve's job to tell Douglas his ideas are bad, unworkable, unusable, not worthwhile, etc., and provide constructive criticism. (Steve agrees that Jerry's criticism is not usually constructive.)

At any rate, I think things are working out here. I asked Marc today if he WANTED to work on CHECK-POINT. His answer was NO: rather, he's WILLING to work on it if Stu can't. So I'm still not sure what he WANTS to do.

If I don't see you next week, have a good trip.

Date: 5 Apr 1985 1154-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Bureaucracy draft To: JW at ZORK, imps at ZORK

I should point out that the "draft" is, in fact, VERY preliminary. I just wanted to know if anything struck them as a problem idea, or a comment about one of the general ideas, etc. ANY sort of comment is welcome. Thanks.

Date: 20 May 1985 1455-EDT From: SWG
Subject: a gentle reminder To: BLANK cc: JON,SWG

If "Bureaucracy" gets bogged down (Is that a tautology?), and we're not prevented by agreement from post-poning it, let's not forget that you could revive "Checkpoint" and probably finish it this year.

Date: 20 May 1985 1458-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: a gentle reminder To: SWG

I appreciate the reminder; the problem, however, is that it's not clear which would take longer to do. On the one hand, Douglas is somewhat of a pain to work with, but on the other hand, I would have to stop in my tracks (ha, ha) and change my train of thought (ugh). My worry is that derailing Bureaucracy might cause the Douglas Adams timetable to be upset, leading to our missing a chance at Hitchhiker's II next Christmas.

No, really.

Date: 20 May 1985 1158-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Bureaucracy To: MD

I don't know what's to be done. I didn't get the feeling in talking with Douglas that things were any different than before. I'm just working for now on stuff that's not controversial. I think that unless I can really just run with it entirely, it's hopeless. The best thing with Douglas would be for him to be here AMAP/ASAP (as much as possible, etc.) do sit with what's been done and planned and get some writing done.

Other than that, I can't think of anything you can do. I know you're worried about this; so am I. Mumble, sigh.

Date: 29 May 1985 1556-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Bureaucracy To: jon, md

In light of my discussions with Douglas yesterday and this afternoon at lunch, I cannot imagine finishing this game for 1985. Douglas' attitude (and Jon can correct me if I'm mistaken) seems to be less than I require in order to do a collaboration. Given what I have heard, I am convinced that I must wait for Douglas to "write" the game - I estimate this to take from 3-4 months. This would imply a release date sometime in February. Even this would be a struggle, since I'm not inclined to simply write Douglas' story for him. This would be a suitable task for a more Junior implementor.

I don't think I'm over-reacting on this. I can't think of a single instance in which Douglas has given in on a story point and, very frankly, I'm not in a frame of mind to bother arguing with him. I'm quite honestly completely frustrated with the whole thing, and I'm at the point of flushing the thing entirely and taking a few months long overdue vacation for June and July.

Have a nice day.

Date: 29 May 1985 1708-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Bureaucracy To: BLANK cc: md

Your objectionable, exceptionable, unacceptable, and totally unwelcome attitude — your gloomy, pessimistic, dispiriting, and dismal outlook — really cheered me up. Thanks!

Date: 16 Jun 1985 0838-EDT From: SWG
Subject: new games To: BLANK cc: SWG

Too bad you had to miss the "re-budgeting" meeting on Friday. It went well, I think, with lots of ideas brought up.

In the Imps' group, we'll probably concentrate on ensuring the timely release of new games until Christmas. And I've been wondering about both my role and your role in that. We could help Steve & Dave fix bugs, etc. What about Bureaucracy and/or Checkpoint? I wonder if you & I (& Brian?) could work together to finish some-

thing this year. As Joel said, another game in the autumn won't help us thru summer — but if we defer a lot of current expenses till autumn, it would be nice to count on more revenue then, too.

Date: 16 Jun 1985 1841-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: new games To: SWG

Bureaucracy is totally hopeless and I wouldn't even bother giving it a moment's thought. Basically, since Douglas is in the critical path and he is uncontrollable, we can't EVER be sure of when it will be done.

Checkpoint is worth a little consideration, but I really don't believe it's salvageable without a LOT of work. This corresponds to a LOT of time, the quantity of which is short. In order to get it out this year, it would need to be in beta-test within a month or so. My gut tells me we'll put out an inferior game on that timetable, but I wouldn't mind arguing about it a little.

My current best idea for a "new" game is to polish up, re-write, and EXTENDEDify DEADLINE and then push it as if it were a new game. I've mentioned this to Jon, and he sounded pretty enthusiastic. You've got to admit, it would be cheap and doable!

Thanks for the note. I hope to be at the continuation meeting on Monday, whenever it is.

Jeff O'Neill takes over the project:

Date: 26 Nov 1985 1914-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Rest! To: JON

Don't Panic. I would not have accepted this thing if I felt it was beyond me or that deep down I was so personally against doing it.

So, while I felt pressure to take the game, I'm not resentful about it, but rather want to make the most out of it and accept the challenge with anticipation of success.

I have a lot of respect for Douglas's talent, and that helped me decide. I really believe that he brings a lot to the company.

So I'm not pissed, damn it. I think your the one who should be taking it easy. Aloha.

Date: 18 Feb 1987 1655-EST From: Lurkin' USA <GARY at FRED>
Subject: Bureaucracy hintbook To: clr, da

I have a copy of the latest version for Dave to take with him to the marathon. Come and get it.

Bureaucracy receives a great review:

Date: 24 Mar 1987 2200-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: B'Cracy To: IMPS at FRED, TAA at FRED, CLR at FRED

Art Kimball of MIDNIGHT SOFTWARE GAZETTE just finished Bureaucracy. He told me, "This might be your greatest game ever!"

Date: 22 Jun 1987 1049-EDT
Subject: For Your Amusement

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: IMPS at FRED

A letter from today's CompuServe mail:

#: 10470 S1/Adventure Games
Sb: Bureaucracy
To: Brian Moriarty 76703,4270 (X)

21-Jun-87 13:31:19
Fm: Varzil the Good 72267,1531

Brian,

I give. WHY was the nasty file in Bureaucracy named "DVH2.HAK"? What's the significance? Hmm, maybe the paranoids ARE out to get me — the same day I finished that game, I saw "The Witches of Eastwick". Jack Nicholson is a handsome devil, and he drives a big black car with license plates "DVH 1". In this case, it's clear — his name is Darrell Van Horn.

- Neil

Bureaucracy
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Cutthroats

by Michael Berlyn and Jerry Wolper
***Tales of Adventure* series, catalog #IA3**

This space intentionally left blank

(no additional information)

Cutthroats
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Deadline

by Marc Blank
***Mystery* series, catalog #IM1**

Date: 16 Jun 1985 0838-EDT From: SWG
Subject: new games To: BLANK cc: SWG

Too bad you had to miss the "re-budgeting" meeting on Friday. It went well, I think, with lots of ideas brought up.

In the Imps' group, we'll probably concentrate on ensuring the timely release of new games until Christmas. And I've been wondering about both my role and your role in that. We could help Steve & Dave fix bugs, etc. What about Bureaucracy and/or Checkpoint? I wonder if you & I (& Brian?) could work together to finish something this year. As Joel said, another game in the autumn won't help us thru summer — but if we defer a lot of current expenses till autumn, it would be nice to count on more revenue then, too.

Deadline is considered for updating:

Date: 16 Jun 1985 1841-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: new games To: SWG

Bureaucracy is totally hopeless and I wouldn't even bother giving it a moment's thought. Basically, since Douglas is in the critical path and he is uncontrollable, we can't EVER be sure of when it will be done.

Checkpoint is worth a little consideration, but I really don't believe it's salvageable without a LOT of work. This corresponds to a LOT of time, the quantity of which is short. In order to get it out this year, it would need to be in beta-test within a month or so. My gut tells me we'll put out an inferior game on that timetable, but I wouldn't mind arguing about it a little.

My current best idea for a "new" game is to polish up, re-write, and EXTENDEDify DEADLINE and then push it as if it were a new game. I've mentioned this to Jon, and he sounded pretty enthusiastic. You've got to admit, it would be cheap and doable!

Thanks for the note. I hope to be at the continuation meeting on Monday, whenever it is.

Date: 17 Jun 1985 0955-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: new games To: BLANK cc: SWG

I'd like to know more about your Deadline ideas. I assume you're talking about significant renovation, e.g. OOPS, NOT-HERE-OBJECT, etc. I don't see how Plusification would matter to the player. Are you also thinking about re-writing the end sequences?

Date: 17 Jun 1985 0956-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: new games To: SWG

I was considering:

1) Beefing up the prose

2) More endings

3) Help/hints/alternate solutions to problems

4) Substrate renovation (OOPS, NOT-HERE-OBJECT)

5) More character responses to questions

6) Your ideas here

Date: 19 Nov 1988 0014-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Deadline Coincidence To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I just notice an inconsistency in DEADLINE after all these years: the memos and other package stuff say that it takes place in Lakeville, CT. However, the letter that arrives at the house at around 10am game time is addressed to Robner, Lake View Drive, Maitland CT. (And using the letter as the reference source, I put Maitland CT on the blueprint/map that is now distributed with the Deadline InvisiClues).

The reason I noticed this was that we rented Beetlejuice yesterday, and something tickled my memory when I saw that it was set in CT and there was a scene at Maitland Hardware.

Deadline
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Was It Murder?

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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.

Z

Enchanter

by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ4**

First message relating to Enchanter:

Date: 27 May 1983 1640-EDT
From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: New Magic Technology
To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

You might want to re-read the description of magic in ENCHANTER.TXT. You will note that it reveals that spells may be cast directly from scrolls, without copying them into the Spell Book. Note that this expends the magic, and so you can only do it once.

Watch out for a couple of new and exciting spells in versions of Enchanter greater than 32 as well!

Date: 7 Jun 1983 0924-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Enchanter Manual To: PDL cc: SWG, Blank

mighiest -> mightiest

ENCHANTer and ENCHANTment -> ENCHANter and ENCHANtment

paperdolls -> paper dolls

“Enchanter” has a vocabulary of hundreds -> “Enchanter” recognizes ...

If you find that enchanter -> If you find that “Enchanter”

in your book, your might experiment -> in your book; you might ...

no object, just saying -> no object: just saying

Would make the BOZBAR spell available -> would make ...

TOO MANY NOUN CLAUSES -> TOO MANY NOUN PHRASES

magics the game disks -> ?

Date: 5 Aug 1983 0832-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Enchanter Hints To: SWG

Do we have any idea when the copy needs to be ready for the Enchanter hint booklet. I have same, if anyone is interested.

Date: 8 Aug 1983 0900-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: vacation To: Blank cc: swg

I’d like to take a week’s vacation Aug. 29 to Sep. 2, when we have an opportunity to stay at a friend’s cottage on Cape Cod. “Enchanter” will be done by then, and “Infidel” almost so. Do you see any reason why I shouldn’t?

Date: 8 Aug 1983 0920-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Enchanter Hints To: BLANK cc: SWG, md

Both Mikey and I are interested in your copy for the booklet.

Date: 9 Aug 1983 1349-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: The Big Enchilada To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

The Big Enchilada is ready for delta testing. Or is it?

Date: 9 Aug 1983 1449-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: The Big Enchilada To: BLANK cc: SWG

Here's another question: is 108,952 bytes too big for an Enchilada?

Date: 9 Aug 1983 1529-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: The Big Enchilada To: SWG

Well, I'm not so sure. I think the limit is 108K, which is about 110,000 bytes.

Date: 9 Aug 1983 1554-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: The Big Enchilada To: BLANK cc: SWG

108*1024 = 110,592. How do we find out for sure if that's it? Scott?

Date: 9 Aug 1983 1558-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: The Big Enchilada To: SWG

I think so.

Enchanter
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Zork IV
The Big Enchilada

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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.

Z

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

by Douglas Adams and Steve Meretzky
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS4**

Hitchhiker's inception:

Date: 30 Sep 1983 1052-EDT
Subject: Doug Adams

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: MSB, SWG, SEM

He's coming at about 2PM next Thursday to talk. You are all invited.

Date: 19 Mar 1984 1659-EST
Subject: DEMO, NZT

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: MD

April 9 seems kind of early. It's 5 weeks before alpha-testing begins. Is that normal? I doubt that more than 50% of the game will be written by then, and Adams is writing it very linearly, so there (probably) won't even be a framework or outline for the non-written part of the game.

Is this around where the demo usually falls in the schedule — almost 7 months before the on-shelf date? I remember at the Sorcerer demo I was able to play through the game all the way to the end.

Regardless of the demo date, I think that the key creative people ought to have read at least the first Hitchhiker's book before they start working on the game. Also, what about our idea to have them actually play the game for a while before they start working?

Adams has suggestions for the game package: demolition orders for Arthur's house and for the Earth (strangely similar), and a pair of peril sensitive sunglasses. Marc suggests a towel, but I don't think that's very practical. The package cover should probably include the goofy-faceless-head-thing-sticking-its-tongue-out graphic for identification with the books; do we need permission to use it?

Speaking of the New Zork Times, I keep having these slow periods while I wait for Adams to catch up with me. Is there anything I can be writing for the spring issue?

Have you seen my new fish?

Gordo says hi.

"S4" is the catalog number for Hitchhiker's

Date: 6 Jul 1984 1700-EDT
Subject: S4

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

I have given Hollywood the official go-ahead for Hitchhiker's alpha-testing.

Date: 28 Aug 1984 1746-EDT
Subject: SECRET COMMANDS

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK, JEFF at ZORK, TOMAS at ZORK

I've added a $command to Hitchhiker's to facilitate bug-checking. It's called $CHEAT, and here's how it works:

>$CHEAT 1
Sends you to Dark with the Vogon Hold as your eventual exit. You'll have the toothbrush, screwdriver, towel, gown, mail, and thumb.

>$CHEAT 2
Sends you to Dark with the Entry Bay as your eventual exit. You'll have the babel fish, the plotter, and the towel.

>$CHEAT 3
Sends you to the Bridge, where the spare drive will be all set up with tea and ready to go.

>$CHEAT 4
Sends you to Corridor, Aft End holding all four fluffs, the flowerpot, and tea. Common sense is removed.

As usual with commands like these, there may be unusual side effects of using them. Be forewarned.

Hitchhiker's Freeze level is 42:

Date: 11 Sep 1984 2353-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: HITCHHIKERS To: TESTERS at ZORK

***** DON'T PANIC *****

The freeze is on. Version (naturally) 42 is ready and waiting for you to do your worst. I'm wearing my towel and my peril-sensitive sunglasses and my bags are packed for Nantucket and just give me the word and I'll press the green button and matter transfer to any passing Cape Island.

Version 42 is an incredible 394 bytes under the TI99 limit; the $commands must have taken up at least five hundred bytes.

Jeff, the last batch of bugs are in your box (as well as some cryptic notes I removed from your desk late last night). In addition to these, here are some suggestions for areas of fertile beating: referring to TEA, returning to scenes multiple times, various uses of IN FRONT OF, saying PUT ALL IN various containers, and various types of orphaning (WHICH BUTTON DO YOU MEAN...?)

RESTORE after death crashes, but I think this is a bug in the new ZIP20.

Well, so long, and thanks for all the bugs.

Date: 13 Sep 1984 1409-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: 45 To: TESTERS at ZORK

Hear, oh ye sinners:

Version 45 is waiting to be blessed. Let all who have sinned before the eyes of God cleanse themselves of their evil by making a pilgrimage unto the game and seeing its pristine purity.

We have received another sign from on high that this version is the chosen one; I gazed upon the file size and lo, beheld that it was 42 bytes under the limit.

Date: 14 Sep 1984 1731-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: HITCH To: TESTERS at ZORK

Version 48 is done.

Would you like the bugs behind Version #46, or the bugs behind Version #47, or the bugs behind Version #48?

Or, would you like to trade all the bugs you've won for the curtain that beautiful Albert Vezza is pointing to?

See y'all Wednesday.

Date: 20 Sep 1984 1628-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Alert! To: IMPS at ZORK

It appears that the Z-80 family of interpreters thinks that an apostrophe is a break character. This was discovered for Hitchhiker's. Are we in for other surprises?

-marc

p.s. DON T PANIC (I don't know the word "don".)

Date: 28 Dec 1984 1655-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Jerry & Douglas To: MD

Though Douglas did express some disappointment that he wouldn't be working with Marc (at least not immediately), he said he'd be happy to work with someone else. He doesn't remember Jerry, and would most like to meet him at CES (since he doesn't plan on being in or near Boston soon). So, sure enough, Jerry is flying out to Vegas on Saturday. Pat will arrange for the two of them to spend most of Sunday together, and Jerry will fly back here Monday.

Since neither Steve nor I will be in Vegas, I've asked Marc to "monitor" their discussions (make sure they do meet, do talk, do like each other, do decide to meet soon again with each other, etc.). Basically, I see Jerry and Douglas's meeting at CES as the honeymoon period — out of it will come, we hope, a happy marriage. Since you too will be in Vegas, please see if you can help JW and DNA get off to a good start.

Steve is quite willing to participate in the design stage of BUREAUCRACY. He suggested that he, Jerry, and Douglas meet fairly soon (within a month, say) for several days, to work out the beginning. Jerry will then go to work on the beginning. Then, a month or so later, they should meet again to work out the rest. I think that's a good plan, and mentioned it to both Jerry and Douglas, who too like the plan.

I never used the words "total creative control" when discussing Steve's role. Rather, I've been calling him "chief critical evaluator," and everyone seems happy with that. It will be Steve's job to tell Douglas his ideas are bad, unworkable, unusable, not worthwhile, etc., and provide constructive criticism. (Steve agrees that Jerry's criticism is not usually constructive.)

At any rate, I think things are working out here. I asked Marc today if he WANTED to work on CHECK-POINT. His answer was NO: rather, he's WILLING to work on it if Stu can't. So I'm still not sure what he WANTS to do.

If I don't see you next week, have a good trip.

Date: 3 Jan 1985 0045-EST
Subject: Doug Adams Interview

From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: imps at ZORK, testers at ZORK

Doug Adams was interviewed for 3 days (yes, the reporter lived at Doug's apartment) last week for a May cover story for Mac World. Doug says that the reporter thinks he can also write articles for Playboy and Esquire.

Date: 3 Jan 1985 1010-EST
Subject: Re: Adams/Wolper

From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: MD

I was indeed planning to "brief" Jerry. I've told both Jerry and Douglas about Steve's role, and of course I'll tell Jerry again. I want Jerry to come away from the Vegas meeting knowing how much Douglas has already written. I want them also to agree on a time (within the next 4-5 weeks if possible) for the Triumvirate (SEM, JW, and Adams) to meet. The meeting will preferably take place here in the States: we'll put them in a country inn on the Cape or in New Hampshire or ... (that's GOT to be cheaper than sending JW and SEM to England). I'll also tell Jerry how important the Adams/Infocom relationship is in no uncertain terms. As for level of planning: not even groundwork without Steve. Jerry is in Vegas on a fact-finding mission, and to nurture his relationship with Adams.

Date: 8 Jan 1985 1454-EST
Subject: Hitchhiker on radio

From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

According to WGBH's January program guide, the radio version of "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" will be broadcast Saturdays, noon to 12:30, beginning Jan. 19.

Date: 28 Sep 1987 1409-EDT
Subject: Is this fame?

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I was doing a crossword puzzle this weekend (in a Dell crossword magazine) and the clue for DENT was "Arthur _____, Adams' galactic hitchhiker."

Date: 18 Nov 1987 1757-EST
Subject: Hitchhiker's Manual

From: a cap no jel <JON at FRED>
To: DA

OOPS works in the new Hitchhiker's *[Solid Gold Hitchhiker's Guide]*. It's not documented in the manual I gave you. Let's add OOPS to the list of special commands if it's not too late. If it is too late, oops.

Hollywood Hijinx

by "Hollywood" Dave Anderson — initial concept by Liz Cyr-Jones
***Tales of Adventure* series, catalog #IA4**

Hollywood Hijinx's inception:

Date: 4 Jun 1985 1815-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: DA To: Imps at ZORK

Hollywood wants to be an Imp. He has a game idea ("Aunt Hildegard's [sp?] Secrets"), has talked to John O., and says he really does WANT the job, not take it for convenience or anything else.

I hope we really do have 2 job openings.

Date: 15 Jul 1986 1822-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Hollywood Hijinx To: DA cc: Jon

Your tirade at lunch today confused me, as most tirades do. You implied quite strongly that everything is wrong with the cover. Yet yesterday, your objections seemed to be (1) that the cover looked busy (or not simple enough), (2) that it didn't "pop" and (3) that the kind of movies it was depicting were not Uncle Buddy's kind of movies. These seem (to me) to be easily-monitored and easily-addressed objections. The next thing we'll see is a color comp. If the color comp doesn't pop, then neither will the cover. If the color comp is too busy, then so will be the cover.

If you have other objections, you haven't communicated them clearly. It's not my job (let alone Carl's or Gayle's) to read your mind, so if you have other specific constructive criticism, let's hear it. General complaints, bitchiness, and comments like "They don't care" or "They don't know anything" don't help you, or the game, or the cover, or anything.

I figure you must be under a lot of pressure — from me to get the game out on time, from the testers to finish puzzles and fix bugs, etc. But don't think that we don't care about the package. Your accusations are unfair, and shit, if you don't appreciate what people are trying to do, then they'll try less, not more. Carl and Elizabeth enjoyed playing your game, and liked working on the package, until you took the wind out of their sails. I wouldn't blame them if they took a "don't care" attitude toward the package in the future, though they're too professional to do that.

The biggest problem I see with the cover is that you don't like it, but you won't, or can't, tell us why.

Date: 3 Nov 1986 1138-EST From: Hannah Apt Cajole <JON at FRED>
Subject: Hijinx To: Bugcorps at FRED cc: DA

Pre-marathon/pre-gamma meeting TOMORROW, Tuesday, at 10.

Nickname/working title for Hollywood Hijinx: "Playland"

Date: 13 Nov 1986 1013-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA

Just installed v217 in <DA>. You left it in <DA.PLAYLAND>

Date: 13 Nov 1986 1454-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA

Brad Pettit's efforts caused me to do a rewrite of the ending:

> Aunt Hildegarde rises from the conveyor belt and peels off a skin-tone mask. As she draws nearer to you you slowly start to make out her features. It's not your Aunt Hildegarde after all! It's Cy Sperling, president, owner and first customer of the Hair Club for Men! He approaches you, salivating as he eyes your thick mat of hair. "I'm going to turn your hair into a carpet," he giggles as you pass out.
>
> *** You have died. ***

See me about royalties.

A game-stopping bug is discovered:

Date: 14 Nov 1986 0928-EST From: Angry Banner <GARY at FRED>
Subject: HH #222 To: DA, SCF, MAX, TOMAS

The game is unfinishable because the game doesn't let you open the closet door on the attic level.

Date: 14 Nov 1986 1436-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Re: NEW ANTHILL To: DA

** EMERGNECY TRANSMISSION FROM MAI TAI **

** FOR YOUR EYES ONLY!! **

Incidentally, how about a new title to your anthill mail. 'NEW ANTHILL' doesn't really some up my feeling for the game, as it changes from version to version. Something a little more Whitmanesque in its light appeal would really toot my horn.

CMT

Date: 14 Nov 1986 1447-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Re: A new selection of HH. To: DA

Hollywood Hijinx: The Walton Mountain years

Date: 3 Dec 1986 1346-EST From: Skiff <SCF at FRED>
Subject: FINAL FREEZE To: DA cc: JON

Since we are approaching final freeze on HH, I need EVERY SINGLE bug sheet from prior to this week. Even those that you were holding for SEM or PDL to look at. I need these before 5:00. Thanks.

Date: 3 Dec 1986 1437-EST From: Gary <GARY at FRED>
Subject: H.H. To: JON, DA cc: CLR, SCF

The response to `>L IN COMPUTER` is currently "That's a job for the DEC twits." Could we get in legal trouble for this? I had suggested changing "DEC twits" to "ROY G. BIV".

(ROY G. BIV = a color notation: Red Orange Yellow Green Blue Indigo Violet)

Date: 3 Dec 1986 1615-EST From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: H.H. To: GARY cc: JON, DA, SCF

I'll check on possible legal issues and report back.

Date: 8 Dec 1986 1104-EST From: Salty rug tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: proof To: DA

I guess it's about time for me to do the traditional proofreading of Hijinx code. Unless you have an objection, and unless you're planning to change much text, I'll start today.

-- Stu.

Date: 8 Dec 1986 1351-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: H.H. ending To: DA

Please read <JON>ENDING.TXT.

Hollywood Hijinx reaches Final Freeze level:

Date: 8 Dec 1986 0923-EST From: Skiff <SCF at FRED>
Subject: FINAL FREEZE HH To: DA cc: JON

Now that we are sort of in final freeze (hard to make any firm decisions last Friday) please do not make ANY more changes without consulting us. All bugs will be routed through one person. Also, you MUST rewrite the ending. It is currently very weak (almost every outside tester has made the same comment). Dysan next Monday

Date: 8 Dec 1986 0926-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: H.H. ending To: DA

It's been a long time since I read the ending. In what directory do the automatic transcripts go? I want to read the ending.

Date: 8 Dec 1986 1003-EST From: Skiff <SCF at FRED>
Subject: Re: FINAL FREEZE HH To: DA

I meant for you to rewrite Aunt Hildegarde's last paragraph, not the moves. sorry for the confusion.

Date: 9 Dec 1986 1115-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>: H.H.] To: SCF

Standard mail from Hollywood reads as follows:

NEW RELEASE. MISC CHANGES.

How does he expect us to divine from this which bugs he's fixed?? (We check fixed bugsheets each morning, if that's what he's talking about.)

Date: 9 Dec 1986 1447-EST From: Skiff <SCF at FRED>
Subject: Mixed messages To: Jon, DA, CLR

This morning I heard from Jon and Chris that Dave was upset because he doesn't feel testing is rechecking his bugs fast enough. Well, testing continued doing as they had: rechecking bugs when they come back from Dave. Max found yesterday's bugs on his desk this morning and began to recheck them. After awhile, Max realized his work was in vain — we still have yesterday's version on the 20.

Please, in respect for efficiency, compile the new version before you give the bugs back.

Date: 12 Dec 1986 1009-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
To: da

your compilation died, but I revived it and recompiled it. v32 is installed, and mail is mailed. I made sure that Max was playing the right version (he almost played Seastalker by mistake ("Did Dave put in these 'What do you want to do now?' prompts?") but I was there to ward off trouble. Bokkles

Date: 15 Dec 1986 1314-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
To: DA cc: SCF

NO GOOD. MOVING THE PAINTING IS NOW BROKEN.

```
>MOVE PAINTING
```

<normal text>.You cant move the painting....

(Missing RTRUE)

A nickname based off of the original working title (Aunt Hildegarde's Secrets):

Date: 15 Dec 1986 0835-EST From: banana fan a <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: NEW ANTHILL To: DA cc: SCF, MAX, GARY, TOMAS

New Anthill? Why bother? Isn't it going to Activis ion today?

Date: 15 Dec 1986 1012-EST From: Sultry Gelata <SWG at FRED>
Subject: double spaces To: DA

I remembered that I forgot to check Hijinx for strings with two spaces in a row, where they might be split by the right-hand margin.

I did find two cases, in PARLOR and ELEVATOR. You might want to check that I did the right thing.

Date: 15 Dec 1986 1057-EST From: banana fan a <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: NEW ANTHILL To: DA

Are the bugs very serious ones? It's certainly NOT worth delaying the ship date for anything else.

Date: 2 Feb 1987 2042-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: ps:<da.playland> To: da

Since hijinx has shipped, and has a directory on ss: anyway, can this be cleaned up a bit?

Date: 18 Feb 1987 1628-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
To: da

Currently hacking hintbook — I'm working out of ss:<tomas>

Date: 24 Feb 1987 0957-EST From: Gutsy lateral <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Hijinx To: everybody at FRED

Gabby reports that Hollywood Hijinx appeared on the SoftSel Hot List, which means a big boost in sales!

Date: 3 Mar 1987 1546-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: hijinx hb To: da

In case you'd like to see the final form that the hijinx hintbook took, type out PS:<TOMAS>HIJINX. HINTBOOK.0 . A lot got changed — check out gag questions. The introduction question was pretty dumb — I put in a placeholder that Jon liked, so I left it there. Czech it out, eh?

Giggling, Joe

Hollywood Hijinx
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Aunt Hildegarde's Secrets
Playland
Hollywood Hijinx: The Walton Mountain years
Anthill

Z

Infidel

by Michael Berlyn and Patricia Fogleman
***Tales of Adventure* series, catalog #IA1**

First message relating to Infidel:

Date: 4 Jun 1983 1510-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Pyramid name changed To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

The name Infidel should now be used to invoke the Pyramid game.

Date: 8 Aug 1983 0900-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: vacation To: Blank cc: swg

I'd like to take a week's vacation Aug. 29 to Sep. 2, when we have an opportunity to stay at a friend's cottage on Cape Cod. "Enchanter" will be done by then, and "Infidel" almost so. Do you see any reason why I shouldn't?

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1205-EDT From: Michael Berlyn <MSB at ZORK>
Subject: QUITting To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

While Infidel is still being tested and played on the 20, I must beg you all to QUIT from the game. ^C and continuing DOES NOT CUT IT.

Infidel
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Pyramid

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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 [Giardini/Russell, Infocom's ad agency] 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.

Leather Goddesses of Phobos

by Steve Meretzky
***Comedy* series, catalog #IC1**

LGOP's inception:

Game Ideas: Leather Goddesses of Phobos
Genre: Sci-Fi/Humor/Adult Rating: probably Standard System: probably Classic
Estimated Development Time: 8 months

A titillating romp through universe to save earth from the evil characters of the title. Featuring lots of anachronistic sword fights aboard interstellar hyperspace battle cruisers, seduction of planetary over-lords, encounters with bizarre aliens who's main motives always seem to be to tear clothes off humans. Very soft-core; see *Barbarella* for an example.

Date: 30 Aug 1985 1008-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: LGofP To: IMPS at ZORK

Please send me titles of books, movies, or whatever that you feel fall into the Leather-Goddesses-of-Phobos genre.

Early testing of the Scratch 'N' Sniff cards:

Date: 31 Oct 1985 1153-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: SCRATCH 'N' SNIFF To: IMPS at ZORK, INFOTESTERS at ZORK

The results of the Battle of the Noses:

STANDINGS (scores are out of 24; partial credit was give for certain guesses):

1.	Andrea Coville	15.0 (63%)	9.	Suzanne Frank	7.0	(29%)
2.	Liz Cyr	12.0 (50%)	10.	Brian Moriarty	6.5	(27%)
	Betty Rock		11.	Jeff O'Neill	6.0	(25%)
4.	Dave Lebling	11.0 (46%)		Stu Galley		
5.	Amy Briggs	10.5 (44%)	13.	Dave Anderson	5.0	(21%)
6.	Jon Palace	9.5 (40%)	14.	Max Buxton	4.0	(17%)
7.	Susan Sobel	9.0 (38%)				
	Tara Dolan					

AVERAGE SCORE:	8.75	(36%)
AVERAGE OF ALL MEN:	6.9	(29%)
AVERAGE OF ALL WOMEN:	10.6	(44%)

SCENTS (scores are out of fourteen):

1.	Mothballs	11.5	(82%)
2.	Garlic	10.5	(75%)

3.	Chocolate	10.0	(71%)	
	Pizza			["oregano" scored as half correct]
5.	Wood Smoke	7.5	(54%)	
6.	Banana	7.0	(50%)	
	Natural Gas			
8.	Peanut Butter	6.5	(46%)	["peanuts" scored as half correct]
9.	Musk	6.0	(43%)	["perfume" scored as correct]
	Anchovy			["fish" scored as correct]
11.	Grapefruit	5.5	(39%)	["citrus fruit" scored as half correct]
	Watermelon			
13.	Martini	5.0	(36%)	["gin" scored as correct]
14.	Skunk	4.5	(32%)	
15.	Grass	4.0	(29%)	
	Leather			
	Mushrooms			
18.	Fish	3.0	(21%)	
19.	Cucumber	2.0	(14%)	
	Whipped Cream			
21.	Model Cement	1.0	(7%)	
22.	Cantaloupe	0.5	(4%)	
	Mildew			
24.	Fried Chicken	0.0	(0%)	

Some amusing guesses:

for Model Cement…
- ...cherry bubblegum (Max)
- ...floor wax (Stu)
- ...mint (Betty)
- ...lemon Pledge (Susan)

for Skunk…
- ...parsley (Brian)
- ...whiskey sour (Stu)

for Peanut Butter…
- ...chocolate cake (Brian)
- ...spaghetti (Max)
- ...dorito breath (Tara)

for Anchovy…
- ...burnt pumpkin (Amy)
- ...garbage (Dave L.)
- ...potatoes (Susan)

for Martini…
- ...a daisy (Jeff)
- ...bread (Susan)

for Grapefruit…
- ...a powder (Max)
- ...lipstick (Liz)
- ...Tang (Tara)

for Natural Gas...
- ...hamster's cage (Jeff)
- ...burning rubber (Dave A.)
- ...fart (Tara)

for Garlic...
- ...Chinese food (Max)
- ...chemical waste dump (Jeff)

for Whipped Cream...
- ...peach (Max)
- ...wet paint (Tara)
- ...marijuana (Betty)

for Mothball...
- ...basement (Amy)
- ...Sears (Jeff)

for Fried Chicken...
- ...naugahide (Dave A.)
- ...rubber (Jon)
- ...a waxy, brown crayon (Brian)

for Pizza...
- ...dill pickles (Stu)

for Mildew
- ...floor wax (Stu)
- ...Vicks Vap-O-Rub (Betty)

Steve starts the discussion on what to call the three playing modes:

Date: 15 Nov 1985 0933-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NAUGHTY-FLAG To: IMPS at ZORK

Suggestions for the input words to toggle the naughtiness flag in LGOP? I'm currently leaning toward:
TAME SUGGESTIVE NAUGHTY

Date: 15 Nov 1985 1007-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: NAUGHTY-FLAG To: SEM cc: SWG

I still prefer a RATING command, with valid objects G, PG, and R. In your scheme, how about making it easier to remember, like REFINED/NATURAL/RAW, or BLAND/SALTY/SPICY, or CLEAN/DIRTY — do you really plan three levels, or only two? I guess three gives more opportunity for humor, because you can have a "normal" situation adaptable to either squeaky-clean or rather raunchy.

Another thing: you might want SUGGEST (= PROPOSE) as a verb, making it a little tricky to distinguish SUGGESTIVE.

Date: 15 Nov 1985 1554-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NAUGHTYBIT To: IMPS at ZORK

Just to clarify my vision for these three levels, here's the same scene played in each level...

TAME:

The air of the inner harem is heady with the musky aroma of perfume mingled with burning incense. As your eyes adjust to the dim light of the candles, you see a beautiful woman dressed only in a few silken veils. She beckons you to sit by her on the fur lined bed, and you spend the next hour discussing the writing of Tolstoy, playing cribbage, and generally getting to know each other better.

MEDIUM:

The air of the inner harem is heady with the musky aroma of perfume mingled with burning incense. As your eyes adjust to the dim light of the candles, you see a beautiful woman dressed only in a few silken veils. She beckons you to sit by her on the fur lined bed. As you do so, she touches a button at her shoulder, and her veils fall into a silky pile around her feet. Some time later...

LEWD:

The air of the inner harem is heady with the musky aroma of perfume mingled with burning incense. As your eyes adjust to the dim light of the candles, you see a beautiful woman dressed only in a few silken veils. She beckons you to sit by her on the fur lined bed. As you do so, she says, "let's fuck."

Here are the suggestions I've amassed so far:

TAME	SUGGESTIVE	NAUGHTY	STANDARD	ADVANCED	EXPERT
G	PG	R	REFINED	NATURAL	RAW
MILD	MEDIUM	HOT	BLAND	SALTY	SPICY
CHEERFUL	AROUSING	LUSTY	CLEAN	SOILED	DIRTY
HANDSHAKE	KISS	HOMERUN	DRY	MOIST	WET
OH!	OOOH!	AAAH!			

Comments or more suggestions?

Date: 15 Nov 1985 1618-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: NAUGHTYBIT To: SEM cc: SWG

Suggestion (as if you need more!): PLAIN/SOFT/HARD.
Comment:
My first thought was to make the shift easy for players by using a set of words that go together naturally. But maybe it should be difficult for pirates, using words that aren't easy to guess, like PLAIN/RISQUE/FESCENNINE!

Date: 16 Dec 1985 1853-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: LGOP To: IMPS at ZORK

The good news is that Leather Goddesses of Phobos is pretty much ready for pre-alpha testing.
The bad news is that Leather Goddesses of Phobos is pretty much ready for pre-alpha testing.

If anyone actually has time to play it, you'll need:

* the manual
* the secret map
* the not-yet-three-D three-D comic
* the scratch 'n' sniff card

These items are all available on my desk.

Everyone pitches in:

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1627-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Help, please To: Everybody at FRED

Leather Goddesses want YOUR input

Please send me sexy, suggestive, or sensual (but not obscene) words. Five verbs, five adjectives, and five nouns per person would definitely satisfy me. Thanks.

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1639-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help, please To: JON

effervescent, svelte, sinewy, glistening, bulbous
impregnate, insinuate, couple, shimmy, radiate
rod, tentacles, crevice, slope, peak

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1646-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help, please To: JON
cc: SWG

Verbs: lick, squeeze, plunge, titillate, satisfy
Adjectives: creamy, slippery, engorged, panting, excited
Nouns: flash, seduction, eruption, wave, climax

Satisfied? (I am!)

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1654-EST From: Amelia <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help, please To: JON

Verbs:
yearn thirst (as in "I thirst for you") caress thrust throb

Adjectives:
arch (as in "arching back" or "arch look") rounded muscled white sun-darkened

Nouns:
member (as in his)
warmth (as in hers) (or warm moistness) (or moist darkness)
(or dark moist warmth) (or you get the picture ...)
silky (I know, that's an adjective)
fruit (in general or specifics: melons, figs, apples — have you ever gone apple-picking on a warm fall afternoon with an attractive member of the opposite sex? Reaching up to cup the sun-warmed blushing apple in your palms, tugging gently to pluck it so it softly, heavily leans into your hand as you raise it to eagerly [ooh, there's another good one] sink your teeth into the white firm juicy warm flesh of her — ahem, I mean, it ...)

Why don't you turn to any of Jude Devereaux's sex scenes to get any number of sensual words. They're almost identical (according to the Rule of Romances) from one scene to another...

I love to read the mail you're getting from people.

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1658-EST From: ELIZ at FRED
Subject: Re: Help, please To: JON

How about:
verbs - caress, disrobe, waft, seduce, tempt, thrill, stroke, satisfy;
adjectives - silky, smooth, alluring, shapely, soft, creamy;
nouns - bubble bath (the classic), silk, satin, chiffon, musk.

If you'd like more graphic ones, I have some of those, too.

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1658-EST From: HEIDI KORN <HEIDI at FRED>
Subject: SUGGESTIONS To: JON

NOUNS - PROJECTILE, HIGH-RISER (AS IN APT. HOUSE), SUCKING CANDY
ADJECTIVES - BUXOM, LISSOME, LITHE, LUSCIOUS, SVELTE, MOIST, NAUGHTY
VERBS - GYRATE, PURRED, LUBRICATED/ING, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST MY FAVORITE PRRROWLING FOR A BAD INFLUENCE (THE REPETITIVE R'S ARE INTENTIONAL)

Date: 4 Mar 1986 1704-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: words To: jon

pulsating, throbbing, gleaming, glistening, erect, nubile, passion, throes
ecstasy, swollen, engorged, enlarged, silken, pumping, arching, rhythmic,
caress, nibble, breathy, whispery, wet, slippery, moist, spurting,

jetting, peak, penetrating, deep, hot, steamy, rosy, pink, parted,

all I can think of for now. are you keeping track of who sends what for words? it would make a great infodope.

Date: 5 Mar 1986 1140-EST From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help, please To: JON

You must be getting some interesting mail these days.

nouns: tart, tramp, stud, beef, oil,
verbs: stroke, squeeze, fondle, quiver, throb,
adjectives: moist, plump, slippery, rigid, stacked, downy

Date: 18 Aug 1986 1116-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: LGOP Historical To: IMPS at FRED

It's interesting to look back now on what people said about Leather Goddesses when I handed out my "next project" ideas a year ago:

dornbrook: I like Leather Goddesses #1.

o'neill: 4 out of 10 on a scale of games I'd like to see. 1 on a scale where 10 equals a game most likely to make Ed Reutemann happy, and 1 equals a game most likely to make everyone rewrite their resumes.

galley: 8 out of 10.

blank: I'll write "Gas Pump Girls" if you do this one.

moriarty: If you don't do this, I will. But not as well as you could.

anderson: I don't know about this one. Sounds like a little Hitchhikers hangover or an inside joke. Are the folks in the streets gonna go for this stuff? I don't know about this one. There are safer routes to explore.

Date: 10 Dec 1986 1202-EST From: bunk rot <MAX at FRED>
Subject: stool To: da

If you don't take the stool in the bar in Leather, you can always climb on Trent/Tiffany's shoulders to get the basket off the shelf.

An interesting coincidence:

Date: 19 Feb 1987 1022-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Nice Trivia To: Imps at FRED

Sugar, the character played by Marilyn Monroe in "Some Like It Hot," is from Sandusky, Ohio. Wonder if she ever went up-river to Joe's Bar?

The following message is about Trinity, but it does mention Phobos.

Date: 24 Apr 1986 0112-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Trim-A-Tree To: TESTERS at FRED

"I need more ZAP power, Scotty."

"I dinna have any more, Captain. The 20'll never stand the strain."

"Analysis?"

"Sensors indicate insufficient symbol table space, Captain."

"Recommendations?"

"Jim, I'm a doctor, not a Senior Scientist."

"Indeed. Uhura, get me Commander Lebling at Star Fleet."

"Shall I plot a course to Beta 36, Captain?"

"Negative, Mr. Sulu. Maintain standard orbit around Phobos until the ZAP drive is fully operational."

"Engineerin' to Bridge. I patched the ZAP engines together with Scotch tape. I dinna think she can hold up much longer."

"Opinion, Mr. Spock?"

"Risky, Captain. Assuming that all critical systems maintain their integrity, arrival at Dysan now seems unlikely before stardate 05.09.86."

"Warp drive at your discretion, Captain."

"Acknowledged, Mr. Checkov. Proceed to Beta 36. Warp factor eight."

"Affirmative, Captain. Warp eight."

"Uhura, relay our gratitude to Commander Lebling at Star Fleet."

"Opening subspace frequencies, Captain."

"As usual, Lieutenant."

LGOP Press Release:

CONTACT: Spencer Steere Infocom, Inc. (617)492-6000

WARNING: SOME MATERIAL IN THIS PRESS RELEASE MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN Especially the Parts About Sex, Which No One Should Know Anything About Until Reaching the Age of Eighteen

This summer, LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, a hilarious new product from Infocom, will be titillating players from coast to coast. Not since Woody Allen's EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX have comedy and sex been combined so well.

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS takes interactive fiction to new heights (or depths, depending on how you look at it). It's the first interactive story that satisfies all your senses, providing you with everything from a tantalizing scratch 'n' sniff card to a curvaceous 3-D comic book. Author Steve Meretzky's zany sense of humor keeps the story moving from one rollicking rendezvous to the next.

To satisfy all appetites, LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS can be enjoyed in any one of three playing modes, Tame, Suggestive or Lewd, which correspond to G, PG, and R movie ratings. If you've under-estimated (or over-estimated) yourself, you can switch from one mode to another. For your own discretion, this press release has also been written in three "naughtiness" levels. For the Suggestive release, go to page 2. For the Lewd release,

hustle to page 3. And for the Tame release, please turn to page 4.

>SUGGESTIVE

Get set for a rollicking trip through space in LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, Infocom's latest work of interactive fiction. Written by Steve Meretzky (fun-loving author of *Planetfall* and *Sorcerer* and co-author of the side-splitting *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*), LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS kicks off Infocom's new Comedy genre. Early in the story, you are given the chance to identify yourself as male or female, so you can choose your own brand of excitement.

The tale begins in 1936 in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, where you're tying one on at your favorite hangout. Suddenly, you're kidnapped by aliens, who carry you off to Phobos, a moon of Mars. You discover that you've been abducted by the voluptuous Leather Goddesses of Phobos. They want to use you for sexual experimentation in preparation for their forthcoming invasion of Earth, which they plan to turn into their personal playground. Naturally, you think everyone should be able to choose their own partners.

So, you frolic around the solar system with your friend Tiffany (or Trent, if you're a male), looking for the things you need to make a special Anti-Leather Goddesses Machine. When you see how much fun can be had on Mars, you'll wonder why the Leather Goddesses ever wanted to leave home.

LEATHER GODDESSES has two other "naughtiness" levels. Tame is great when you're feeling straight, and Lewd is dandy when you're feeling randy.

The packaging includes a nifty 3-D comic book and a multiple-use scratch 'n' sniff card. The accompanying 3-D glasses make a great party gag.

>LEWD

Grease up for an erotic romp through space in LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, Infocom's up-and-coming work of interactive fiction. Written by Steve Meretzky (a guy who knows his stuff), LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS is a hot intro to Infocom's new Comedy genre. Early in the story, you reveal yourself as a handsome stud or a sexy siren, and you'd better believe it makes a difference!

The saga begins in 1936 in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, where you're boozing it up at a sleazy bar. Suddenly, you're seized by aliens, who pin you down with their slimy tentacles as they carry you off to Phobos, a moon of Mars. You learn that you've been snatched by the raunchy Leather Goddesses of Phobos. They want to test you out with all kinds of indescribably degenerate equipment in preparation for their coming invasion of Earth, which they plan to turn into their private playground. For the first time, you admit that there's a limit to sexual freedom.

So you plunge into the seamy side of the solar system with your playmate Trent (or Tiffany, if you're playing as a femme fatale), groping your way through puzzle after puzzle as you hunt for the things you need to build a special Anti-Leather Goddesses Machine. You're often distracted, however, by the erotic adventures to be had on other planets, in particular the Sultan's wife (or Sultaness's husband) with whom you have a full hour of wild sex.

LEATHER GODDESSES has two lesser "naughtiness" levels, but don't get sucked into either of them. Go all the way with Lewd.

You'll get a rise out of the packaging, which contains a 3-D comic book that really shows off the fine points of the Leather Goddesses. You also get a sensuous scratch 'n' sniff card (scratch it, sniff it) and an intimate map of the catacombs.

>TAME (Yawn.)

Get set for an entertaining trip into space in LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, Infocom's latest work of interactive fiction. Written by Steve Meretzky (respected author of *A Mind Forever Voyaging*), LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS inaugurates Infocom's new Comedy genre. Early in the story, you're given the chance to identify yourself as a gentleman or a lady, to make sure no one tries to get too friendly.

The tale begins in 1936 in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, where you're enjoying an evening with your friends in the local lounge. Suddenly, you're kidnapped by space creatures, who carry you off to Phobos, a moon of Mars. You discover that you've been captured by the dangerous Leather Goddesses of Phobos. They want to use you for unmentionable experiments in preparation for their forthcoming invasion of the Earth, which they plan to use for their own indiscreet purposes. Naturally, this must be prevented at all costs.

So, you travel around the solar system with your compatriot Trent (or Tiffany, if you're a lady), looking for the objects you need to make a special Anti-Leather Goddesses Machine. Along the way, you get to see a lot of interesting places not available through your travel agent, like the canals of Mars and the Venusian jungle. People

try to engage you in indecent acts, but you're able to maintain your integrity.

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS has two other so-called "naughtiness" levels, but you won't want to play either of them since they include descriptions of things that nice folks don't even think about.

The packaging contains a 3-D comic book, which you'll want to look at in your room at home so nobody will see how silly you look in the accompanying 3-D glasses. You also get a scratch 'n' sniff card (don't risk using it) and an educational map of the secret catacombs.

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS is geared to the Standard Level player. It will be available in early September 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) at a suggested retail price of $39.95.

Infocom is a leading developer of computer software for the home. All 19 of its entertainment packages, as well as CORNERSTONE, its full-featured relational database, have reached the top ten on the industry best-seller lists.

For additional information, please contact Spencer Steere at 617-492-6000.

Trivia:

Leather Goddess of Phobos was mentioned in the ship's log that was added when *Starcross* was reissued in the standard grey box format, and is the name of the video game in *Wishbringer*.

Leather Goddesses of Phobos
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

The Lurking Horror

by Dave Lebling
***Horror* series, catalog #IH1**

Lurking Horror's inception:

Game Ideas: The Lurker in the Basement
Our first Horror game. The plot is by H.P. Lovecraft out of Steven King. (According to Brian, it even is somewhat like "The Amityville Horror" [ecch!]). You find a thingy in your basement which opens into a Lovecraftian subterranean world. Lots of squishy Freudian monsters. Lots of gore, too, I guess. Probably rated PG-13, at least.

Date: 5 Feb 1987 1225-EST From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Lurking Bugs To: TESTERS at FRED

Version 160 exists.

* No end as yet. Soon. I promise. Really…
* Many old bugs fixed.
* One of the puzzles is now rather (very?) different. I got tired of fixing my own bugs in it. I'd like to fix some of yours for a while!

Date: 27 Feb 1987 1124-EST From: A trusty legal <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Friday Feature To: EVERYBODY at FRED

In honor of the upcoming "Lurking Horror" game, I plan to screen the movie "Re-Animator" at about 5:15 today. It's a gory but tongue-in-cheek story of a modern Frankenstein who revives dead bodies. It will be shown in the kitchen conference room, so viewing is clearly optional. Running time is approximately 90 minutes.

Date: 3 Mar 1987 1807-EST From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Lurk #177 To: TESTERS at FRED

This should be the Beta. If not, then we'll drop back to 176.

Date: 6 Mar 1987 1303-EST From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Lurk #179 To: TESTERS at FRED

* Elevators and all around them should work better and be described better.

* Some twiddles to orphaning (yikes!).

```
Which noun do you mean?
>A-DIFFERENT-NOUN
```

should work now.

* Tiredness and its relationship to Coke are different.
etc. etc. etc.

Date: 26 Mar 1987 1851-EST From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Lurk 187 To: TESTERS at FRED

Some changes... One of the rooms in the nightmare is gone. The urchin will now no longer go into the "scary parts." This means that he won't go down from the Tomb or Ancient Storage or enter the Alchemy Lab. This should make him easier to find. The Computer Room is also gone.

These changes are all to save space, of course.

Date: 1 Apr 1987 1314-EST From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: lurk gamma To: testers at FRED

Version 190 exists. Barring lurking horrors, this should be gamma. It's too big for Atari still, but could possibly be shrunk if absolutely necessary.

Date: 22 Apr 1987 1708-EST From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: LURK #196 To: TESTERS at FRED

More or less up-to-date with all gammas that have come back.

Questions:

1. What to do about the ancient problem of the elevator doors closing on the chain?

2. Should the hand "hide" from the urchin until you show it to him? It's been pointed out that it's there all the time and doesn't scare the urchin until you show it to him.

Date: 30 Apr 1987 1812-EDT From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
Subject: L.H. #198 To: TESTERS at FRED

The major change here is that you must use the "real" login id and password to use the computer. Thus,

LOGIN	872325412
PASSWORD	UHLERSOTH

The old placeholder stuff (xyzzy and plugh) won't work anymore!

There are actually 50 whole bytes to spare now.

Trivia: the ad below appeared on page 5 of "Popular Enchanting" when Sorcerer was reissued in the standard grey box format, providing a link between the "GUE" of the Great Underground Empire and the "GUE" of George Underwood Edwards.

MAKE REALLY BIG ZORKMIDS! LEARN MAGIC IN JUST 12 WEEKS!

Our proven "Learn-at-Home" course lets you study at your own pace. Why spend your life as a woodcutter when magic can open doors for you? Over 70% of our graduates find careers in magic-related guilds. Write:

GUE TECH,
Borphee, Land of Frobozz
For full-color catalog

The Lurking Horror
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Moonmist

by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence
***Mystery* series, catalog #IM5**

Moonmist's inception:

Date: 11 Apr 1985 1217-EST From: SWG
Subject: Nancy Grue To: JON cc: SWG

I just talked with Jim Lawrence on the phone. He is very excited about the new project.

Tentative plan: I'll go visit him (Summit, NJ) next Wednesday, to brainstorm the game design. I'll plan to get the Kaypro 2 from Elizabeth L. (Tom V. says she can borrow the Osborne 1 instead) and take it along to set up for Jim to use for a few months.

(Alternative: Dan H. says I could borrow the Mindset, which is compatible with IBM PC. But it's much harder to transport, and we'd have to buy word-processing software for Jim to use on it.)

Date: 22 May 1985 1302-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Nancy Grue Schedule To: SWG

How does this sound for a schedule?

Begin Alpha testing	10/1/85
Begin Beta testing	12/15/85
Begin Gamma testing	2/15/86
Ship disks to Dysan	4/1/86
Ship finished product	5/15/86

This gives you about 4 months to Alpha testing; about 10 weeks of Alpha, 8 weeks of Beta, and 6 weeks of Gamma testing.

Date: 3 Jun 1985 1757-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: synopsis To: imps at ZORK cc: eliz at ZORK, md at ZORK

I've received a synopsis from Jim Lawrence for a junior-level mystery and put it in <SWG>MOONMIST. MEM for your perusal.

Date: 3 Jun 1985 1804-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: synopsis To: SWG

Sorry about the last message, but the synopsis looks pretty good to me. Reminds me of the old Hardly Boys, etc. stories I liked so much when I was a kid.

Date: 4 Jun 1985 0930-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Nancy Grue To: md cc: swg, jon

Questions after talkin g with Jim Lawrence:

(1) He recently finished a Nancy Drew book, to be published this autumn, with a Cornish setting similar to his proposed game, but a completely different plot. Any problem?

(2) Conversely, are we interested at all in trying to license the Nancy Drew character from Stratemeyer Syndicate (owned by Simon & Schuster) so that we can promote his proposed game with it?

(3) Jim also thinks his proposed game would make a dandy book. He could change the ending in the book so as not to spoil the game. Would we be interested in licensing the story back to him for publication? What about publishing it "ourselves," la Zork books?

Date: 4 Jun 1985 0959-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Nancy Grue To: SWG cc: md

1. I don't believe there's any problem with a Cornish setting.
2. The pros and cons of licensing the Nancy Drew character are many. I guess it'll be Mike's decision, though it may take months to get through the legal bullshit, meaning we may not want to do it for the Jim Lawrence game now in progress.
3. What's a book?

Date: 5 Jun 1985 0905-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: MOONMIST To: SWG

The outline is exciting but, as you said, ambitious. How do you plan to proceed? Some specific "puzzles" and specific geography might be a good place to start; or removing or combining some characters might make it easier (the doctor could be an antique collector, for instance). Would you like to do some brainstorming with the Imps, maybe at our next lunch (or at a separate meeting)?

Jon

Date: 5 Jun 1985 1036-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: MOONMIST To: JON cc: SWG

I don't think the outline is TOO ambit ious at this point. It feels to me about the same size as Seastalker, which should be okay. I'm inclined to let Jim continue designing and see what results. Yes, geography and puzzles and some events will probably come next. I plan to see his work every few days to make sure it's reasonable. Meanwhile, I can start implementing some necessary parts.

Date: 5 Jun 1985 1058-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: MOONMIST To: SWG

I didn't realize Jim would be sending in stuff regularly. Good!

Date: 8 Jun 1985 2006-EDT From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Nancy Grue To: SWG cc: jon, bls

I've read the synopsis and I think it sounds great!

1) I have no problem with the Cornish setting as long as that is the only similarity to the book.

2) We discussed licensing the Nancy Drew (and Tom Swift and Hardy Boys) names when we were considering Simon and Schuster as our distributor. The price was high, there were significant complications, and we decided it wasn't worth the cost or hassles. I feel the Nancy Drew name may also be a drawback - it would definitely limit the audience to young girls only. Although we want to have a "Nancy Drew-like" story, we agreed that the main character's sex would remain indeterminate so as not to dissuade boys or adults who might otherwise be interested.

3) I feel the best approach to Jim turning the game into a book is to license it back to him somehow. I don't think we would want to publish it ourselves. This would have to be looked into by lawyers - we don't want lawsuits with Stratemeyer.

Date: 21 Aug 1985 1057-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: MOONMIST To: SWG cc: jon

The last time I sent a schedule around, we guessed MOONMIST would be ready for alpha testing 10/1 (release date 5/15/86). What's your best estimate these days?

Date: 21 Aug 1985 1116-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: MOONMIST To: JON cc: SWG

My estimate now is about a month delayed from that schedule, namely alpha test begins 11/1 and release date is 6/15.

Date: 17 Oct 1985 1054-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Don't forget … To: JON cc: SWG

It's a very good letter. Except for one little thing: I wouldn't mention "Nancy" at all in writing, for fear of legal problems; use "the player" instead. And another nit: instead of "the first Lord Jack" it's "the late Lord Lionel".

By the way, the line from the 20 to the Compaq/laser printer should be working now. Apparently the recent glitch was the fault of the 20's operating system.

Date: 1 Nov 1985 1332-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: bon voyage and … To: BLANK cc: SWG: RO

Should you just happen to tour any building at all — Tower of London, country house of a duke, whatever — I'd really be grateful for a copy of a tour pamphlet or guide, as a model for the browsie of my game. I have in mind something with floor plans, descriptions, pictures, administrivia, and so on.

Have a good trip, and don't panic!

Date: 17 Nov 1986 1617-EST From: All-tasty Grue <SWG at FRED>
Subject: innovations in Moonmist To: imps at FRED

While constructing a "foundation" using the appropriate features of Moonmist and Hitchhiker's, I "re-viewed" some features in Moonmist that don't appear in any other game, as far as I know. I can't call these retrofixes, because they might not be suitable for other games; but I want to document them in some way, so they won't have to be re-invented in the future.

* LIGHTING

If the lights are turned on in a room (so the room has the ONBIT), then any room connected to it by an open door is lit enough to see things. (By this rule, the room where you wake up at the beginning of Sorcerer would be lit by the hallway.) This feature just requires some extra code at the end of ROUTINE LIT? which runs only if the room is not lit by normal standards.

* DOOR = ROOM

Some twenty rooms in the castle, for example the eight bedrooms, have entrance doors that are represented by the same object as the room itself. Typically this just means that the room object also has the SYNONYM DOOR and the DOORBIT, and it's in the GLOBAL list of the hallway from which you enter the room. And some code has to check whether the player called it a room or a door. But it works remarkably well, since most verbs work equally well on room or door: look inside, close, lock, etc.

* POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES

Moonmist understands phrases like MY LORD'S BEDROOM. This feat requires three kinds of changes:

1. Apostrophe becomes a "self-inserting break" character, like period. Thus the program can distinguish between TAMARA and TAMARA'S. In fact, the word TAMARA'S acts like three words: TAMARA, apostrophe, S.

2. Before the parser really gets to work on an input line, it scans the line, looking for apostrophes. If one is found, and the word to the left identifies a person (in the sense of THIS-IT?), then the apostrophe is replaced by a special adjective for that person (for example TAM\'S). Of course, the routines that reprint words from the input line know enough to pretend it's still an apostrophe.

3. Later on, ADJ-CHECK notices the special adjective and ignores any other adjectives in the noun phrase. As long as the valid names for a person are all adjectives, they get ignored in favor of the special adjective, so the phrase looks like (for example) TAM\'S BEDROOM.

Moonmist also handles HIS, HER and YOUR (as in TAMARA, GO TO YOUR BEDROOM) by using the same special adjectives.

* [to be continued]

Date: 18 Nov 1986 1130-EST From: All-tasty Grue <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Innovations, cont'd To: imps at FRED

* ROOM EXITS

Moonmist required a new kind of exit from a room: one that makes a comment as you pass through it -- for example "You step down into a narrow secret passage." Naturally the comment should appear only for certain exit directions. Of course you can do this with a PER exit, but I really wanted this to be an IF ... IS OPEN exit, so that it's easy for another routine to find out what room is on the other side of the door.

The method I used makes the routine GOTO call the ACTION routine for HERE with an argument equal to the direction number of the exit. (Speaking in ZIL: <APPLY <GETP ,HERE ,P?ACTION> <DIR-FROM ,HERE .

RM>>) Fortunately, direction numbers range from 20 to 31, and the other possible arguments for a room routine range from 1 to 9, so the routine won't get confused. As a bonus, the room routine can RFATAL to make GOTO fail, after making a comment like "Before you even take a step, you remember that you're not dressed."

* GENERIC PRUNING

[Ah, so Stu's fiddling with GENERIC routines again, eh?]

For those of you who came in late: A GENERIC routine is just a way to prevent embarrassment when the parser is ready to say "Which ... do you mean, ...?" They first appeared in The Witness, where, besides the two identical guns, there was a generic gun in GLOBAL-OBJECTS for characters to comment on if the player hadn't yet found a real gun.

Here's an example of "pruning": Jack has the first clue and second clue, and Tamara has the third clue, and the command is TAKE CLUE FROM JACK. Each clue has a generic property, so the parser passes a TABLE to the GENERIC-CLUE routine, and the TABLE has the three accessible "clue" objects in it. The routine sizes up the situation, removes the third clue from the TABLE, and returns a special object (I chose ROOMS) to tell the parser that the TABLE has changed. Finally, the parser says to the player, "Which clue do you mean, the first clue or the second clue?" As God intended.

* DEBUGGING THE CLOCK QUEUE

I had several debugging commands that coughed up internal info, like the goal tables for independent character movement, until ZDDT made life much easier. But the clock queue is still hard to decipher, because it contains pointers to interrupt routines. So I made each interrupt routine take an optional argument, which if supplied makes the routine TELL its own name and then return immediately. The debugging command #QUEUE can then step through the clock queue, call each queued interrupt routine with an argument (so the routine identifies itself), and then TELL the time remaining until the interrupt actually runs.

* ACTIVITIES AND EPITHETS

With a large number of characters, who often gather in one place, it gets boring to see them described individually each time. So I invented a TABLE of possible activities: dancing, looking at you with suspicion, poised to attack, and so on. Each person has a property that contains a number corresponding to a slot in this TABLE, and another property that contains his or her default activity, sort of like an epithet. For example, Tamara is "looking at you hopefully" and Jack is "surveying his domain".

DESCRIBE-OBJECTS has a special part that looks for people in the room, and makes a separate sentence for each common activity — for example, "Vivien and Ian are playing the piano. Lord Jack and Wendish are deep in thought." The activity codes are also useful in other ways — for example, LISTEN TO HYDE, when Hyde is playing the piano, becomes LISTEN TO PIANO; ASK WENDISH ABOUT HIMSELF, when he is "searching", makes him comment on his search instead of his life story.

The codes are updated by various routines. For example, when you talk to a character, they start "listening to you"; when MOVE-PERSON makes a character advance toward a goal, they become "walking along"; when a character reaches a goal, their GOAL-FUNCTION routine makes them do the right thing. When a character becomes idle (for example: IRIS, STAY HERE after you asked her to follow you), their activity code becomes zero, and the epithet takes over.

Date: 18 Mar 1987 1407-EST
From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: amstrad
To: swg

Moonmist works just dandy on the Amstrad, and, from what I understand, is being copied and will "ship" soon!

Moonmist
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Nancy Grue

Z

Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It

by Jeff O'Neill — illustrations by Kevin Pope
***Comedy* series, catalog #IC3**

Nord and Bert's inception:

Date: 14 Mar 1985 1644-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at ZORK>
Subject: FREAKS To: IMPS at ZORK

Any ideas out there for "modern-day" freaks. That is, some segment of the population that has become so obsolete or rare in modern society as the warrant a member of such segment to sell himself/herself to a circus. [In past times, for example, there was in Barnum's show a hundred-and-some-odd year-old slave who was claimed to have been the midwife for George Washington.]

An example would be: "the last surviving American Housewife," shown in a Kitchen-setting, wearing an apron, etc.

Alternatively, what do you think of the idea of having such "modern-day" freaks in the first place.

Date: 8 Dec 1986 2018-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: help To: DA

There's a yellow pad of paper on my desc. On it, under the heading MARKET, there's things listed, about four, including "pickled peppers" and "pig."

Can you tell me the others?

Date: 6 Jan 1987 1422-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Knock knock jokes To: everybody at FRED

In my quest to further broaden the ever-expanding horizons of interactive fiction, I'm collecting knock-knock jokes. In my game, they will be perpetrated by a jokester brother-in-law character out of a 50's situation comedy TV show. But don't let this limit you. So please send along a couple such jokes.

Date: 6 Jan 1987 1438-EST From: Sultry Gelata <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Knock knock jokes To: JEFF cc: SWG

Note: I believe that, in the beginning, the punch line to a KKJ had to be a well-known phrase — title, lyric, or saying — and not just a clever pun. But so what?

1. Knock! Knock!
2. Who's there?
1. Sam and Janet
2. Sam and Janet who?
1. "Some enchanted evening …"

A nickname for Nord and Bert:

Date: 4 Mar 1987 1005-EST From: A trusty legal <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Titular thoughts To: jeff cc: jon, swg

While musing on possible titles for "Wordplay", I turned to Webster's 7th Collegiate, Vocabulary of Rhymes, where I found:

bird, curd, gird, heard, herd, surd, third, word

To which we could add: nerd, turd, absurd. Now to play G/R's game:

Revenge of the Words
Great Silver Word
Words of a Feather
A Word in the Hand
Third Word War
Scene and Not Word
Obscene and Not Absurd
Give Me the Word

Little Miss Muffet / Sat on a tuffet, / Letting her words decay.

Then there are the past tenses of -er verbs, too many to list:

blurred, purred, slurred, spurred, stirred, whirred, deferred, occurred, preferred, etc.

All this to you proffered. / Do not think me absurd.

Date: 5 Mar 1987 1522-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Wordplay Feelies To: JON at FRED, tomas at FRED, imps at FRED

I mentioned this to Jeff a couple of weeks ago. This is only an example obviously.
A pin prick: A pen shaped like a penis.
It is a bad example, but something like that. An object that is a play on words.

Date: 5 Mar 1987 1433-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Wordplay Feelies To: Imps at FRED

When "we" (Jeff, Liz, and I) met with Marketing about Wordplay, none of us had any good ideas for feelies. If there ARE no good ideas, then we may have a feelie-less package. And if we have a feelie-less package, we MAY use a different package. (After all, an empty package may piss off a few people.)
Does anyone have any ideas for feelies?
And does anyone have any ideas for a good title?

Date: 5 Mar 1987 1528-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: Re: Wordplay Feelies To: DA

Along the same lines, how about a 'fucking asshole'???

Date: 31 Mar 1987 1019-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: You & WordPlay To: SWG

I am trying (perhaps too successfully) to keep you productively occupied. I've invited you to the WordPlay meeting not only for your input as a player, which is valuable, but also for your perspective as a game writer. I'm also wondering if you can help the development process in any other way, since Jeff is behind schedule and you are freer than others to help. (I don't know how exactly you could help, but I'd rather not dismiss the possibility yet.) You're right, you're not indispensable, but I'd like to take advantage of your "freedom" while I can.

Date: 23 Apr 1987 2347-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Wordplay V.70 To: TESTERS at FRED

Scoring is in. When you reach the maximum score in any scene, you should be taken back to the "Beginning" room.

Also interrupts should run now. E.G., the waitress will follow you.

Date: 28 Apr 1987 0139-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: V.77 To: Testers at FRED

You should be able to do a BEGINNING from any section now. Just at certain critical times you won't be allowed to.

When you return to a scene that you had been to before, your should arrive at the room you left from. Any objects you had been carrying should be there too.

Nord and Bert goes through 40 revisions in 3 weeks:

Date: 12 May 1987 0203-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: V.117 To: Testers at FRED

All but a few pages of bugs have been fixed around. Among the highlights, Restore should update status line, Possession is nine tenths of the law — should work as input now, You can type Score.

Can you imagine playing "The Farmers in the Deli"?

Date: 18 May 1987 1614-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: WordPlay To: Testers at FRED

A title has finally been chosen! Thanks to all who helped by giving suggestions and opinions. The title is: The Farmers in the Deli.

Date: 20 May 1987 1730-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: WordPlay title To: Testers at FRED

Well, The Farmers in the Deli has been axed. (The Kevin Pope cartoons weren't as funny as we hoped.)

Sooo ... We're now calling it "Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Heads or Tails of It." I know how happy this makes all of you.

If you want to discuss this with me, try to find me.

Date: 17 Jul 1987 1411-EDT
Subject: V.40

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Don't bother playing it. Stick to v.39.

Date: 20 Jul 1987 1650-EDT
Subject: V.48

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

It should fix all the bugs. Should.
-Jeff

Date: 21 Jul 1987 1522-EDT
Subject: v.49

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Ready for your inspection.
-Jeff

This message is primarily about Beyond Zork, but has a compliment for Nord and Bert:

Date: 28 Jul 1987 0026-EDT
Subject: Re: Query…

From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
To: MARC

I hate the role-playing elements: the tedium of fighting monsters, the random geography, not knowing what spells are until you cast them, and the quantification of things like endurance and luck. (There is ONE roll playing element I like, which is buying and selling items at shops.)

The setting is fun and very consistent with the previous GUE games. The puzzles are mostly excellent, though most are still too hard. If the role playing elements were removed, it would be one of my favorite games. Unfortunately, there's no chance of that, since it's already been marketed and P/Red as an IF/RPG hybrid.

It's also pretty buggy for a game in beta.

Have you played Nord and Bert? I just played it last week, and it's possibly the most fun I've ever had playing an Infocom game.

"That's the most fun I've ever had without laughing."
-Alvy Singer

Date: 17 Sep 1987 1422-EDT
Subject: Research

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: Testers at FRED

I'm trying to find a video which is a compilation of 1950's television commercials, which, I think, exists. Any ideas, besides 'try the corner video store'?

Date: 21 Jun 1988 1604-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Suggestion To: swg

In phrases of the form “the farmer in the dell”, the parser should look for IN specifically, rather than IN or its synonyms; currently “the farmer into the dell” seems to be equivalent.

Details on Kevin Pope

Kevin Pope: Nord and Bert Couldn’t Make Head or Tail of It, But He Could

The twisted world of words portrayed in Nord and Bert Couldn’t Make Head or Tail of It proved to be quite a formidable problem for the packaging scientists here at Infocom. How to present a game where the antagonists were words and phrases without making it look like a fancy typing tutor or spell checker? But then a book, like some serendipitous tumbleweed, found its way to the desk of Product Development Manager Jon Palace. The book, The Day Gravity Was Turned Off In Topeka And Other Short-Lived Phenomena by Kevin Pope, quickly brought a smile to Jon’s face. “This is it,” he thought. “This book is the twisted answer to our twisted problem.”

The reason for Jon’s excitement of course were the strange and funny cartoons that Kevin had crafted. The cartoons, both reveal and create zany insights into common words, phrases, and situations in much the same way that Author Jeff O’Neill has done in Nord and Bert...

With a solution seemingly found, numerous phone calls and meetings ensued culminating in the purchase of a round trip airplane ticket. Soon Kevin Pope himself sat before a computer terminal at Infocom playing Nord and Bert. Then he went back, as the saying goes, to the drawing board.

Kevin’s drawing board, is located in the small town of Mundelein, Illinois, as is his wife Kimberly and their new son Griffith. Kevin has spent most of his life in sleepy little midwestern towns like Mundelein and his cartoons are peopled with many remembered characters from them. Most times however, these characters are placed in perverse and whimsical situations that will always bring on an urge to laugh.

For the Nord and Bert game package, Kevin created a portfolio of original cartoons that we no will bring a smile to your face. You won’t be able to resist keeping this handsome full color book around to show your friends.

Besides his book, Kevin’s cartoons appear in many newspapers across the country including the San Francisco Bay Guardian and the Chicago Tribune. He is also hard at work on a line of greeting cards.

A group of penguins lines up before a dour looking petty bureaucrat; as each penguin reaches the front of the line it removes its beak and hands it over to the bureaucrat. Caption: “The Bill Collector.”

A lone woman walking down the street is heckled by a trio of bald men wearing long robes. Caption: “Buddhapests.”

An ant hangs from a rope attached to a tree. A group of ants, on the ground, race away from the scene. Caption: “Vigilantes.”

A camera toting tourist stands in front of a group of letters and motions the letter on the end to move closer to the others. The letters spell out the word PROBLEM. Caption: “Ted poses a problem.”

An early draft of the article that appeared in the Fall 1987 issue of “The Status Line” (Volume VI, No. 3):

There’s panic in Punster and only you can stop it.

Punster, the strangely besieged town at the center of Jeff O’Neill’s witty new collection of interactive short stories, needs help and it needs it fast. Because you see, Punster is infected by a strange malady which has affected language itself. Yes, language, the thing we all depend on to carry us through our daily routine interactions has virtually come alive and forced the good people of Punster into hilarious submission.

The stories in Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It take you to eight of Punster's most disastrously affected areas. To restore each area you'll need to solve a series 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, O'Neill's first game for Infocom, you know that his prose and puzzles can be both clever 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 pretty girl will lead you into a strange land where only the correct twist of phrase can solve the puzzles that will save both her and you. Or how about a trip to the wacked-out Punster TV station 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 lions meat" until you can figure out just the right thing to say to turn it into something edible.

Figuring out just the "right" thing to say is one of the trickier parts of Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It. But you'll be rewarded. Because as you solve each one 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 expertise to bear in order to gain the final victory that will return Punster to tranquility.

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 a normal Infocom game, which can take many hours or days.

Nord and Bert also introduces some other new features that are bound to be crowd pleasers. Through the auspices of Infocom's Interactive Fiction Plus, mapping is a thing of the past since all accessible locations are displayed at the top of the screen. Just type the name of the location and you're there. Also, remember hint booklets, well all the hints for Nord and Bert are on line and instantly available if you need one. No fair peeking now!

As usual Infocom, strives to go that extra mile for its fans 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. You can read more about Kevin and his cartoons elsewhere in this issue. So, get together with your friends, laugh over Kevin's cartoons and then try to save Punster. Remember, the pun is mightier than the sword.

Nord and Bert will be available in early September for a wide variety of personal computers, at a suggested retail price of $39.95.

Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Farmers in the Deli
Wordplay
Words at Play

Z

Planetfall

by Steve Meretzky
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS3**

First message relating to Planetfall:

Date: 8 Mar 1983 1921-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Survivor To: MARC, MSB, SWG, PJF, TESTER.JW cc: SEM

I hereby declare Survivor, Release 4, to be ready for alpha-testing. However, keep in mind that Witness! is a higher priority. It is scheduled to be released six weeks earlier than Survivor.

Also, when you play Survivor, please try to stay in CAPS-LOCK mode, and use QUIT rather than control-C to leave the game.

This games goal: 2000 bugs.

Date: 25 Apr 1983 1101-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: planetfall secret commands To: consumers at ZORK

The "secret words" that Planetfall knows have now changed somewhat. Here is the current set-up:

(1) $CRAG - takes you to the Crag, gives you the towel and survival kit, and turns off the opening-sequence interrupts.
(2) $FORK - simply takes you to the Fork
(3) $BOOTH - simply takes you to Booth 2, near the Elevator Lobby
(4) $CARDS - gives you all the access cards except the mini card
(5) $FIX - fixes the comm, defense, and course control systems
(6) $DEBUG - turns on the "time elapsed" feature

You should try to use $DEBUG as much as possible during Beta-testing in order to look for inconsistencies in the timing of things. Note that using $FORK or $BOOTH before using $CRAG will have bizarre side effects. None of these commands do anything about scoring, and they are not guaranteed to work correctly. They should only be used as a testing short-cut, not to finish the game faster.

Once you have memorized the secret commands, send me $4.95 and I will send you a Planetfall secret decoder ring, an Ensign Seventh Class code book (including instructions on how to perform the Planetfall Secret Hand-shake), and a Stellar Patrol certificate (suitable for framing) personally signed by Uncle Floydie.

Date: 28 Nov 1983 1536-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: ATTN: FLOYD To: testers at ZORK

Three "Attn: Floyd" letters arrived recently, all saying that Planetfall was too easy. This prompted me to do a survey of "Attn: Floyd" letters to date.

There have been eighteen letters. Of these, eight thought the game was too easy. Of these eight, I would classify seven as angry and dissatisfied. All eight thought it was too easy in comparison to our other games, and therefore are veteran players.

Three thought that Planetfall was too hard. I think that all three were adolescents, but I can't be sure. The remaining seven letters were just "I liked the game a lot" type letters. I'm assuming that they found it neither too

hard nor too easy.

Many people, although writing "Attn: Floyd" expressed opinions and reported bugs on a variety of earlier games. I presume that they had merely never considered writing until they read "We're Never Satisfied" in the manual.

Work begins on Solid Gold Planetfall

Date: 29 May 1984 1119-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Planetfall Browsie To: MD

I hadn't realized that we were doing Planetfall so soon. I guess the browsie would be some sort of "Welcome to the Stellar Patrol" brochure.

What about Deadline and The Witness? I thought they were next in the re-packaging queue.

Date: 25 Apr 1988 1638-EDT From: This Margy Burg <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Soiled-Gold Planetfall To: JON

The diary could be made the equivalent of the rule book in LGOP — a non-object that one can't fiddle with much. The only times that became a problem was when one was stripped of one's clothes/possessions by the game, which I don't think ever happens in Planetfall. That way it's always with you for reference, too.

Date: 25 Apr 1988 1835-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Soiled-Gold Planetfall To: JON

It's a little dangerous, but it doesn't have much in the way of unusual properties, so it isn't unreasonably dangerous, I think.

A bigger problem is the length of the diary. If you just said `>READ DIARY` and proceeded to get all the text in the diary it would be around ten screenfuls of text before the next prompt. Too much.

PDL suggests a menu-type interface where `READ DIARY` gives you a menu of all the entries in the diary (by date) and you could then select entries using arrow keys or whatever, and read them whenever you feel like.

This is, of course, much more coding work and has a much higher bug potential.

Date: 25 Apr 1988 1710-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Planetfall manual To: DA cc: Jon, SEM

The solid-gold Planetfall manual can be found in <JON>PFALL.CHEAPMANUAL. I used the following formatting commands:

.tm	at beginning (to signify "technical manual")			.b	bold
.12	12 point	.p	plain (Times?)	.x	bold italics
.10	10 point	.i	italics	.h	Helvetica
.7	7 point (for copyright info — is this right?)			.j	bold Helvetica

Let me know if there's something else to be done.

Date: 26 Apr 1988 1542-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Planetfall manual To: DA cc: SEM, Jon

OK, NOW it's ready: <JON>PFALL.CHEAPMANUAL.

(The previous version neglected to mention HINTS; the current version corrects that oversight.)

Planetfall
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Sole Survivor
Survivor
Lost Planet
Pratfall

Solid Gold Planetfall
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Soiled-Gold Planetfall

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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 [Giardini/Russell, Infocom's ad agency] 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, frustratin g 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.

Date: 19 Nov 1986 0951-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: sue To: IMPS at FRED

In Arthur C. Clarke's new book, "The Songs of Distant Earth," the sixth chapter is titled "Planetfall."

Plundered Hearts

by Amy Briggs
***Romance* series, catalog #IR1**

Plundered Hearts' inception:

Brief Synopsis of Plundered Hearts

The story takes place in the late 1600s. You are English and well-bred and have just blossomed into beautiful womanhood. You receive a note from the Governor of St. Sinistra (a Caribbean island, colony of England), saying that your father has been hurt by local pirates, and may suffer further injury unless you travel to the island immediately. And so, of course, you do.

Plundered Hearts begins with you aboard a ship being attacked by pirates. You overhear remarks about Lafond (the Governor of St. Sinistra) which indicates that he may be a Bad Guy. You are rescued from the pirates by handsome Captain Nicholas Jamison. Jamison takes you to his ship, sails to St. Sinistra, and tells you to stay aboard the ship while he rescues your father and "settles a score" with Lafond.

If you do nothing, the ship blows up and/or drifts into deadly reefs (one of Jamison's crew actually works for Lafond and has sabotaged the ship). You avert these catastrophes, then dress like a boy and sneak to the island. There you surreptitiously enter Lafond's mansion, change into a found ballgown (luckily your size), and crash a party that Lafond is giving. You have romantic interludes with Jamison, dancing together at the party and in a bougainvillea covered gazebo, but soon you separate to look for your father. You find your father imprisoned in a crocodile-guarded dungeon and you manage to rescue him.

Unfortunately Lafond catches you and brings you to his bedroom, where he nearly steals your maidenhead. Jamison tries to rescue you but fails, and he is fettered and whipped in the dungeon. You cleverly escape Lafond's lechery, and signal to Jamison's crew for help. You then rescue Jamison from the dungeon, but before you can escape, Lafond and Jamison duel. The sword fight begins in a ballroom, in front of the amazed party guests, and ends on a tiny beach, surrounded by pirates and dragoons. With your help Lafond is defeated, and you and Jamison are able to sail into the sunrise victorious and in love.

Date: 4 Mar 1987 1039-EST
Subject: Pirates and Prejudice

From: Har-har 'n Avast Me! <AMY at FRED>
To: LIZ, ELIZ, JON, SWG, TESTER.KATHERINE

Following the New Paperwork Act of January, 1987, here is form P/A 4M87-1500R1, exhibiting the questions I have about "Swashbuckler":

1) Although no one has reached the end yet, since the first half isn't working and the second half is only half in ("Students, what fraction of this endgame has not yet been put in?") — anyway, is the game too short? Or too empty, rather — I feel like there aren't that many puzzles — which is fine with me as long as no one feels cheated. A novella is just as good as a novel, done right.

2) Too linear? After one gets into the house one can mostly just dance (which leads ultimately to the end-game, in Lafond's bedroom, heh heh) or rescue Dad.

3) Are the scenes with Nick too long — in terms of replay value, because one has to sit through those whether you really want to or not. Any suggestions if they are? It's hard to set-up even an unbelievable romance if one character may walk out in the middle or the other character says everything in two sentences (one move).

4) It may also be too early to define difficulty, what with all the bugs making it harder. "Canvas Caresses" should be easy, intro. easy, since if there is a new market out there, it won't, by definition, have played any of our games.

5) Any specific nits? Puzzles or scenes you don't like, things that don't fit (besides the anachronistic "squeezable" bottle, and the "nail file" — though I'd like to find another file-like thing that fits more). Want it funnier, sexier, more romantic — or less of any?

Amy has an interesting nickname for Plundered Hearts:

Date: 26 Mar 1987 1029-EST From: Cordelia Braithwaite <AMY at FRED>
Subject: "Ribbons and Rapiers" To: Jon, SWG, Liz, Tester.Andrew, Tester.Katherine

(also known as "Rubbers and Rapers", so it hasn't a good chance of becoming a title.)

Version ... um ... 94 ..? "The Beginning of the Concept of the End."

The plot-part of the story is in place, all the way through sailing off into the sunrise. Whether it works at all is what I will be fiddling with today. This means, (I'm sure you will correct me if I'm wrong) that besides normal bug-fixing, etc., all I have left to do creatively is the Folly Romance scene and Getting-Rid-Of-Dad. Right?

Before I get on with those (Folly/Dad) I'm going to try to catch up on all the bugs, as well as getting the end passable. The game, as of last night, is 115K; my panic has subsided into concern. I don't intend to cut anything major, and certainly the text could do with some editing — I haven't tried to hold back much on the prose. We'll see, we'll see.

Date: 29 Jun 1987 0909-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: [Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>: Instruction Manual, PH] To: DA

A question from Amy. It's probably too late to do anything. Do you know?

Date: 28 Jun 1987 1401-EDT From: Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Instruction Manual, PH To: JON

Is it too late to make a slight change? Or rather, how much would a small change cost us? I guess it does say "Your goal is PH is to achieve 23 points" or something like that, and I'd like to add two points. I can always move two points around if I have to, it's just the 23 is such an awkward number.

Date: 29 Jun 1987 1239-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: P.H. Inst. Man. To: DA cc: Amy

The BEST thing, if possible, is to not mention the number of points. That way Amy can change the scoring up to the last minute.

If that's NOT possible, then Amy needs to choose between 20 and 25 points.

Date: 29 Jun 1987 1324-EDT From: Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>
Subject: P.H. Inst. Man. To: da

Let me know, please, whether it is 20, 25 or not mentioned. Thanks.

Date: 24 Jul 1987 1144-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Atari? To: JON cc: LIZ

I really think if Amy has to trim by cutting prose, it's a shame. I don't think there's a lot of prose to be cut. I don't have too many objections to having "two versions", although would be concerned that they would receive adequate testing. I'd be interested in finding out what percentage of our sales are Atari 800. It's a shabby machine, and I think if we have to cut up a great game to make it fit isn't quite right. Testing would certainly have to make an extra effort because cuttin g bugs tend to be unsightly, but we'd be willing to go the extra to make sure the games as good as it has been up to now.

Date: 24 Jul 1987 1148-EDT From: Gus & Myra Bright <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Atari? To: JON

Well, I still have to cut some 150 bytes or so to fit on the Commodore (its limit is 225 over the Atari.) Beyond that version, besides figuring what can be cut that (the lack of it) intrudes the least but is still big enough, it's okay by me.

Date: 18 Sep 1987 1049-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Plundered Hearts hintbook To: DA cc: jon

It's in my directory, in the file called ROMANCE.HINTS.

Sections titles and questions are in boldface, so are preceded with the ".b" notation. (Plain text which follows has the ".p" prefix.) Italics text has ".I" prefix.

All the text is Helvetica, I believe. I'm not sure what the type size is, so I haven't marked anything yet. (If you want me to, I will; just tell me what I should mark it.) I THINK the copyright notice is 7 point, the body text is 9 point; the section titles look big, maybe 13 point?

If you want me to do more, just let me know. Please note that the Beyond Zork table of contents is still to come (it will immediately follow the Plundered Hearts TOC).

Date: 29 Sep 1987 1705-EDT From: ecalaP noJ <JON at FRED>
Subject: Hintbook copy To: DA cc: Jon

The final copy for Plundered Hearts and Beyond Zork Hint booklet is in:
<INTERLOGIC.HINTBOOKS>PH-AND-BZ.HINTS.1
Formatted as I mentioned earlier: .b for bold, .p for plain, .i for italic.

Plundered Hearts
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Pirates and Prejudice
Swashbuckler
Canvas Caresses
Ribbons and Rapiers
Rubbers and Rapers

Z

Seastalker

by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence
***Tales of Adventure* series, catalog #IA2 (original catalog #IK1)**

Seastalker's inception, with the nickname of Tom Swift:

Date: 14 Jun 1983 1151-EDT From: SWG
Subject: Tom Swift To: MSB cc: BLANK,SWG

Is there any reason not to put Jim's outline on-line now? Not only would that make it much easier to revise & enlarge, but some of the text will go right into the first implementation anyway.

New working title:

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1048-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: operating the UB To: consumers at ZORK

The file <SWG>CONTROL.MSS describes proposed rules for operating Tom Swift's Ultramarine Bioceptor. I'd appreciate your comments today, if any, before sending it to Jim.

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1123-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Controls To: SWG

Sounds very good to me, but I'm not sure the forward/reverse control is necessary?
/marc

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1141-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Controls To: BLANK cc: swg

I'm not sure the fwd/rev control is necessary either, but Jim wants it. Originally I had it combined with the throttle. It may prove useful in battling sea monsters.

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1147-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: UB Controls To: swg

Looks good. As usual, I vote for simplicity, so I would say 3 rather than 4 speed settings and instant achievement of set speeds. Also, the reverse control seems redundant unless you want it for the battle scene.

Date: 12 Nov 1983 1102-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Frobton Bay To: SWG

I think that the UB-maneuvering problem is fun enough that it should be beefed up in some way. The simplest thing would be to make the loser have to change course at least once to get through the seawall. Yow!

/marc

Date: 14 Nov 1983 0901-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Frobton Bay To: BLANK cc: SWG

Suits me. I'll organize an un-dredging project to extend the shoal into the line-of-sight course.
(I still want to provide an auto-pilot for the younger kids, tho.)

New working title is "Tim Quick":

Date: 27 Nov 1983 1154-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: SEASTALKER To: IMPS at ZORK

... is the new name of QUICK. You can also call it J1 for short.

FYI, Jim Lawrence, the writer who's working on this game, plans to visit Cambridge on Tuesday and Wednesday. This will be the first time he's seen the game "in the flesh".

Note: you get the split-screen sonar display only if you SET SONARSCOPE TO AUTOMATIC. If you don't do this, but LOOK AT it repeatedly, Buzz will remind you.

The final name is chosen:

Date: 13 Dec 1983 1815-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: juvenile manual/game To: testers at ZORK

The deadline is very near for finalizing copy for the manual for "SeaStalker", the first juvenile game. While I think that it's a good idea to include a sample transcript in the manual, as for "Sorcerer", I don't have the time to write one myself. Would anyone like to volunteer? If you want to review the one for "Sorcerer", look at <INTERLOGIC>SAMPLE.RNO.

By the way, I hope to have "SeaStalker" ready for alpha-testing by the end of this week. Which Product Tester would like to be the first to try it out, in an eight-year-old frame of mind? (I'd like to have one of you at a time test the game, in case there are bugs that would spoil it for you.)

Date: 20 Dec 1983 1003-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: juvenile manual/game To: MD cc: SWG

1. G/R is bringing initial manual copy tomorrow, I think.
2. No one's volunteered to write a sample transcript. I too want to do it, if I can find the time!
3. Various kids and parents have volunteered to test. Also I have a lead on The Phoenix School in Cambridge, which is heavily into CAI.

Date: 19 Sep 1983 1600-EDT From: SWG
Subject: parsing a number To: BLANK cc: SWG

I'd like to allow players of "Tim Quick" to say things like:

```
SET THROTTLE TO 12 KNOTS
SET DEPTH TO 4 FATHOMS
```

Could the parser treat a number as a noise word, while still setting P-NUMBER to the proper value? Then I could examine PRSI for the units of measure.

On a related note, could the parser recognize words in a certain list (ONE TWO THREE ... TWENTY THIRTY FORTY- ...) and TELL a standard message like "(Use figures for numbers.)"?

Date: 10 Nov 1983 1510-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: QUICK To: imps at ZORK

I put some instructions in your mailbox about the submarine and Frobton Bay. You can try out the game by typing QUICK.

Please remember that the lab is not completely decorated yet, i.e. some descriptions are missing. Ditto for the Aquadome, should you manage to reach it.

Date: 22 Jan 1984 2241-EST From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Seastalker Hint Book To: Marc at ZORK, SWG cc: MD, : ;, : ;

We need to make a decision very soon on whether we will have an InvisiClues book for Seastalker. Ernie is about to reprint the Bilk and Wheedle form.

It would be nice for completeness - a product support package for every game. It would also allow us to direct any calls for assistance to the 800#. But it doesn't make sense if no one will benefit from it. Opinions?

Mike

Date: 23 Jan 1984 0933-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Seastalker Hint Book To: MD cc: swg, blank

Yes, it would be nice for completeness. And I can imagine kids who would benefit from it, despite the clues that appear on their screens. But I have no plans to write one, since I'm giving higher priority to another new product. Perhaps the Product Testers would do the writing?

— Stu.

Date: 23 Jan 1984 0908-EST From: Michael G. Quinn <MGQ at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Seastalker Hint Book To: MD

I haven't played enough of SEASTALKER to be sure, but it seems that the hint cards take care of any problems that arise.

How about a non-hint-book product to fill the gap, using the InvisiClues format — something the kiddies would have fun with (exactly what, I don't know).

At any rate, it doesn't seem likely that anyone will shell out $7.95 for a hint book when they already have the hint cards.

Date: 23 Jan 1984 0945-EST From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Seastalker Hint Book To: MD

I HAVEN'T SEEN ENOUGH OF THE FINAL DOCUMENTATION TO REALLY DECIDE. I SUPPOSE IT DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH IS GIVEN AWAY IN THE HINT CARDS. I GUESS THERE WILL BE PEOPLE WHO WILL WANT IT NO MATTER WHAT.

IF THERE IS NO HINT BOOK, DOES THIS MEAN WE MUST TELL ALL IN THE HINT CARDS INCLUDED IN THE GAME? AND IF WE DO, DOESN'T THIS SORT OF FLY IN THE FACE OF THE ARGUMENT THAT WE DON'T WANT TO PRINT THE ANSWERS NEXT TO THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE?

IF WE DO PRINT A BOOKLET, I THINK IT WOULD PROBABLY BE SHORTER THAN THE USUAL OR INCLUDE OTHER INFORMATION SINCE THE HINT CARDS WILL SUPPLY MANY HINTS.

HOLLYWOOD

Another nickname for Seastalker:

Date: 17 Feb 1984 0929-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: go for it! To: testers at ZORK

I think today's Seafrotzer, revision 60, should go out for beta testing, unless serious problems are discovered.
That means it should be tested first on the 20, then on Apple & IBM.

Bug report:

Date: 16 May 1984 1159-EDT From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Seastalker Bugs To: testers at ZORK cc: mgq at ZORK

It can now be revealed for the first time: There were 1,540 bugs reported for Seastalker.

Date: 26 Jun 1984 1518-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: AUTHOR BIOS To: JON cc: SWG

Stu Galley was just a student of physics and journalism when he discovered computers, at a time when most machines were just big number-crunchers. Nevertheless, he thought they were too much fun to be taken seriously, until he decided that physics was too little fun to be taken seriously. At MIT he discovered computer games and Lisp-like languages and the other founders of Infocom. In 1982 he began writing interactive fiction, first "The Witness" and then "Seastalker." His son enjoys interactive stories more than his wife does.

Date: 3 Sep 1984 1020-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: JIM LAWRENCE To: JON cc: SWG, MD, BLANK

I think he should be included in Seastalker's About the Author.
Here's a summary of the bio he supplied to us:

Jim Lawrence has written fiction extensively for both children and adults in a variety of media: books, magazine articles, film and radio scripts, and comic strips, including "decision" strips. He estimates that he has written

some sixty books of fiction, many of them under pen names for series like Tom Swift Jr. and Nancy Drew. His radio credits include weekly scripts for Sergeant Preston of the Yukon, The Green Hornet, and Sky King. He has written for, and in some cases created and illustrated, the comic strips Dallas, Joe Palooka, Captain Easy, Friday Foster, and Buck Rogers. Seastalker is his first published work of interactive fiction.

Date: 4 Sep 1984 1730-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: JIM LAWRENCE To: JON cc: SWG

By the way, you should check with Joel about whether Jim's bio can mention Tom Swift and Nancy Drew. To be safe, we might have to add:

"Tom Swift" and "Nancy Drew" are registered trademarks of Stratemeyer Syndicate.

(I don't know if there is a similar problem with other titles.)

Date: 12 Oct 1984 1005-EDT From: Jennifer Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
Subject: Seastalker for Commodore To: DAN, SWG

I've had two complaints on the C64 version of Seastalker. Both of these customers have our other games, and poke to change the screen display color so it is more readable. On Seastalker, this doesn't seem to work—it makes the screen completely unreadable. One customer said it was overwriting the color memory. Anyhow, I wouldn't be concerned about this if it happened with all the games, but it is curious that it's only a problem with Seastalker. I would appreciate any explanations on why this is happening, and suggestions on how to solve it, if possible. Thanks.

Date: 12 Oct 1984 1018-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Seastalker for Commodore To: JENNIFER cc: SWG, dan

Do you mean that the screen is unreadable ONLY if they POKE to try to change its color? If so, is that a feature that we need to support?

(I'm not trying to be ornery, but I have no helpful comments!)

Date: 12 Oct 1984 1026-EDT From: Jennifer Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Seastalker for Commodore To: SWG

Yes, that's what I mean. It's not a feature we need to support at all, I was just trying to find out why it might be happening, and if there was anything that could be done about it.

Date: 17 Oct 1984 1003-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: SEASTALKER To: SWG

G/R didn't sabotage SEASTALKER after all, as I accused them of doing yesterday. It turns out that they were planning all along to reduce the size of the Infocards. I didn't realize that (or if I did, I forgot about it), and my photocopies of the new mechanicals didn't mention reduction. At any rate, the sample die cut of the decoder was OK.

Jon

Date: 17 Oct 1984 1042-EDT From: Jennifer Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
Subject: Seastalker To: SWG, DA

A customer warranty card comment:

When the sub is underwater a player goes in crawl space comes back up, it says Tip closes hatch, but the hatch could not be open when underwater.

Comments? -Jenni

Date: 17 Oct 1984 1053-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Seastalker To: JENNIFER cc: SWG, da

It appears that could occur if the player has a weapon and the fine sonar installed. I guess no one ever went in crawl space under those conditions. That output really applies to entering the sub from the docking tank. I've fixed it in the source file.

(P.S. Are there other Seastalker reg. cards around here? I'd like to see some.)

Date: 8 Feb 1985 1141-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Random before read To: SCF cc: SWG

Release 17 of Seastalker is ready for testing. I already gave it a script and made sure that one can get all points & finish. If you want, I can figure out just what has changed since the last release.

Date: 7 Jun 1985 1350-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: SAVES DIRECTORY To: GARY cc: SWG

Here's a suggestion, which you might improve:

Seastalker
A2.BAY - just after leaving the lab in the sub
A2.DOME - after arriving at Aquadome, before opening hatch
A2.SPY - air supply fixed, Bly spoke, Bill working in sub
A2.BATTLE - after leaving Aquadome, both weapons installed

A sample transcript for Seastalker:

```
>examine the computester
The Computestor is off.

>turn the computestor on
(You can't see any computestor here!)

>turn on the computester
(You can't see any computester here!)

>drop the microphone
Okay, the microphone is now on the floor.
```

```
>l
(lab center)
You're at your workbench in the center of your laboratory, a
small part of the Shitface Research Lab in the town of Frobton.
The videophone screen looms overhead.
There's a microphone here.
Tip is here.

>go to the submarine
(SCIMITAR)
You're in the pilot's seat of the SCIMITAR, its operating control
panel before you. A wraparound viewport, both fore and aft,
provides a view ahead and astern. You can also observe your
surroundings with a sonarscope and a hydrophone listening device.
There's a sonarphone for communication. You'll discover other
features when you need them.
Tip is sitting behind you, reading a magazine.
The power reactor is off and open.
(Your score just went up by 1 point!)

>tip, where is the computestor
(To locate something, use the command: FIND (something).)

>find computester
It's in the north part.

>go to lab
(lab center)

Tip follows you into the lab center.
There's a microphone here.

>n
(north part)
You're in the north part of your laboratory. A Computestor stands
here to help test your inventions.

>unscript
Here ends a transcript of interaction with
SEASTALKER: ASSHOLE SHITFACE AND THE ULTRAMARINE BIOCEPTOR
Junior-level interactive fiction from Infocom
Copyright (c) 1984 Infocom, Inc. All rights reserved.
SEASTALKER is a trademark of Infocom, Inc.
Release number 17 / Serial number 841129
```

Seastalker
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Tom Swift
Tom Swift’s Ultramarine Bioceptor
Tim Quick
Seafrotzer

Z

Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels

by Bob Bates
***Immortal Legends* series, catalog #CS1**

Sherlock's inception:

Date: 9 Apr 1984 0929-EST From: PROF
Subject: Infocom Classics To: swg

Spent a few hours this weekend leafing through my dog-eared textbooks. Here's a list of likely candidates for the "Educational" games we were discussing (under the influence of Green Punch) last Friday:

In the royalty-free category (e.g.; cheap), we have

Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes"
Pick a mystery out of the dozens available. Or do "The Hound of the Baskervilles", etc, etc. Doyle is widely used in high school English, believe it or not.

(For the full list of the games considered, go to the Game Ideas section, starting at page 510.)

Date: 31 Jul 1987 1106-EDT From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock To: CLR cc: ELIZ, JON, LIZ, MATT, TESTER.JACOB

The new revision is now here. These are Bob Bates's comments:

THE NEW FEATURES CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

1) EASE OF USE (MULTIPLE SYNTAXES FOR LEGITIMATE ACTIONS)
2) SIMPLIFIED ENTRY PUZZLE (NEWSPAPER AND ABBEY)
3) EXPANDED HOLMES PRESENCE AND INTERACTION (ALTHOUGH MORE IS NEEDED)
4) ADDITIONAL HUMOUR
5) POP-UP WINDOWS FOR ALL SIGNS
6) CABS

AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, THE CABS ARE SOMEWHAT ROUGH. THE ONLY SYNTAX THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO GO FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER IS "DRIVE TO *LOCATION*." THE DRIVER WILL ONLY RECOGNIZE SOME OF THE ROOMS (THE ONES WITH "STREET" IN THEIR NAME), BUT HE WILL RESPOND TO "ABBEY" AND "TOWER." (LEST ANYONE THINK THE GROWLER IS NOT WORKING, THAT DRIVER WILL NEVER TAKE YOU WHERE YOU WANT TO GO). EVENTUALLY, I'D LIKE THE CAB DRIVER TO ASK YOU WHERE YOU WANT TO GO ("WHERE TO, SIR") AND ALLOW THE PLAYER TO MERELY TYPE IN THE NAME OF THE LOCATION.

Date: 4 Aug 1987 1737-EDT From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock To: Eliz, Jacob at FRED, Jon, Matt, Liz cc: CLR, TAA

Bob Bates says that revision 11 is better than 8:

THE CLOCK TOWER NOW WORKS FINE, AND WE HAVE MADE THE CAB AVAILABLE TO GO TO ALL OF THE CORE ENVIRONMENT ROOMS THAT ARE OUTDOORS.

IF YOU PLAY THE GAME FROM START TO FINISH, YOU WILL COME UP 6 POINTS SHORT, SO DON'T THINK THERE'S SOMETHING YOU MISSED.

We thank you for your input at yesterday's meeting.

Excerpt from a message on various topics:

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1441-EDT From: Chaaa on Planet J <JON at FRED>
Subject: Mostly boring stuff To: Imps at FRED

Below are the notes I took at this morning's meeting. (Joel et al. wasn't here last Thursday, which is why we had the meeting today.)

Terry Ishida at Activision (Russell Leiblich's manager, now that Jeff Steinwedel is gone) plans to hire a sound assistant who Russell will train around November or December. If we're serious about sounds, we should hire a sound person who will work out here but who will be trained by Russell, maybe in January or February. Russ is taking a vacation and doing Last Ninja sounds, and will be ready to start Sherlock sounds around October 1. We'll do sounds (if at all) on the ST, Amiga, gs, and Mac only.

Date: 1 Sep 1987 1610-EDT From: Latha Japan Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Tides To: Challenge cc: Eliz, SWG, Liz, CLR, Jon

I bought Sunday's and Monday's London Times. High tides at London Bridge occur every 12 hours 6 minutes.

Option 1: Reality. The Thames (the newspaper in the package) would list the weekend tide table. Saturday 8:40 a.m., 8:46 p.m.; Sunday 8:52 a.m., 8:58 p.m.; etc. Obviously the game would have to do the right thing too.

Option 2: Simplicity. Round off 12 hours 6 minutes to 12 hours. High tide would be listed at 8:40 (say), and not change day to day. This is how the game currently acts.

I would definitely prefer option 1. But if it's incredibly difficult, it's not the end of the world.

Date: 2 Sep 1987 1011-EDT From: Alert salt guy <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock To: testers at FRED

In release 15, body parts (eyes, ears, hands, etc.) are a bit buggy: you are holding them, but you can't see them; if you drop them, you can't take them again. Also, they severely limit the number of items you can carry, so put everything you can into the black bag.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1712-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock To: clr cc: swg, jon

There are certain discrepancies between what Bob Bates considers a bug and what we do. Understandable.

I'm not sure how we should establish a standard. One of the naggiest ones we're dealing with are hyphens. Don't laugh - I know it's one of Gary's peeves, and it's fast becoming one of mine. I can't believe the words Bob wants to hyphenate: absent-mindedly, boarding-house, pre-dawn, under-heated, jack-knife, arm-chair, south-east.

I think these words look absolutely stupid. In rechecking the bugs, I've found that not only Gary, but Elizabeth

and I have picked out the same words to have the hyphen removed.

I talked to Bob about this weirdness, and he said he was willing to take some out. His reasoning went along the lines of wanting people to understand what they read, and he felt adding hyphens would cause them to "digest" the words better. This sounds to me like a tall pile.

Suggestions?
liz

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1728-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock To: LIZ cc: clr, jon, SWG

If hyphens are the biggest disagreement between us and Bob, then we're in great shape!

Seriously, this sounds like a typical disagreement between an author and a publisher. Maybe Jon has some insight from his book-publishing days. In the worst case, we can edit the source files at the very end of development before shipping the master disks.

My prediction is that Bob, like in-house imps, will compromise and agree to reasonable hyphenation, if only to stop the testers from re-reporting bugs over and over.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1735-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock To: LIZ cc: swg, jon

I agree with Stu. If this is our worst problem then we have no problems.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1735-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock To: SWG cc: LIZ

The hyphens are the worst problem because there's so many cases. There are other real basic differences I feel - I guess partly because we've got high standards, etc.. It seems like some actions s.b. handled that aren't. I'm confident, however, that it will work out. Bob strikes me as a very agreeable person.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1739-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock To: LIZ cc: SWG, Gary, Veldran

For now, use the command XDDEBUG to refresh the status line. I'll ask Bob to make $REFRESH a synonym, if that's the standard.

By the way, use the command XVERIFY to verify the beta disks. I'll ask Bob to add $VERIFY also.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1757-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock To: LIZ cc: clr, swg

We have given Bob, and we shall continue to give him, our hyphen bugs.

You ask for suggestions. I suggest we consider hyphens as unimportant. Under-heated, pre-dawn, absent-mindedly, boarding-house all seem reasonable. I don't think they look stupid. South-east is certainly unconventional for Infocom, but I've seen it elsewhere.

If hyphens are the biggest problem with Sherlock, I suggest saving lots and lots of time and money and stop testing the game. (But of course I don't really believe that hyphens constitute the biggest problem.)

Complaining about hyphens is like (get ready, here comes one of Jon's great analogies) it's like pointing at a wart on Marilyn Monroe and crying "Disgusting!"

Date: 11 Sep 1987 1358-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock Manual To: DA

Gosh golly no. The manual is MOSTLY written, but I still have to write the sample transcript and the preface, and then ask Stu and Liz to OK the thing. I'll finish writing it Monday, so I may be able to turn it over to you by Wednesday. OK?

Date: 16 Sep 1987 1202-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock To: Testers at FRED

Bob Bates mentioned to me yesterday that in addition to specific bugs, he would welcome any suggestions on general matters (for example, ideas for things for Holmes to do).

Date: 16 Sep 1987 1532-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: comments on SHERLOCK.MANUAL To: jon cc: swg

1. Why are some section titles styled in Initial Caps and others not?
2. "You will meet many interesting people in the story, and you can 'talk' to them and give them comands." — "comands" s.b. "commands"
3. "(Among the cases where AGAIN will not work is if you were just talking to another character.)" — I think this is no longer true. It should be deleted.
4. "VERBOSE tells the computer to tell you all about a place or a thing ever time you see it." — "ever" s.b. "every"
5. Somewhere you should say "You can abbreviate EXAMINE to X." How about number 2 in "Tips for Novices"?
6. "Unless you are answering a question, each sentence must have a verb (or one of the special commands)." — ... or a compass direction.
7. In the "Quick Reference Guide" 2.B. is the example "HOLD THE PAPER OVER THE CANDLES." Does it matter?

Date: 16 Sep 1987 1633-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: conversion to XZIP To: Challenge cc: taa, swg

Tim Anderson (TAA) would like to use the newest ZIP interpreters for beta-testing Sherlock.

For your part, all you have to do is change the <VERSION EZIP> in GAME.ZIL to <VERSION XZIP>. The other changes I dictated to you already: putting <PUTB ,GL-P-PIBUF 1 0> before each <READ ...>.

For our part, we need to supply you with an IBM-PC version of XZIP, so you can continue to test on your PC's. It should appear in <CHALLENGE> on Thursday, from whence you can download it.

Date: 16 Sep 1987 1639-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: correction To: Challenge cc: taa, swg

Don't panic! We don't need to convert to XZIP before beta test. In fact, it would probably be better to do so after beta disks are made. Maybe in about a week.

Date: 18 Sep 1987 1141-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Beta Sherlock To: CHALLENGE at FRED cc: testers at FRED

Sherlock (release 45) is now on Fred, ready for testing.

Date: 23 Sep 1987 1735-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: add'l Sherlock copy To: DA cc: Eliz, Jon, Liz, CLR

If there is room, please add the following to the "Sherlock" manual, after ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

ABOUT THE OTHERS

The author thanks everyone who helped create this product: senior programmer Frederick Wilt; programmers Duane Beck and Mark Poesch; program testers Liz Cyr-Jones, Gary Brennan, Jacob Galley, Tyler Gore, Matt Hillman, and Joe Prosser; package designers Carl Genatossio and Elizabeth Langosy; package artists Peter Harris, Thomas Hillman, Ralph King, and Norman Walker; package producers "Hollywood" Anderson, Angela Crews, and Jon Palace; product manager Gayle Syska; marketeer Mike Dornbrook; and system programmers Tim Anderson, J.D. Arnold, Ed Black, Duncan Blanchard, Linde Dynneson, Stu Galley, Andy Kaluzniacki, Dave Lebling, and Chris Reeve.

Date: 30 Sep 1987 1506-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: sherlock To: testers at FRED

There should be a new version in Monday - hints and all. Also, from here on in, we'll be moving to 2 versions a week (fingers crossed and all).

Date: 30 Sep 1987 1628-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Extra! Extra! To: DA cc: Eliz, Challenge

If there is room, please add this to the Sherlock instruction manual, after the "About the Others" section:

We gratefully acknowledge The Times of London for their kind permission to reproduce their nameplate and selected stories from their edition of June 17, 1887.

Date: 7 Oct 1987 0856-EDT From: nJo celPaa <JON at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock manual To: SWG

After proofreading version 2, Stuart Kirsch came to me to discuss a few things. He felt strongly that About the

Others would hurt some people's feelings. (Cynthia isn't mentioned, nor is Stuart; nor is Glen Weisman or Carol King of Activision, etc.) I mentioned that something similar to this appears on several game disks. Stuart argued it wasn't the same thing.

I want to be sensitive to people's feelings but don't know what to do. We could try to add more names, but I don't know where exactly to stop. (Add Cynthia? Gabby? Customer Support? Activision Manufacturing?) I'd hate for the list to be exclusive, yet it's bound to exclude someone.

A possibility: exclude all Infopeople.

I'd appreciate your perspective on this. Thanks.

Date: 7 Oct 1987 0923-EDT From: Truly Gas Tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sherlock manual To: JON cc: SWG

I tried to set a reasonable boundary on whom to thank by using the phrase "helped create this product" — not "publicize" or "manufacture" or "sell" or "market". But you're probably right in thinking that's it's bound to hurt somebody's feelings.

One possibility: exclude all Infopeople.

Another possibility: let Bob Bates pick a few names, and write the copy so that he thanks them personally (even tho it already does that).

Date: 12 Oct 1987 1108-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock v. 80 To: testers at FRED

installed, since Bob Bates will be here tomorrow.

Date: 21 Oct 1987 1531-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock! To: clr cc: jon, swg

I got mail from Bob Bates saying there would be a new version tomorrow afternoon. This means that the game won't go to gamma until next week and allowing 3 weeks to test (which is minimum), means the game WON'T SHIP until 12/1 at the earliest. Someone needs to inform marketing.

Hopefully, the reasons for the product's slow progress can be mostly attributed to the fact that this is Challenge's first game. Testing is not satisfied with the quality of the game, nor with the way it was handled through development. I'd hope that we learn from the difficulties we've had on this first go round and plan to deal with them up front if we're planning a second project with them.

Infocom wants to advertise Sherlock in magazines that mystery writers read:

Date: 22 Oct 1987 1005-EDT From: nJo celPaa <JON at FRED>
Subject: Notes from Yesterday Morning's Meeting To: Imps at FRED

To members of the Mystery Writers of America: Is there any newsletter in which we might advertise or announce the Sherlock game?

Date: 26 Oct 1987 1336-EST From: Truly Gas Tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock #97 To: testers at FRED

... is here, no thanks to noisy phone lines.

Date: 27 Oct 1987 1635-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: c64 times To: swg cc: challenge, clr, taa

I played Sherlock! on the 64 this morning briefly - briefly because it was painfully slow. Following are time comparisons to Spy and Nord&Bert:

Game	Load	Save	Restore	Move
Spy	2min	1min	1 1/2min	10sec
Nord&Bert	2min	1min	1 1/2min	10-13sec
Sherlock!	2.11	2.54	3.11	35sec

I don't have times for Spy and Nord&Bert as far as $Verify goes, but it takes Sherlock! 6 minutes. Yuck. Testing needs to check out all the stuff put in for the 40 column monitor, so we'll wait for a new 64 version. I realize you are working hard on this problem, I just wanted to let you know what it looks like.
Liz

Date: 27 Oct 1987 1643-EST From: Truly Gas Tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: c64 times To: LIZ cc: challenge, clr, taa, SWG

As far as I know, Sherlock has not been optimized at all for the 64 yet. When it is, the $verify time won't change, but moves will be faster.
You can check the appearance of a 40-column screen on Fred, by the way. Just @SET TERMINAL WIDTH 40 before starting SHERLOCK.
— Stu.

Date: 27 Oct 1987 1653-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: c64 times To: SWG cc: LIZ

I've checked out the pop up windows and stuff already on Fred, and have reported bugs re:these type of things, but when I started it up there were tasteless status line bugs. I don't know why it didn't show up on Fred. There's definitely a difference between playing in 40 column mode on Fred and playing "for real" on the interp..
Thanks, liz

Date: 28 Oct 1987 1516-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: sherlock! To: testers at FRED

The remainder of Sherlock!'s development will be done in-house. Therefore, any bug reporting should be set down on traditional bug reporting sheets and given to testing. (I know it'll be hard to ignore that convenient ^E, but, try.)

Date: 28 Oct 1987 1506-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: sherlock! To: swg, clr cc: jon, gary

I just spoke with Bob Bates. He's expecting to send the gamma version up tomorrow (Thursday) morning. I told him that we'll need the zap files in order to make our gamma versions, and he said why doesn't he just send the zil files and we can zilch it thereby getting out zap files, neh? So, we will have in our hands on the game and the zil files as of tomorrow. If the game is in good gamma shape, it'll be ours to go ahead with and finish up. If not, it'll still be in Bob's hands to go back to the drawing board and work on it (albeit by Thursday afternoon).

Date: 29 Oct 1987 1224-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock v. 98 To: testers at FRED

This is the 'last' version from Challenge; future versions will be generated locally. To encourage the generation of paper bug reports for the game, I've disabled on-line bug reporting for it.

Date: 8 Feb 1988 1351-EST From: Bob Bates et al. <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Pre, post, and other partums To: swg

Stu -

I thought a post-partum is what the wide receiver runs when the quarterback tells him to go deep.

But seriously, folks.

I guess I'm more or less in the middle of the aforementioned depression. It helps to have Arthur to work on, but I spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about why Sherlock isn't in the stores yet (1st sighting this past weekend!), whether anyone will buy it once it's there, bugs that I know about, bugs that I don't know about, whether the reviewers will like it, whether the reviewers will review it, and why it isn't a whole lot better than it is.

As an author/businessman, I'm in kind of a peculiar situation, where it's hard to separate my feelings about the artistic merit of the product from its commercial performance. It's hard to take pleasure in positive responses from individuals without knowing whether the game will sell enough copies to the masses. On top of all that, there is a sort of "so what?" feeling, which I guess defines the whole post-partum feeling.

It's good to know, however, that there are others who have been the same route, and are familiar enough with the syndrome to recognize it for what it is.

My desk is getting cleaner by the hour.

To: Gabrielle, Elizabeth, Gayle From: Yours truly

Here's the almost final Sherlock sell sheet. The first paragraph will go between the title and the Package Elements. Let me know if there are any changes by 10/14. Thanks for all your help.

"Sales blurb" for dealers

INFOCOM is pleased to introduce THE IMMORTAL LEGENDS™ series, a collaborative effort with CHALLENGE, INC that brings to life legendary characters of English literature.

Package Elements

SHERLOCK: THE RIDDLE OF THE CROWN JEWELS diskette; a map of Victorian London; the June 17, 1887 issue of the London Thames; and a handsome key fob.

Features and Benefits:

- SHERLOCK lets the detective in everyone come out as the player thrills at solving a case side by side with the world's most famous sleuth.
- Not only is SHERLOCK vividly detailed in the ever-popular Holmes tradition, but it also offers the intrigue of riddles written in verse. And Holmes fans will love SHERLOCK's fascinating characters, rich environment, and clever plot.
- The release of SHERLOCK coincides with the one hundredth anniversary of the first Sherlock Holmes story. The resurgence of interest in Sherlock Holmes means that it's a great time to be selling the new interactive version.
- SHERLOCK includes on-screen hints, the feature most requested by Infocom players. Readily-accessible hints keeps the story moving and will bring customers back sooner to buy more games.
- High quality sound makes SHERLOCK all the more real and brings Victorian London all the more alive. (Available on certain machines; see below.)
- High quality sound brings Victorian London

Availability

System	PRODUCT #	ISBN #	UPC#	PRICE	SOUND
Apple II series	TD-CS1	0-87321-366-1	0 51051 01366	$39.95	
Apple IIgs	KD-CS1	0-87321-400-X	0 51051 01400	$39.95	yes
Macintosh	ID-CS1	0-87321-378-5	0 51051 01378	$39.95	yes
Atari ST series	SD-CS1	0-87321-396-3	0 51051 01396	$39.95	yes
Commodore 64/128	DD-CS1	0-87321-382-3	0 51051 01382	$34.95	
Commodore 128	DD-CS1	0-87321-382-3	0 51051 01382	$34.95	
Amiga	WD-CS1	0-87321-393-9	0 51051 01393	$39.95	yes
IBM series and 100% compatibles	PD-CS1	0-87321-388-2	0 51051 01388	$39.95	

INFOCOM™, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140

Infocom products are exclusively sold and distributed by Activision, Inc. Contact your Infocom distributor or call Activision Sales at (415) 960-0518.

Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

James Clavell's Shogun

by Dave Lebling
***Tales of Adventure* series, catalog #IA5**

Shogun's inception:

Date: 1 Dec 1987 1802-EST From: Big Land Devil <PDL at FRED>
Subject: "Pictures" To: IMPS at FRED

Here's some copy about the placeholder picture stuff I've done for Shogun.
You make a FOO.ZPIC file (where FOO is the name of your game). The file looks like this:

;The first line of the file is a descriptive line about the 1st picture.

From then on, anything up to a line with only a form feed on it is the picture. It can be anything you like, and the lines of it will be adjusted to all be the same width (using the longest one as the basis). The end line of the picture comes now:

^L
;Then comes the second picture.
*
|
^
^L

You run this file through the PICS program by saying

PICS FOO

to EXEC. It generates an output file called FOO.PIC which contains all the stuff ZIP needs to "display" the picture. The pictures will be given numbers starting with 1. I tend to make constants somewhere that give these numbers mnemonic names starting with P-. To display a picture, you say

<DISPLAY picture-number x y>

where x and y are like the x and y for CURSET. In Shogun, I tend to display pictures on the right margin, 'cuz I think that looks better, and I use the "carriage return interrupt" and MARGIN instruction to make the text bleed around the picture. If you want to do that too, see <A5>STATUS.ZIL and look for the routine MARGINAL-PIC for how to do it.

If you have any questions or suggestions, let me know.

Date: 18 Jan 1988 1319-EST From: Avg. Bill Need <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Shogun To: JON

A few questions;

1) Have Shogun and Zork 0 officially switched release dates?
2) Can you do some pseudo-pre-alpha testing?

I am feeling rather strange about Shogun. I've written a lot of stuff, very little of it truly fleshed out though. I am very unsure how to tie it all together. I made a list of things that were "important" in the book, and I've hit far less than a third of them. I'm wondering how many to try to add, and how to add them.

I'm still waiting for questions to be put in the new parser.

I'm still waiting to hear Clavell's reaction to the stuff I sent him before Thanksgiving.

I'm still waiting for some movement on putting pictures into the game (from the systems side, not the artistic side).

The game is 120K already and I don't really feel there is a game there yet.

If you could do some pre-pre-alpha, there would at least be someone who could give another perspective on some of these questions.

d.

Date: 25 Jan 1988 1346-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Clavell Summary To: joel cc: clr, jon

Just to get "on the record" with my conversion with James Clavell. He has read the transcripts we sent, thinks in general they are fine, and says to keep on. He had a minor (and correct) criticism of some stuff that was basically a bug.

It's pretty clear to me that at this point there is little more that we can expect from James. He indicated during the conversation that he hasn't read Shogun in years and apparently doesn't remember the details too well, so he's not going to fill in details or anything of that nature.

His substantive advice was:

* There's a lot of detail in what he's seen, is there going to be time/room for everything at that level?
Answer: "No, a lot of stuff will be glossed over in bridging scenes."

* I told him I'm putting in a lot of his prose almost unaltered. His reply was "Good, the more of that the better." (Modest guy).

* I asked if he had any ideas for action scenes that hadn't previously been mentioned. (This is where he confessed his "ignorance" of the book). He said, "My recollection is that if you open the book to almost any page, he's hitting someone, or being hit, or someone's head is being cut off." My interpretation of this is that he isn't really interested in investing much time in this.

* He said he looks forward to seeing me again. (Hint, hint.)

I told him we would try to set up a method of regularly getting him transcripts, and that we (Joel?) would talk to Ken about what method to use. I personally would prefer sending them directly to Clavell, if we can convince Ken of this. I said nothing about disks, and would prefer we continue to say nothing about disks for a while.

Summary of summary: I am now convinced that barring major disasters Clavell is unlikely to do anything to impede the project, but contrariwise, he isn't likely to help much either. I would continue to send him transcripts from time to time, just so he and Ken have some feedback but otherwise...

Date: 2 Feb 1988 1120-EST From: Alan J. Cope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Deluxe Paint To: DA, PDL

Donald Langosy is anxious to start work on the Amiga for Shogun art. I was hoping Tom Veldran would be able to give him a primer on Deluxe Paint, but both Donald and I think we shouldn't wait any longer if possible.

Hollywood, have you used Deluxe Paint? If so, can you sit down with Donald for an hour or so tomorrow and show him whatever features you know?

If Hollywood hasn't used Deluxe Paint, then maybe you, PDL, should spend a few hours with it this afternoon or tomorrow morning so you can learn how to use its features.

And if both of you can't, can you think of anyone else? Or should we just send Donald home with an Amiga cold?

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1013-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Shogun art To: JON

X is both compression and transferring. There is, of course, the question of whether we want to look at it before we start wasting a lot of time doing other things to it.

I can't do anything with it until my Mac disk comes back from Apple anyway.

Although we don't strictly need Deluxe Paint, is there any actual reason why we shouldn't get it?

Date: 6 Apr 1988 1740-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: SHOGUN To: JON, AMY, LIZ

I've installed a new version which is fairly up-to-date on bugs and script reading. It should be lots less buggy, though there are no new scenes yet, or completion for some of the incomplete scenes.

The major change is that the game is now running in "YZIP," the new version of the interpreter. Consequently, I'm quite interested in anything that looks like an interpreter problem.

I expect the next version will have major new scenes, and major revisions of old scenes.

Date: 19 Apr 1988 1706-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: SHOGUN To: JON

This version incorporates most of the suggestions you made in your first Notes file. I look forward to your reactions to it.

I have a seriously intended question, which goes something like this: What is going on, with regard to schedules and such, with Shogun? Is Shogun on hold until we (whomever) decide it's good enough? Whatever its current faults, I think it's a better game than (to pick just one example) Border Zone, which never got much negative criticism. Is it really offic ially scheduled for next Spring or is it scheduled for this Fall or is it scheduled at all? I saw a testing schedule Liz was printing out and it's not even on it. Am I wasting my time working on it because it's already effectively cancelled and no one has told me? Are Joel and Mike out in Mountain View damning it with faint praise, or what?

Am I paranoid yet?

yr obt svt

d.

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1312-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Shogun To: jon

Tom and I were thinking about possible things to add and this is what we came up with.

location: PIT
Omi and Co. tell you that one of you must die.
The crew decides to draw straws.
Blackthorne must grab the straws and he throws them down in disgust.
Omi and Co. (with a translator) come and get one of you.
No one does anything.
They send one of their men down the ladder.
Blackthorne must shake the ladder.
the guard falls into the pit, dropping his sword.
Blackthorne must grab the sword.
Blackthorne must threaten to kill himself. (Actually, he learns earlier in the story that Japanese think that suicide is honorable. this and the fact that they want him alive makes this bluff seem feasible.)
The spanish translator calls his bluff (whether speaking on his own or for the Jaopanese is TBD.)
Blackthorne must kill himself. He only wounds himself though. (Why? I forgot.)
He wakes up in Mura's house to the sound of Pieterzoon boiling. (A few days later.)
now the scene where omi pisses on his back comes.

This can only be motivated by using more "thoughts" by Blackthorne. Earlier parts of the game need to be expanded to train you more how to act like Blackthorne anyway.

Please send comments or questions to Tom Veldran because I'm leaving early today.

Date: 30 Jun 1988 1505-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Shogun manual To: Veldran, Tomas cc: jon

Mike volunteered your time and services, Mr. Bok, for writing the Shogun instruction manual.
However, if you, Mr. Veldran, have the time and inclination to write it, you obviously know the game well.
I started writing the manual, and my work-in-progress can be found in my directory, under the imaginative name of SHOGUN.MANUAL.
Mr. Veldran, do you have the time and inclination to do it? (It's due in a couple of weeks, and I know you're working on the Journey manual — how's that going, by the way?) Whatever your answer, please let both me and Mr. Bok know. Thanks.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1017-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: shogun To: adam at FRED

Dave showed me a bug you gave him that slightly irked him. It has to do with the rescuing of Rodrigues scene - `>L AT KIMONOS` or something like that, where the game doesn't seem to recognize the kimonos. Anyway, you wrote on the bug sheet, Dave, FIX this. It turns out to be a day's worth of work to fix it, and Dave's not sure he has the time to spend on one bug. He also didn't care for the "FIX this" demand. Try to restrain yourself.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1038-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset him, but that's like the third REwrite of that bug. He keeps checking it (as in marking it fixed) and later, the same bug would appear. Again, I didn't mean to upset him, it was more to stress that this was a bug that never got fixed. I'm sorry I made it sound like a demand.

I won't deny that I've been upset with him at times. He's written derogatory comments about the bugs. I'll write up a valid (and may I point out, still occurring) bug, and he'll write back "Wrong. You've got the wrong one." You try it. If the ninja come into the Secret Redoubt, and you close the door and bar it, they just go south *through* the door (without opening it, etc...). Wrong. I've got the wrong door. Perhaps, but does he need to be so cold to me? Is it me, my replies, or just testers that he hates?

I hate to be pushy, but I'd like to be moved to another game, as soon as possible. I wouldn't mind working on Shogun part-time, but I don't know if I'll be able to continue much longer on full-time. Now that Jake is doing Shogun, I could just retest bugs, and let him do all of the new bugs.

Sorry to make life hard for you, Liz. I'm doing my best, but I don't seem to be getting along too well with Dave. I'll make an effort, but I honestly doubt he's making a comparable one.

Adam

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1055-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: TESTER.ADAM cc: LIZ

Obviously with the stuff going on he's feeling somewhat testy. I can agree with some bugs of yours as being "vague" — you still need to make sure that you write in directly your command and the game's response. That's the only way he can look in the code to see where it's losing. It's not enough to just describe the scene, because he'll know where you are of course, but not WHAT EXACTLY you typed in and WHAT EXACTLY the game responded. If there are several bugs that seem to go unfixed and recur, then stick a postit on it and put it on a "fix later" list.

Dave doesn't hate testers in general — and I doubt he hates you. I think your style of bug reporting annoys him where you put comments on. I don't know what to have you test next. I'll let you know.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1101-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

Ok. I'll try to get along with him in the meantime. I'm not arguing the fact that some of my bugs are vague... I don't doubt that at all. It's just very disappointing and often depressing when the bugs I do send in are simply shot down. I understand that people aren't perfect, but he could try a bit harder...

By the way, what does "PLOT" mean? He's written that on a lot of the bugs.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1105-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: TESTER.ADAM cc: LIZ

I have no idea what PLOT means. I'll look at the bugs as soon as I calm down from beating the shit out of Marc. I understand that it's difficult to have some of your bugs ignored or shot down, but that's the way it goes - it's all part of the job. Also, I know when I'm finding bugs, it's difficult to restrain myself from making snotty comments because I think some of the bugs I find are so stupid, how could anyone make that mistake? Fortunately, I've been here for a while so I've learned. You have to realize this, too. If it makes you feel any better, a kid who worked here last summer got into a similar situation only worse! Steve Watkins was working on Border Zone (Marc's previous game) and would really annoy the fuck out of Marc to the point where Marc would be on the phone with me every other day telling me to kill Steve (or fire him).

Just try to be objective and impersonal when you're writing up bugs. It should help.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1117-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

Ok, I guess... It's just hard. I can't wait for one of Marc's games (the impression I get from the Journeymen around here would imply it's a good game, but the author is a bit touchy).

Dave writes PLOT in a lot of the bugs... I think it might be something he's going to put in, come next version, or something like that.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1151-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: TESTER.ADAM cc: LIZ

You're probably right about what PLOT means. Anyway, don't be too anxious to work on one of Marc's games. He's much worse than Dave in the context we've been talking about.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1153-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

This is so infuriating. About 20% of the SUPPOSEDLY fixed bugs are actually fixed. And this big bug that we're arguing over is still there. What can I do to get him to fix it?

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1202-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: TESTER.ADAM cc: LIZ

I told you this morning. The bugs you're talking about Dave's aware of, and aware of how much it will take to fix them. There's nothing you can do to "get him to fix it". Put a postit on it, and mark it "LIST". You are asserting the wrong attitude - it isn't up to you to "get him to fix it" - don't let this show.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1211-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

Ok. That's all I wanted to know. "LIST"

Date: 15 Aug 1988 1137-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: shogun To: adam at FRED

Adam, how come every time I do a finger on the system, your terminal has been idle several minutes? It gives me the impression that you're fooling around. I realize you're bored, but this is your job. Make a save, then quit and start a new transcript. OK?

Date: 15 Aug 1988 1141-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

It so happens that I'm writing up bugs. I just went for a bagel, so the terminal has probably been idle for 4 or 5 minutes. It takes a long time to write up a bug that takes three slots.

Date: 15 Aug 1988 1151-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: shogun To: adam at FRED

I'm not trying to give you a real hard time, but I'm tired of making sure that everyone's doing what they're supposed to be doing. Your Friday script doesn't have much in it - I realize you left early - but still. We don't have that much extra time.

Date: 15 Aug 1988 1157-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: shogun To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

You don't have to worry about making sure that everyone's doing that they're supposed to be doing. I'm working out bugs which take a while, and, because of the immense volume of them today, I'm spending a lot of time idle while I write them up.

Date: 22 Sep 1988 1000-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: SHOGUN v. 262 To: TESTERS at FRED

This version is now installed. When the game starts, and you are given a three-item menu (START, RESTORE, QUIT), if you type the "0" keypad key, you will get a menu of all scenes and can start at any of them. You can get the same effect, but with fewer guarantees of bug-free operation, by typing $SCENE at any time in the game.

The scenes named "Mariko" and "Journey to Edo" are still unfinished. The "Mariko" scene is quite unfinished, in fact...

Date: 31 Oct 1988 1425-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: shogun 266 To: testers at FRED

This is installed on the 20, and Shaun has a copy of it on floppy. It's almost entirely bug fixes, very little of the "new stuff" we were talking about last week.

Have fun

Date: 9 Nov 1988 2028-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Not even close To: pdl cc: veldRAN, jdARNOLD

The shogun ZIP I have is 305912 bytes. The picture file is 191885 (Thank you, Denise, for totally eliminating compression...), of which 9 pages (4608 bytes) belong to segment 0, so appear on two surfaces. This gives a total size of 502405 bytes.

The maximum allowed game size is 921 pages (111 preload, plus three 270 page disks), or 471552; there's an additional 80 pages (40960) on the preload disk that can be used for something that's sworn never to touch segment 0 (hints come to mind). Unfortunately, the hint segment only has 35 unique pages; moving those to the preload side gives us 484485 to fit into 471552. (On the bright side, at least your hint segment fits in 80 pages; Zork 0's requires 85 pages if it never wants to touch segment 0.)

It's possible that further cleanup by a more reasonable artist (I understand Tanya is doing some work on it) will reduce the size of the picture file enough to allow winnage. It's possible that it won't.

Yours in disgust,
-ta

Date: 5 Dec 1988 1723-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Shogun Question To: TESTERS at FRED

Should Shogun do an INVENTORY for you at the start of each new scene? Since often a lot of time has passed since the end of the last scene, you may not know what you've got. I wouldn't count it as a move.

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 89 08:26:20 EST From: jon (Jon Palace)
Subject: Amiga Shogun To: duncan

I played through Shogun re. 293 with interpreter version 6.6. Everything looked good except two things you already know about: the status line isn't reversed, and the pics flash.

The status line bug is the more important, because we MIGHT ship the game with the flashing problem if we had to, but we wouldn't ship the game with the status line problem.

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 89 13:10:34 EST From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
Subject: Turbo Parser! To: taa@spike, pdl@spike, sem@spike Cc: swg@spike

... is now installed in Zork Zero, as of the next time it's compiled.

Turbo Parser Mark II (with improved adjective reductions) is now installed in Shogun and Restaurant (~dev/old/h2).

A question about which definition works best:

1: "...your terror lends you inhuman strength…"

2: "...your terror lends you superhuman strength…"

Inhuman \(')in-hyu-men,-'yu\
1: a: Lacking pity, kindness, or mercy: SAVAGE <an ~ tyrant>
b: Cold, impresonal <his usual quiet, almost ~ courtesy>
c: Not worthy of or conforming to the needs of human beings <~ living conditions>
2: Of or suggesting a nonhuman class of beings (in-hu-man-ly\in-hu-man-ness)

Superhuman \,su-per-'hyu-men,-'yu\
1: Being above the human: DIVINE <~ beings>
2: Exceeding normal human power, size, capability: HERCULEAN <a ~ effort>
(su-per-hu-man-ity\su-per-hu-man-ly\su-per-hu-man-ness)

Which fits the best?

James Clavell's Shogun
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Sorcerer

by Steve Meretzky
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ5**

Sorcerer's inception:

Date: 9 Nov 1983 1024-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Z5 and G/R To: testers at ZORK

G/R has come up with the following suggestions for the title of Z5. They like one of these titles in particular, but I won't say which one, yet. Please send me your comments on these titles, ASAP. (Titles are in alphabetical order.)

POSSESSED	SORCERER	SPELLBREAKER
SPELLSTALKER	SPIRITSAVER	TRANSPORTER

Also, G/R thinks that the addition of many more examples, and the addition of the example game transcript, will make the manual too long and imposing. What are your views?

Date: 9 Nov 1983 1142-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: BROGMOID To: TESTERS at ZORK

In the Enchanter II infotater, the Brogmoid will be pictured as wearing a T-shirt. What should the T-shirt say? Some suggestions so far:

I ♥ NY	I ♥ NZ	BORPHEE IS FOR LOVERS
I'D RATHER BE FROTZING		HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR BROGMOID TODAY?

Comments on these, other suggestions would be appreciated.

Date: 9 Nov 1983 1158-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Z5 TITLE To: testers at ZORK

Results of the poll on G/R's 6 title suggestions, including my own vote:

TITLE	FAVORABLE	INDIFFERENT	UNFAVORABLE
Possessed	0	2	6
Sorcerer	5	0	3
Spellbreaker	2	3	3
Spellstalker	0	2	6
Spiritsaver	0	2	6
Transporter	0	1	7

My interpretation of the result is a first place finish for Sorcerer, a second place finish for Spellbreaker, and punt the other four.

I will now reveal, for the first time ever in a piece of computer mail, that G/R's recommended name is Spellbreaker.

In other related news, DA has discovered that SPELBOUND (yes, only one "L") is the name of an educational children's game made by Davell Custom Software of Cleveland, Tennessee. Weird.

The preliminary concept for the plot of Enchanter III is that you will be Head of the Circle, and will have to collect words, concepts, attributes, etc. to construct objects and/or spells, in order to combat some Great Evil.

With this in mind, I have the following suggestion for naming the entire Enchanter trilogy:

ENCHANTER
SORCERER
SPELLCRAFTER

Naturally, if Spellcrafter is the name of Z6, then Spellbreaker wouldn't be very good for Z5. MD has already suggested one problem with this naming scheme, which is that someone could come out with a game called Spellcrafter before Z6 is done, and then we couldn't use it.

Comments, please.

An official title is chosen:

Date: 10 Nov 1983 1540-EST
Subject: Z5 Title
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

"Sorcerer" is now the official title for Enchanter II.

Date: 30 Nov 1983 1420-EST
Subject: IT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

JW has installed a new ITnology in Sorcerer. Please try to use it as much as possible in order to locate the holes in this swiss cheese of programming.

Date: 13 Jan 1984 1700-EST
Subject: Z5
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: md

It looks like Sorcerer won't run on any micros with only 32K of memory. Its PRE load file is about 1000 bytes larger than Planetfall, and Planetfall runs on 32K micros like molasses at the north pole. (In fact, I would say that it runs so embarrassingly and painfully slow that we should just say that Planetfall doesn't run on 32K machines). Anyway, Marc thinks we should put some kind of sticker on it that says "requires 48K of memory" or some such.

An important improvement is made to their game system:

Date: 20 Jan 1984 1619-EST
Subject: RESTORE AFTER DEATH
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

Two of the Sorcerer gamma-testers have made a suggestion which seems like a damn good idea to me. Currently, when you die, the game asks "Would you like to play again?" and if you answer affirmatively, it RESTARTS.

However, these two gamma-testers suggest that it is much more common in this situation to want to go to a

SAVE rather than to the start of the game.

Can anyone think of an objection to having FINISH ask "Would you like to RESTORE or RESTART at this point? (Type RESTORE, RESTART, or QUIT)>"

This would circumvent the process of RESTARTing for those people who want to return to a SAVE. Remember, the RESTARTing process can take a good minute on some of the micros!

Bug report:

Date: 2 Feb 1984 1030-EST
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Z5 BUGS
To: TESTERS at ZORK

The final total number of Sorcerer bugs reported through Version 4, the first production version:

1,695

Date: 2 May 1984 1002-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: PIRACY
To: IMPS at ZORK

PIRACY NEWSFLASH:

The pirated copy of Sorcerer just arrived via Nolan Bond. It's amazingly brazen; drop by my office to see the "packaging." It is Release 67, the Beta-test version, for the Apple. The Apple Beta-Testers were Bernie Yee, Linda Bushyager, Bill Daggett, and Monte Schulz.

Suggestions for the next step?

Date: 7 Sep 1984 1009-EDT
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: POPULAR ENCHANTING
To: TESTERS at ZORK

What classified ads might appear in POPULAR ENCHANTING magazine (to be included in the new Sorcerer package)?

Lost: CLEESH spell scroll. Dropped while frog watching in swamp. Small reward. Box I36.

Also, letters to the editor:

To the editor: So Orkan of Thriff is now selling wand racks? He's a Guildmaster, not a carpenter! Next thing you know, actors will be selling salad dressing.

H.D.A., Accardi

(Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity or space, or arbitrarily.)

Both appeared when "Popular Enchanting" was republished in the standard grey box version of Sorcerer.

Sorcerer
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Z5
Enchanter II
Possessed
Spellbound
Spellbreaker
Spellstalker
Spiritsaver
Transporter

From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of **The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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 *Sorcere*r? I don't know, really. And I don't care. I'm just glad I'm not working on ad copy.

Spellbreaker

by Dave Lebling
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ6**

Spellbreaker's inception:

Date: 20 Mar 1985 1430-EST
Subject: Initial Reaction
From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: jon, sem, prof, swg

I have put together a VERY preliminary idea from my conception of Z6, figuring that if Dave can't get it done on time, I might as well give it a shot (perhaps we can end up working on it together). Any comments as to the initial idea? Thanks.

Date: 20 Mar 1985 1547-EST
Subject: Re: Initial Reaction
From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: BLANK cc: SWG

Sounds like fun.

Do you suppose the player could steal any blocks from Orkan's hoard?

What about reversing the process and creating Platonic ideals — oops, I mean blocks — by breaking down objects into their essences?

Suppose there were an unreadable block, so the player would have to experiment to find out what its concept is.

I love the idea of blocks. It's like taking the back off of adventure games! (Hmmm... is that a marketing angle? "Infomagic kit"?)

Date: 12 Apr 1985 1317-EST
Subject: zap
From: Dave Lebling <PDL at FRED>
To: imps at FRED

The new ZAP, for its sins, has been promoted to from NZAP to ZAP. This facilitates using the WASTE queue. It has also been changed to assume you mean .XZAP as a first guess if you don't specify a file name extension when you give the input file. Thus, you can invoke the new ZAP with

ZAP Z6 /R 69

to produce release 69 of Z6 by assembly of Z6.XZAP.

Date: 16 Aug 1985 1757-EDT
Subject: "Review"
From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
To: imps at ZORK

"Spellbreaker is a stupid title. The more I play the game the more I realize how horrendous it is. What a disaster. How embarassing for Infocom."

— Monte Shulz

Monte was one of their beta-testers for the Apple II version of their games.

Date: 16 Sep 1987 1655-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Magic Ending To: DA

The Spellbreaker ending is pretty vague; it can even be interpreted as Belboz saying "We could go on using magic, but we'll have to stop because magic breeds dangerous things like your evil persona who almost just destroyed the world."

Spellbreaker
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Z6
Enchanter III
Mage
Spellcrafter

Z

Starcross

by Dave Lebling
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS1**

Trivia:

The original package for *Starcross* was a "flying saucer". It is now quite hard to find.

When *Starcross* was reissued in the standard grey box format, a mention of *Leather Goddess of Phobos* was included in the ship's log.

> M.C.S. STARCROSS 03-28-2186
>
> Underway less than four weeks and I'm about to go crazy! First, the entertainment tapes were mislabelled. It's all highbrow stuff like operas and lectures. *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* was really something about the history of the Terran Union. What a rip-off! I suppose I can talk to the computer.
>
> I can't stand those tapes. I'll save them for later in the voyage when I'm really desperate. I'll play games with the computer to keep amused that way.

Starcross
Working Titles & Nicknames List

A Gift From Space
Celestus
The Linking
Alien Intercept
Stardate: 2186

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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 [Giardini/Russell, Infocom's ad agency] 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.

Stationfall

by Steve Meretzky
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS6**

Stationfall's inception:

Game Ideas: STATIONFALL
Genre: Science Fiction Rating: Standard or Advanced System: Classic
Estimated Development Time: 8 months

The long-awaited sequel to Planetfall. Since your promotion to Lieutenant First Class in the Stellar Patrol of the Third Galactic Union following a commendable job on Resida five years ago, you have failed to advance your rank or career at all. Elevation to LFC has meant that your routine of constant mopping drudgery has been replaced by a routine of constant paperwork drudgery, and your harsh commanding officer Ensign Blather has been replaced by the bubbleheaded and bureaucratic Captain Measle. Your latest assignment: to shuttle over to Station Alpha Beta Epsilon Gamma Omega 78-C-985 Sector Delta Delta VH-98, in order to pick up a crate of new shuttle fuel requisition form requisition forms. You stop by the robot pool to pick up a robot aide for the trip ... one familiar figure comes bounding toward you... "Hey, take Floyd! Floyd best robot aide in pool!" After a brief trip, you arrive at the station. It is deserted, your shuttle has stopped working you can't raise your ship, and Floyd has begun to act oddly...

Date: 13 Nov 1986 1541-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Space Station To: IMPS at FRED

I finished designing the space station for Stationfall. If anyone has the time and the inclination, please take a copy of the blueprints from my desk and look them over for glaring omissions or other errors.

Date: 4 Feb 1987 1105-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Stationfall instruction manual To: Testers at FRED

If you've played Stationfall and haven't seen the manual, let me know.
If you've seen the manual and have any comments, let me know.

Date: 10 Feb 1987 1027-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: R57 To: TESTERS at FRED

Fixes bug with spacetruck form.

Date: 11 Feb 1987 1758-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: PRE-BETA VERSION To: TESTERS at FRED

Release 59 now exists, incorporating everything from the pre-beta meeting:
* ostrich leaves when Plato attacks

* ostrich will no longer enter a room with a bed
* new text for finding foil
* the story should now begin around 2000 millichrons earlier, on the average
* walking around takes 4 milichrons less per turn
* food now lasts about 15-20% longer
* ASK PLATO ABOUT THE BOTTLE
* a better description of Vacuum Storage
* additional exits on Level Six
* response to THROW SOUP AT FLAME
* scoring adjustment for village entry puzzle

plus some minor stuff. Fleshed out rooms still to come.

Stationfall reaches Beta status:

Date: 18 Feb 1987 2320-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: V.63 To: TESTERS at FRED

All bugs to date have been "fixed."

The library has now been fleshed. Stop by and check it out. Also, there are now windows in the Spacetruck and in Shady Dan's.

If nothing major turns up on Thursday, this should be the Beta Version, but of course something always turns up, right?

Date: 2 Mar 1987 1535-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: STATIONFALL V67 To: TESTERS at FRED

Some changes:

The timer can now be set to any number, not just increments of 10. It counts down by the number of millichrons the turn lasted, rather than by 10. This involved significant re-writing of the timer, so take a hard look at its workings.

The ensign on board the Duffy has been replaced by a door and a slot.

The sex of the ostrich is no longer mentioned, to avoid SHE vs. IT bugs.

Gary has pointed out that Oliver should turn out "twisted" because he was trained during the pyramid's influence. Also, it always disturbed me that Oliver showed up, even though there's no one around to wake him or disconnect him. There's new text in the Oliver description to get around these issues.

Don't try to use the word CRUMPLE (or CRUMPLED) in this version.

Date: 3 Mar 1987 1731-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: STATIONFALL V68 To: TESTERS at FRED

Some more new stuff:

The scoring has been slightly tweaked to reduce the number of points you get during the final section of the game. You should know go into the explosive puzzle with a score in the low 60's instead of in the high 50's.

You can now zap a lot more things: the innocuous machine, the locker, the roulette wheel, the log reader, Oliver, the pedestal, the heating chamber, the dryer, the presser, the cage. Everything takeable is already shootable. Are there any other non-takeable items which should be shootable?

Is the new timer theory unbuggy?

Andrew continues to find a lot of good, obscure bugs associated with the explosive. Of course, fixing obscure bugs can create new obscure bugs. Furthermore, fixing obscure bugs can create big new serious bugs. Keep giving the Frezone a workout.

This version is scheduled to be the Marathon version, so please make sure that the scoring works — we don't want people to finish the game with 78 out of 80 and not tell us because they think they're not done when they really are.

Date: 13 Mar 1987 1538-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: FOOTNOTES To: TESTERS at FRED

I am leaning toward putting footnotes in Stationfall. I did this before in Hitchhikers. At various points in the story, a parenthetical note appears, saying "(Footnote 5)" or "(Footnote 11)". To read the footnote, you simply type **>FOOTNOTE 5** or **>FOOTNOTE 11**.

I have the space, and I have a few footnote locations in mind, and footnotes are generally a lot of fun. However, I'm also worried that people may think of IF Footnotes as a Hitchhikerish thing, and think that the use of them in Stationfall is a ripoff.

We have to decide by Monday, because if I put in the Footnote command, it will have to be noted in the manual. Comments?

Date: 24 Mar 1987 1852-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: SFALL V84 To: TESTERS at FRED

This version has all the pre-gamma meeting changes in it:

* the new forklift puzzle, along with the sign in the shipping room.
* the Thermos works, but it hasn't been beat on yet.
* the spools are now more readable. They've also been moved out of the library, to the Chapel and the Printing Plant.
* the foil is now located in the Barbershop.
* there are a lot of fixed bugs to check.

Theoretically, this is the gamma version, because it has all the gamma features installed. In reality, it would be a miracle if all this new stuff worked right off the bat. By the way, less than 300 bytes left.

Stationfall reaches Gamma status:

Date: 26 Mar 1987 1803-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: SFALL V87 To: TESTERS at FRED

Awesomely great news! I discovered that the FREQ table (of the 96 most commonly used words) was very old. In fact, it was from mid-October, pre-dating the official Release 1 of the game! The new FREQ table I made today saved approximately 2K!

To celebrate, I added three new objects: a sculpture object in the Studio, a pile of garbage object in the Junk Yard, and an airlock object for the airlock. There is still one object to spare.

I have tweaked the timing on the explosive. Without using the Thermos, you SHOULD be able to get the explosive to the Commander's Quarters, but you SHOULD NOT be able to blow the safe (of course). Did I tweak enough? Too much?

One tiny little new feature: if you explosive sublimes within the closed Thermos, and you then open the Thermos, you get a puff of FREZONE (tm) gas.

Unless something nasty turns up tomorrow morning, V87 is the gamma version. Don't forget to make sure the ending (score/rank) screen is readable on all the micros despite the <QUIT> after it.

Date: 15 Apr 1987 1800-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: SFALL #91 To: TESTERS at FRED

A few little diddles in this version:

* The zapgun now has a counter which shows the number of shots left.
* Floyd has a new comment in the spacetruck scene.
* I've tinkered with the weights of all the objects a little. See the sheet I handed out on how ITAKE should work. (If you didn't get a sheet and want one, see me.) The two ITAKE fails should come with approximately the same frequency.

Date: 28 Apr 1987 0009-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: STATIONFALL V104 To: TESTERS at FRED

Several serious bugs fixed:

* The explosive kept melting if you brought it inside and then back out into the vacuum. (The code to handle this case got removed when the CO2 bottle was removed.)
* You were able to spray the can of spores while paralyzed. There may be other things you can do while paralyzed which you shouldn't be able to.
* The explosive and timer weren't doing the right things if you went to sleep while they were melting/ticking. Other things might not be doing the right things when you fall asleep, such as the log reader overheating.
* The code involving touching and examining the various liquids has been revamped. Beat on this.

Bad news: it's now 24 bytes over the size limit.

Date: 29 Apr 1987 2329-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: SFALL V.106 To: TESTERS at FRED

Yo. Just finished making Version 106. All the bugs Liz sent me mail about have been fixed. Stu went through some of the ZIL files and found a bunch of typos. To recap:

1) mess hall AF by Stu

```
>LOOK AT COFFEE
The coffee still hot.
```
(missing "is")

2) During Plato's attack, one can:

eat and drink	OK
remove chronometer	OK
read instruction sheet	NAB
roll dice	OK
play simulation games	OK

(In fact, on the last one, there was a more general bug: Plato's attack should move you out of any vehicle you're in, such as the simulation booth in this case.)

3) **>TAKE PLATINUM DETECTOR** OK. Just a missing RTRUE after the call to ITAKE.

```
"You're juggling as much..."
"You're juggling as much..."
```

4) Factory, after shooting Floyd — After shooting Floyd, both "off" and "on" should now give the same new response.

```
>turn Floyd off
"Floyd isn't on."
>turn Floyd on
"Floyd IS on..."
```

I also fixed one late Tuesday bug that I thought was serious: the explosive should now explode when you fall asleep, even if you aren't in the same room with it. If the explosive is in the safe hole, and you fall asleep on the floor, the welder should get you 100% of the time.

Sorry I've been out for so much of Tuesday and Wednesday and for any miscommunications. Let's hope this is the FINAL VERSION! (But if it isn't, there are still 92 free bytes.)

Stationfall
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Suspect

by Steve Meretzky
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS6**

Suspect's inception:

Date: 27 Sep 1984 1706-EDT From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: FYI/Suspect Bug/Warning To: IMPS at ZORK

The current "the bug" in Suspect was caused by having a local and a global with the same name used in the same routine. Just a warning that this compiles quite happily (Marc?) but almost always incorrectly.

Failure to observe this restriction will result in promotion, Vogon poetry, or worse.

Date: 11 Sep 1987 1047-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: another movie version To: IMPS at FRED, Marc at FRED

Coming next month: "Suspect", starring Dennis Quaid and Cher, directed by Peter Yates. Whodunit this time?

Date: 29 Sep 1987 1633-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
Subject: suspect To: da

the mansion is in maryland. so its not really southern.

Suspect
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Suspended

by Michael Berlyn
***Science Fiction* series, catalog #IS2**

Suspended's manual is updated:

Date: 30 Apr 1984 0815-EDT From: Michael Berlyn <MSB at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Suspended Manual Update To: MD

The inclusion of sample scripts doesn't seem like a bad idea at all IF we can include them as a transcript of what Gregory Franklin did or something like that, keeping them in context with the rest of the manual.

Date: 11 Sep 1987 1025-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: ...from a flounder To: IMPS at FRED

>From an otherwise dull bit of recent fan mail, this kid says he's been writing a take-off on Suspended called Suspended From School, where you're barred from the building but get to control 6 students who haven't been suspended in an attempt to take over the school.

Suspended
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Suspension
Suspenders

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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.

Trinity

by "Professor" Brian Moriarty
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ7**

Trinity's inception:

Date: 23 Jul 1984 0809-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: SPY and TRINITY To: SWG

Read SPY.MSS, sounds like fun. Maybe the player could locate the Good Spy's room and/or luggage, and find some interesting Q-type gadgets like a flamethrower wristwatch or something.

Let me know what you think of <IDEAS>TRINITY.MSS.

Date: 23 Jul 1984 0946-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: SPY and TRINITY To: PROF
cc: SWG

I enjoyed reading TRINITY.MSS, especially the style of writing.

I wish it told more about your theories of time travel, about the "mysterious Presence" if it's important, and about what the player's strategies would be in playing — I assume it's not just a game of zapping steel armadillos.

By the way, what if the player thought it was a good strategy to PREVENT the Trinity test and thus development of all atomic weapons?

Trinity will be the first in a series of "Time Police" stories:

Date: 23 Jul 1984 1342-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Holes To: SWG

A Hole created by a nuclear blast can be used to access any subsequently created Hole. The Trinity Hole is the "deepest" since it was created first. Ergo, whoever controls Trinity controls the entire Hole network.

The Presence is the representative of an advanced intelligence which is deeply concerned about unregistered Holes, such as those created by blasting. They may be our own descendants using "real" time machines (as opposed to the Holes, which are only for cheaters), or they may be extraterrestrial in nature. They will play a significant role in the climax of the game, in which the player, having lost all his Roadrunners and Gila Monsters to the laser-bearing Armadillos, must himself go through the Hole to try to save the Bomb. The exact identity of the Presence will be left for sequels ... in case you hadn't guessed, this is only the first of a whole series of Time Police stories.

The idea of deliberately stopping the bomb to change history is central to TRINITY. It's a shamelessly moral little tale. I may even drop the player off in downtown Nagasaki on a certain August morning, although this may be stretching the bounds of good taste.

Date: 25 Nov 1985 1234-EST
Subject: Movie

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK, ELIZ at ZORK

I'll be showing "The Day After Trinity," a 90-minute documentary on the bomb, early next week to the folks in Marketing Services. It's a pretty good film (won an Oscar in 1980); anyone interested may attend, except for testers.

Date: 4 Dec 1985 1106-EST
Subject: Trim-A-Tree

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

Behold Trinity's hack name. Thanks, Jon.

Date: 8 May 1986 2144-EDT
Subject: Freeze 6

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

– All of the bugs reported yesterday are fixed (including the quirky quotes in the Book of Hours). The bug sheets are in my office.
– The final screen display has been slightly altered. Can somebody play through and make a save so I can see the complete ending?
– Significant shrinkage has also taken place. Be warned.

Thanks to SWG for proofing the text. He found some embarrassments.

Trinity
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Trim-A-Tree

Z

Wishbringer

by "Professor" Brian Moriarty
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ0**

Wishbringer's inception:

Date: 13 Sep 1984 1231-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: J2 To: SWG

Read <IDEAS>J2.TXT for the latest from my fevered brain.
You and I will meet with Jon and Mike tomorrow to discuss.

Date: 21 Dec 1984 1226-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: PRE-ALPHA TESTING To: IMPS at ZORK

Holidays making you restless? Tired of playing Where's The Beef(TM)? Then type ZIP20 <PROF.J2>J2 and savor the pre-alpha wonders of Wishbringer. I'm aching for scripts, bug reports, comments, criticism, suggestions and whispers-behind-my-back-about-how-awful-it-is.

Date: 27 Feb 1985 0913-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: teenage testing To: da cc: prof, swg

I can supply at least four 13-year-olds on Sunday to test Wishbringer. Is there any problem with that day?
(P.S. I tried and failed to boot your copy of Softporn on the 800 in T9.)

Date: 4 Mar 1985 1949-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Version 22 To: TESTERS at ZORK

Things to do and see:

— The goldfish in the fountain is now a turtle. It avoids the problem of having a GOLD coin and a GOLD fish in the same place. Yes, turtles do eat worms.

— Mr. Crisp's and Miss Voss's unskewed scripts are changed. If you take the envelope and hang around the Post Office too long, Crisp throws you out. If you don't take the violet note, Miss Voss stalks off in a huff. I'll be adding this type of assertive behavior to the other character's scripts in future releases.

— The DARKNESS Wish has been abridged to two moves. It's been completely rewritten from start to finish, and I've tested it very little. Bang hard on it.

— There's still a problem with scoring. Right now you can finish the game with 92 points, without using Magick. This will be corrected (somehow) in Version 23.

— You'll notice a new auto-hint the first time you ascend the Steep Trail. This is a direct result of some testing we did this weekend with some teenagers, who were lulled into a false sense of "mapping security" by the map included in the package. Foolish Earthlings!

Wishbringer sets a record for number of words in its vocabulary:

Date: 25 Apr 1985 1637-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Version 61 Trivia To: TESTERS at ZORK

You may be amused to know that Version 61 of Wishbringer has a vocabulary of 1,043 words. This is 32 words more than Sorcerer, the previous record-holder. Of course, EZIP's immense capacity will make these figures seem puny indeed.

Date: 25 Apr 1985 2305-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Version 62 To: TESTERS at ZORK

This is exactly the same as 61, except that SAY "[anything]" now works properly. You can, for example, SAY "KALUZE" to open the drawbridge, or SAY "ALEXIS, HEEL" to heel the hellhound. It basically throws away the word SAY and the quotes, and acts as if you had simply typed in the quoted sentence alone.

Gary has pronounced the game essentially free of important bugs.

Date: 26 Apr 1985 1619-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: The New, Improved (?) SAY To: TESTERS at ZORK

Version 64 (now available) has a modified version of SAY "[anything]":

1. If you're in a room by yourself, and you SAY "BANANAS", you'll be given the usual Party line about impending mental collapse.
2. If another creature is in the room with you, and you SAY "RUTABAGAS", you'll be instructed to tune to another station in your area for news and official information on how to address characters.
3. If you say SAY "KALUZE" (or "FRATTO" or "SORKIN") anywhere, you'll get the usual "magic word" message about that word not being useful ... unless it IS useful, it which case it will work.
4. You cannot type SAY "ALEXIS, HEEL" and admire how well it works any more. Things inside the quotes (except for the three magic words) are NOT understood. It isn't a very good SAY, is it?
5. You can still type things like SAY "WINDSHIELD" TO THE GORILLA. The word "gorilla," or anything else you type after the second quote, will be THROWN AWAY by the parser. This is not a feature. This is a BUG. Got it? B-U-G. Remember it the next time you laugh at *Mindwheel*.

Date: 19 Jun 1985 1458-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Wishbringer Event Photos To: IMPS at ZORK

Contact sheets (in Living Color) are viewable in my office, including a suspiciously large number of shots featuring Dan Horn.

Wishbringer
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

The Witness

by Stu Galley
***Mystery* series, catalog #IM2**

First message relating to The Witness:

Date: 2 Feb 1983 1740-EST From: SWG
Subject: progress! To: BLANK,MSB cc: SWG

Not only did Monica successfully remove the evidence from the office, but also she had to give up and leave on her first attempt, because I was there at the time! (On her second attempt, I peeked in the window.)

Date: 3 Feb 1983 0930-EST From: Michael Berlyn <MSB at ZORK>
Subject: Re: progress! To: SWG

That, my good man, is clear proof that you belong here, among the higher peepers of creativity.
michael

Date: 15 Apr 1983 0528-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Monica's motive To: swg

Looking through the book and seeing various people's reactions, they seem to be similar to mine with respect to Monica's motive. I suppose it's a bit clearer now that she and Linder don't get along perfectly, but I think what bothers me most is that the two questions the player can ask to officially ascertain the motive yield answers that don't look incredibly like motives for murder. ("He had his faults" is not exactly what one would expect a jury to consider cause to convict.) Granted that it's late to bring this up, but (1) I did mention it earlier, at which point I deferred to your judgment, and (2) it looks like everyone who's played has had trouble with the motive (Steve, Pat, and I all made notes; Steve Wright took 4 of his ~17 hrs. to find it). Maybe if wict (spelling error here is a kludge to save the rest of the text), she'll come out and admit her guilt, explaining why she felt she had to off dear old Dad, ore subtle MOTIVE-ESTABLISHED-FLAG (?) setters in, but also leave a more direct path for (the apparently huge number of) people who don't find the subtlety sufficiently obvious.

The particular suggestion is off the top of my head; if you can think of something better, go with it, but I really think that something should be done.

-Jerry

Date: 27 Apr 1983 1008-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: MAKE/ACCUSE To: SWG

In point of fact, ACCUSE was only working through a bug in the parser. Both should now work; you should definitely check them out, though. Note that the SYNTAX for both should be VERB OBJECT OBJECT, not VERB OBJECT WITH OBJECT as was erroneously reported.

Stu's nickname for Witness:

Date: 5 May 1983 1308-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Adjectives To: BLANK cc: SWG

I disagree. Run Witless and type EXAMINE FRONT => "front door".

Date: 20 May 1983 2246-EDT From: SEC
Subject: WITNESS To: SWG

I HAVE COPIED OVER WITNESS.ZIP.9 SUCCESFULLY. LET ME KNOW WHEN THE NEXT VERSION IS READY. (518)-374-4450. I WILL HAVE A COMPLETE SET OF DISKS MAILED TO YOU ON MONDAY

Date: 21 May 1983 1937-EDT From: SEC
Subject: Z80 WITNESS To: SWG

I HAVE TRANSFERED OVER VERSION 10. WILL PRODUCE COPIES AND GET THEM TO YOU ASAP. STUFF SHOULD ARRIVE TO YOU BY TUESDAY (MONDAY EXPRESS MAIL OR FED EXPRESS)
GOOD LUCK WITH WITNESS

Date: 14 Jun 1983 1141-EDT From: SWG
Subject: DROP CUFFS,MATCH To: BLANK cc: SWG

You're right - The Witness's parser thinks MATCH is a verb in this case.

Date: 21 Nov 1983 0919-EST From: SWG
Subject: TIE HER TO BED To: MGQ,DA cc: SWG

I think this is fixed (finally!) in the newest Witness, called revision 20. Someone should play it for a while, preferably on the Tandy 2000. If Ernie's too busy to transfer it there, I'll have a go.

The press really likes The Witness:

Date: 17 Feb 1984 1103-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: WITNESS To: SWG

Congratulations. My research reveals that 59 of the last 63 articles on Infocom begin with an excerpt from the opening of The Witness. (Three others begin with an excerpt from Deadline, and one begins without an excerpt at all).

Discussions begin on what to put into the new grey-striped Witness package:

Date: 29 May 1984 0009-EDT From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Witness Browsie To: swg, jon, marc at ZORK

It's time to start thinking about what we want to do with the Witness Browsie. Should we write it, or ask G/R to?

Date: 30 May 1984 1737-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Witness Browsie To: MD cc: SWG, marc at ZORK, jon

Here's one idea:

We need a sample transcript in the new package anyway. Suppose I write a short introduction that sets the stage for the story (who you are, why you're here) and follow it with an actual transcript of the beginning of the story, up to meeting the three characters in the Linder household. This would not give away any secrets, but it would show how to move around and interact with the environment.

Would this do for a major part of the browsie?

Date: 30 May 1984 2237-EDT From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Witness Browsie To: SWG

So your sample transcript would be in the browsie? I don't necessarily see this as a problem, but Steve planned to have all the "Techie" parts of the browsies the same format, which includes the transcripts.

Date: 31 May 1984 1557-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Witness Browsie To: MD cc: swg, marc at ZORK

Another idea for the Witness browsie: put the Nat'l Detective Gazette in front. It might include:

A police blotter
Bizarre, humorous (possibly true) articles concerning crimes or arrests (e.g., the recent story of a bank robber who was dressed like a clown)
"Wanted" pictures like those seen in post offices and banks (some stamped "apprehended," "apprehensive," etc.)
Ads

The back ("techie") part would include an introduction (who you are, why you're here) and a sample transcript.

Date: 24 Sep 1984 0953-EDT From: SWG
Subject: new The Witness To: DA cc: ERNIE,SWG

I changed five strings in The Witness that refer to the instruction manual so that they make sense with either old or new packaging.

I sent Ernie a memo about the change in July, so that he could ensure that the revised program was in production before new packages arrive. But he told me last Friday that it's not in production, pending approval from you.

The revised program is in SS:<WITNESS.R21>WITNESS.(ZIP,PRE,PUR).22.

If you want, I can show you exactly what changed.

Please expedite approval of this revision. I think it would be embarrassing to have confusing instructions on players' screens.

Date: 6 Jan 1986 1400-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: UPDATES To: SCF cc: SWG

As for The Witness, revision 22 was made for the new packaging. Revision 23 is the same as 22, but with unused parts removed, so the whole thing is about 400 bytes smaller.

Some day I'll make a new revision with some actual bugs fixed, but probably not now.

The Witness
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Witless
Invitation to Murder

***From page 3 of the Winter 1984 issue of* The New Zork Times: "A Zork by Any Other Name":**

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.

Z

The Zork Trilogy:

Zork I: The Great Underground Empire
Zork II: The Wizard of Frobozz
Zork III: The Dungeon Master

by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling
***Fantasy* series, catalog #s IZ1, IZ2 & IZ3**

Work begins on updating the Zork series:

Date: 31 Jul 1983 1538-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: ZORK1 To: BLANK cc: SWG

I've removed the LIGHTBIT, so there is now space to install the new TAKEnology.

I tried playing thru version 31, but the bell part of the exorcism wasn't working. (Merely "Ding, dong.") This is because I removed this response from V-RING when I was genericizing, and put it into a newly created BELL-FCN. However, the exorcism stuff is all contained in the room function, LLD-ROOM-FCN, and I guess the BELL-FCN handles it first. I tried to fix it, but it still doesn't work in version 32. You'd better look at it.

Version 32 is 80630 bytes.

Kludge-of-the-week: If you liked left-right-phonecall in Deadline, you'll love this one. Despite removing the nails-object, the first assembly of release 31 announced that there were 256 objects. Therefore, I got rid of the overboard-object (for saying "THROW OBJECT OVERBOARD") and gave the global teeth-object the synonym "overboard". So, now you can brush your overboard, or throw something teeth.

Could you locate the OBJ which is globally undefined?

The game crashed at one point — it began scrolling forever and I had to ^C out. I'm not sure exactly what happened, but I think it was thief-related.

Date: 1 Aug 1983 2312-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: zork1 To: consumers at ZORK

While investigating the recent fightbug in Zork 1, I came across the most delightful response. I just had to share it with everyone. I'm not sure which bowels of the program produced it, but it reminds me a lot of Vogon poetry:

(in Troll Room)
```
>WAIT
Time passes...

can't to . With are that which This have from large appears through in
hereroom water cannot Cyclops narrow small into leading south cyclops his
thief seems be but It this already there north Your west east can don't not
on staircase probably for would troll here looking
```

If only our more recent games could achieve this level of descriptiveness and depth of meaning!

Date: 2 Aug 1983 1344-EDT From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: ZORK1 and a caveat To: BLANK, SEM, MSB, SWG

The bug in New-Zork1 fighting turned out to be caused by something like this...

```
<GLOBAL VILLAINS
        <TABLE TROLL ... TROLL-MELEE>
        ... >

<GLOBAL TROLL-MELEE
        < ... >>
```

Looks innocuous enough, doesn't it? Well, any global referenced in a TABLE or LTABLE ***must*** be defined before it is used. This probably applies to things like objects as well. Be careful!

Dave (for the Circle)

Date: 3 Aug 1983 1208-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: zork1 To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

I hereby declare Zork I to be available for Alpha-testing. (What a concept!) The only item still not in place is the new TAKEnology, so TAKE ALL is not working too reliably. I guess that all bug reports should go to me.

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1212-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: TRYTAKE To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

The following objects in Zork I currently have neither the TAKEBIT or the TRYTAKEBIT, and therefore TAKE ALL will ignore them. They also have no special response to TAKE OBJECT other than the YUK default. Please send opinions on which of them should stay this way, and which should become TRYTAKABLE. Similar lists for Zork II and Zork III forthcoming.

Ghosts (at Entrance to Hades)	Compressor (Coal Mine)	Bubble (Dam)
Bolt (Dam)	Mailbox (West of House)	

Date: 8 Aug 1983 1901-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Generic Zork To: consumers at ZORK

A worry: Once we have generic files, will that mean that any change to a generic file, such as GVERBS.ZIL requires that all three games be tested? Also, doesn't this mean that any serious bug in a generic file mean 30 new versions that would have to be made, rather than 10? Aren't we tripling the risks as well as the benefits? Am I worrying about nothing? What about Naomi?

Date: 10 Aug 1983 1523-EDT From: SWG
Subject: no more crufties! To: SEM cc: SWG

As part of Zork renovation, I think we should eliminate the non-compilable routines in the CRUFTY files.

Here's how:

Substitute the routines in <ZORK1>LIGHT-INT.ZIL for LIGHT-INT. Add the routine in <WITNESS>CRUFTY.ZIL to the PARSER file.

Then you can remove references to CRUFTY in the main file.

(We can do the same for non-Zork games too. THIS-IT? is the only crufty routine they need, and I rewrote it so it compiles.)

Date: 2 Sep 1983 1041-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: manual
To: implementors at ZORK

What do you think of the following possible sections for the generic Zork manual?

1) An "Interlogic Manifesto," which would briefly explain our theory of adventure gaming, and answer such frequently asked questions as Why No Graphics and Why Can't I Get A Vocabulary List and Why are Your Games So Hard?
2) A sample script, of perhaps 20 or 30 moves, using non-real situations, to show how an Interlogic game is played. Currently, the manual never shows example of more than 2 or 3 consecutive moves.

The 3 Zorks are repackaged into the standard grey-striped boxes:

Date: 6 Jan 1984 2135-EST
From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Zork Manual
To: marc at ZORK, sem cc: md

The three Zorks are now being repackaged. I expect to have the new packages by June. I'd like to use the manual Steve wrote for all three games. I understand that the manual is consistent with the new Zork I and with Zork III, but that there would be some inconsistencies with the current Zork II. I also understand that some work has gone into updating Zork II.

My questions are:

1) How much more work needs to go into Zork II?
2) How much time would it take?
3) Is it currently scheduled?
4) If not, would it pose problems to schedule?

Date: 7 Jan 1984 1321-EST
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Zork Manual
To: MD

The generic manual is ready to be submitted to G/R. I would say that nothing needs to be done to it besides typesetting, i.e. no cute themes, i.e. like the current non-generic Zork manuals.

As you say, the manual is consistent with the new Zork I. The new Zork II, which will be consistent with the manual, requires outside (gamma-ish) testing. This would take about a month. As far as I know, this outside testing is not currently scheduled. However, after 2/1/84, Sorcerer will not be in outside testing. Seastalker will be, but Stu told me that he is not planning on using our usual adult outside testers. Therefore, my guess is that we could schedule Zork II outside testing for early February without any problem. A 2/15 outside testing date would yield a 3/15 Dysan date — more than enough time for a June "release".

Zork III is not currently consistent with the generic manual, but would require only minor alterations to become so. My guess is that it could be done in a day.

Inception of the "incredible map not sold at any gas station known to Mankind":

Date: 16 Apr 1984 2152-EST From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Package Elements To: SEM cc: md

My idea was to include a poster in the Zorks. It would be something like the Lord of the Rings poster, i.e. it would be in three parts. Only if you bought all three games would you have the whole poster.

I think that items which help to set the scene or identify your character are overall a good idea. I could imagine early objects found in any of the games, or items which would be appropriate but which were never mentioned before.

A hint of a third trilogy beyond the Zork trilogy and the Enchanter trilogy:

Date: 18 Apr 1984 1006-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Package Elements To: MD

I already discussed this idea with Marc and I think it has problems. For one thing, it would have to have listings for things in Sorcerer and Enchanter, which would take some of the fun out of those games, especially reading the Encyclopedia Frobizzica in Sorcerer. Secondly, it would "tie our hands" as we continue to develop new mythology for Z6 (or even Z7 through Z9). "If Foobar the Wise was such a great king, why isn't he listed in the Encyclopedia Frobizzica?" "In SPELLCRAFTER, Foobar's castle is in the middle of the desert, but according the encyclopedia in my Zork package, Foobar's castle sat beside a mighty ocean!"

I like your poster idea better.

Date: 8 May 1984 1400-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Zork II, III To: MD

Zork III could, if necessary, bypass renovation. It could be made generic-manual-compatible with just minor changes requiring no testing. Marc keeps saying that Zork II, which has already undergone some post-renovation testing, is "very close to done."

Date: 23 Jul 1984 0924-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: ZORK 3 To: DA cc: SWG, Blank

Zork 3 (release 17) is ready for testing. The only differences from the release now in production are that the "complaints" now look as the new Zork manual says they do. It's not fully renovated yet.

Date: 15 Jan 1985 1534-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Ancient ZORK To: IMPS at ZORK

Tim Anderson has found the sources for the mainframe version of ZORK and has deposited them in SS: <ZORK>. They are mildly amusing, and include (scattered in DUNG.MUD) the famous ZORK picture collection.

The picture collection was shown in the Spring 1985 issue of "The New Zork Times"

Solid Gold Zork I's inception:

Date: 3 Nov 1987 1044-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: NZORK1 To: TESTERS at FRED

There's a new version of our classic, Zork I — converted to XZIP, and with on-line InvisiClues.
The status line now says "Score" and "Moves" and ", in the foo" if you're in a vehicle (Except on the C64 because of the 40-col. width.)
None of the text in the game has been changed, except the addition of the hint stuff — so look there for typo's, etc. Make sure when you get out of or into a vehicle, the status line updates to reflect this.
Try nouns (both direct and indirect objects), try adjectives, try prepositions, and try to win.

REMEMBER: to access this New Zork1 type: >NZORK1 (note the initial "N"). This new version will tell you your scripting. If "Score" and "Moves" are not printed on the status line on your terminal, you're asleep at the wheel, having forgotten to type that "N".

Paper bug sheets, only please.
Enjoy a classic.

Date: 3 Nov 1987 2031-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: NZORK1 To: TESTERS at FRED

Hold off on playing it until a certain couple of bugs are cleaned up. I'll get back to you.

Date: 4 Nov 1987 1836-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: NZORK1 - R.27 To: TESTERS at FRED

All Tyler's bugs should be fixed. The status line still won't update on a restore, though.
Have at it.

Date: 18 Nov 1987 1029-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: NZORK1 To: TESTERS at FRED

This new version should fix the screen width problem reported by Gary.

The Zork Trilogy
Working Titles & Nicknames List

NZork (for *Solid Gold Zork I*)
Cheap Zork (for *Solid Gold Zork I*)

German Zork I
&
Mini-Zork I

The German version of Zork I resurfaces:

Date: 6 Sep 1988 1720-EDT
Subject: German Zork

From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Does anyone know the status of German Zork? The person who translated it, Renata Briggs, called to inquire, and since everyone at Infocom who she'd ever heard of was no longer here, she got put thru to me.

She says that there's a blurb in the Sept/Oct issue of Joystick, a German-language magazine, which indicates that G.Z. is being shown at a computer show in Germany in a few weeks.

I haven't heard a thing about it in months; PDL thought the thing was dead and buried. Renata is interested in getting a copy. Anyone know anything?

Info relating to Mini Zork (only available for the C-64, this one came with Infocom's one and only cassette based ZIP; it was finally published in the British "Zzap! 64" #67, Nov. 1990):

Date: 4 Nov 1987 1222-EST
Subject: MINI-24

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Release 24 of Mini-Zork hopefully cures the Thief and Trophy Case crashes.

Date: 10 Nov 1987 1641-EST
Subject: MINI-ZORK FIGHTING

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Here are the fighting algorithms for fighting in Mini-Zork:

The chance of your attack succeeding is 45% versus the troll. Versus the thief, your HIT-PROB is a function of your score: 1/4 of your score (rounded down) plus 15. For example, at 50 points, your HIT-PROB versus the thief is 27%; at 150 points, it would be 77%.

The chance of attacks against you succeeding are 55% for the troll and 60% for the thief.

When you connect, or someone connects against you, it is a 50-50 chance whether it will be a light blow or a heavy blow. The text should indicate which it is.

The troll's STRENGTH is 2; the thief's STRENGTH is 5; your STRENGTH is 6. A heavy blow should reduce STRENGTH by 2; a light blow should reduce it by 1. You or your opponent should die as soon as your/their strength drops BELOW zero. In other words, if the thief has a strength of 1, and you give him a light blow, he won't die until the next hit; but if you give him a heavy blow, he'll die immediately.

After a fight has ended, any survivors will heal at the rate of one STRENGTH point every ten turns. Healing will stop once you or an opponent has reached the normal STRENGTH point. For example, if you receive one heavy blow in a fight, your STRENGTH will be reduced to 4. Ten turns after the fight ended, you'll be back up to 5. Twenty turns after the fight, you'll be back up to 6, and stop healing.

This is all intended to make the troll beatable most of the time, the thief pretty unbeatable toward the beginning of the game, and pretty beatable toward the end. If everyone thinks that it's acting reasonably well, I'll take out the debugging comments.

Date: 16 Nov 1987 1308-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: MINI-32
To: TESTERS at FRED

In Release 32 of Mini-Zork, the forest geography has changed a bit, in response to a complaint from Gary.

I will remove the thief-related debugging code as soon as you tell me that the problem with treasures becoming unfindable is gone.

Have we found someone who's never played Zork I to play Mini-Zork yet?

Date: 17 Nov 1987 1537-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: MINI-ZORK
To: TESTERS at FRED

Joe reports that he hasn't been able to get the line "My, I wonder what this fine FOO is doing here." when the thief is screwing around with your stuff in the maze. I can't get it either, but I can't figure out why. I also can't get that line in the regular Zork I. Has anyone seen it in Zork I recently, or in Cheap Zork recently? Does anyone know under what maze circumstances it should or shouldn't happen?

Date: 24 Nov 1987 1819-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: MINI
To: TESTERS at FRED

The new version should fix the thief/maze bug. Hopefully this will be the final version.

Mini-Zork
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Zork Zero: The Revenge of Megaboz

by Steve Meretzky
***Fantasy* series, catalog #IZ9**

Zork Zero's inception:

Games: ZORK ZERO
Genre: Fantasy Rating: probably Standard System: definitely Extended
Estimated Development Time: 10-12 months

As the name implies, a prequel to the Zork trilogy. It would be set in the Great Underground Empire, and covering a long period of time, from the end of the reign of Dimwit Flathead in 789 through the fall of the GUE in 883, and possibly through 948 (the year of the Zork trilogy). It would almost certainly end "west of a white house." There would be some story, probably about as much as Enchanter or Sorcerer. For the most part, though, it would be an intensely puzzle-oriented game with a huge geography.

Date: 3 Jun 1987 1248-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: NEXT PROJECT To: IMPS at FRED

I've tried to quantify the results to my latest Next Project Poll by assigning a number between 10 and 1 to each person's comment about a particular project (many people did this themselves). The results of this admittedly imprecise accounting:

7.4	Zork Zero	6.1	Best of Stevo	3.6	Viable Idea
7.3	Titanic	4.6	Interactive Bible	2.4	Blazing Parsers
	Superheroes	4.5	Minute Mysteries		

Given the fuzziness, Zork Zero, Titanic, and Superheroes are effectively tied for first. Here are some of the comments about those three projects:

Zork Zero:
"To close to Beyond Zork" (Chris)
"I'm afraid Zork is getting a little old. We should do this soon" (Joel)
"Would do awesomely well" (Mike)
"Perhaps it's time has come" (Hollywood)
"Would sell well…'safe'...reassembling original imps a so-so idea" (Jon)
"Reassembling imps a good idea" (Amy)
"A sure winner" (Stu)
"I like this if we all work on it" (Dave)
"It would be nice to have a big fantasy in '88...sequel to BZ?" (Brian)

Superhero League of America:
"Sounds very interesting" (Chris)
"I like the idea, but don't care for your sample characters" (Joel)
"Sounds too bizarre...comic book fans wouldn't like the satire" (Mike)
"Fucking great. I always thought we should do serial-type stuff" (Hollywood)
"I'd rather be one superhero with lots of powers than be one of several with a single specific power... better off as a Tom Snyder project…" (Jon)
"A humorous XZIP/RPG!" (Amy)

"Sounds like fun" (Stu)
"This is great. The heroes shouldn't be quite so silly...maybe…" (Dave)
"Sounds like fun. In XZIP, you could have cartoon figures of heroes" (Brian)

"Superheroes League of America" was eventually released by Legend Entertainment as the "Superhero League of Hoboken"

Titanic:
"This could be good, particularly of it was historically accurate" (Joel)
"I like the idea, but feel that it's past its time" (Mike)
"Too dry. No opportunity for jokes, at least not tasteful ones" (Hollywood)
"Titanic has always intrigued me...there would be no way to win...if you could do justice to the Titanic, it would be the greatest thing I'd ever seen on a computer. I'd cry from the terror and the pity." (Jon)
"Don't like the idea of an option with split-second timing" (Amy)
"My favorite! Exciting concept and exciting setting" (Stu)
"Too bad it didn't come out last January. Too serious? Too big?" (Dave)
"An interesting idea...maybe it'll be news again when pirates start ransacking the wreck next spring…" (Brian)

Date: 3 Jun 1987 1423-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: NEXT PROJECT To: DA

Pyramid: yes. I've probably got enough cardboard now. Does that have anything to do with my Next Project mail?

Date: 7 Jun 1987 0959-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Titanic To: IMPS at FRED

I'd like to spend some time at this Tuesday's lunch discussing the Titanic game, to see if we can iron-out enough of its conceptual difficulties to make it viable. Please read <SEM>TITANIC.IDEAS before then.

First reference to "Mega-Zork", excerpted from the early Beyond Zork ad:

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?

First reference of Zork Zero being "Mega-Zork":

Date: 11 Sep 1987 1022-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: review To: DA

Hmmm...
No out-and-out inaccuracies, although it might be a bit proper to say that Quendor was "formerly" known as the great underground empire rather than "also" known as the great underground empire.

There seems to be an odd stylistic problem — the first couple of paragraphs are super-serious cryto-mystical mumbo-jumbo; then the style suddenly changes to a kind of light, almost humorous style.

Also, there's all this story-related stuff up near the beginning of the article, and you don't get to most of the interesting/new/different stuff until about halfway through the article (RPG elements, new interface, etc.)

A couple of typos: "upheval" is spelled wrong, and there's an unnecessary space after one of the left "(" parentheses. Also, what's that bizarre reference to Mega-Zork?

Date: 11 Sep 1987 1036-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: review To: DA

That's how Moriarty always (mis)spells it. It's never been spelled that way outside of Wishbringer or Beyond Zork.

Date: 21 Jan 1988 1649-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: LIZ

There's a graphics meeting going on that's been on for about two hours: CLR, PROF, PDL, JDARNOLD, JOEL, TAA, DUNCAN, PHIL (new IBM guy) I think that covers it.

Also, a packaging meeting for ZORK0 - Mikie's in there.

Not much is in testing. ZORK0 has been in pre-alpha - I've solved it. Really like the game. The puzzles are excellent and the atmosphere is very Zorkian. I think Steve did a good job. We had a brief meeting today to discuss additional puzzles and features.

Date: 27 Jan 1988 1020-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

Well, if it makes you feel any better, it's pretty hard to understand what's going on even when you're a few hundred feet away.

Yes, Liz says its one of her favorite games, Amy says its the first Zork she's ever liked, and Gayle/Elizabeth say they've never had so much fun playing one of our games. (I think they played one other, once.)

If you're going to play Zork0, you'll need feelies, most of which aren't on line. I'll send you a package.

Date: 7 Mar 1988 1129-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork Zero Package Copy To: ELIZ cc: JON, SEM

Here are my comments on the back package copy:

"Now See Where It All Began" makes it sound like we're encouraging the person to take another long at an old but historically interesting product. In other words, crufty and boring except to aficionados. Sort of like the phrase that might go along with a re-release of the 1901 "Great Train Robbery" or a reprinting of "Tom Jones." How about "Go Back to Before the Beginning"? It sounds intriguing, and it has a good alliteration.

The G.U.E. certainly isn't in it's heyday; it's at the end of a hundred-year decline on the brink of collapse.

Your descriptions of the highways make them sound mechanical — like the moving walkways in large airport terminals.

The opening paragraph is relatively dull; all the exciting stuff is in the second paragraph (wizard's curse, end

of the kingdom) and the third paragraph (the jester). I think the excitement should be right up there in the first sentence.

I don't like the description of the Flathead items ("absurb to sublime"); it sounds too much like our description of your LGOP mission. In fact, I don't think we ought to mention them at all, since that's one of the anti-piracy mission of the scrap of parchment.

Change "new parser" to "new friendlier parser."

Is mentioning "mouse interface" a good idea? Won't people who don't own a mouse think, "Oh, I can't play this game, oh well, I'll buy this other game instead, sigh."

If we add on-screen mapping, when is the latest date to get that info into this paragraph?

I assume you included Sorcerer since it's my only other fantasy, but it just doesn't seem like it has much name recognition these days. Maybe I'm wrong, but I'd just leave it out, or substitute Planetfall.

The photo captions are a little overboard. There aren't really any graphics that provide puzzle clues. And "breath-taking" is pretty hype-ish. How about "Graphical touches enhance the richness of the story" and "Integrating puzzles and graphics gives an exciting new dimension to Zork Zero."

Other than those minor points, I like it a lot.

The "calendar vs. poster" war begins:

Date: 11 Mar 1988 0112-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork Zero package To: ELIZ, JON

Please tell Carl that the "Lives of the Twelve Flatheads" element will not be needed, in any form, since the game is being re-designed to eliminate its former anti-piracy purpose. Carl can do whatever he wants with the piece — but I'd say just punt it, since I'm sure we can spend the money on something more worthwhile, like giving out 8mm video cameras or buying more ads in PC magazine.

Also, the redesign has increased the size of Zork Zero appreciably, so there probably won't be enough room for on-line hints anymore. So Eliz, make sure any mentions of that are deleted from the package copy.

Date: 11 Mar 1988 0916-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork Zero package To: SEM cc: ELIZ, jon

I don't think punting on-line hints is a good idea. I think we should find out how much room is needed for the hints and try to fit them in.

I hope you're not redesigning the game hastily, out of anger over a poster rather than a book. I think the Lives of the Flathead Dozen is a cute idea for copy protection — I think it'll be fun to look at the pictures and read the copy and try to figure out what items to put in the cauldron. The illustrator for the piece will be here Monday (at 1, I think); perhaps he can assure you that the portraits will have the detail and clarity you need.

Date: 11 Mar 1988 1027-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork Zero package To: JON

I think that the "Lives of the Twelve Flatheads" is much more than "a cute idea" for copy protection; I think it's the best copy protection we've ever done. I'm sorry to see it go.

Date: 14 Mar 1988 1127-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Zork Zero poster To: Liz, Amy

As you undoubtedly know, Steve wanted a book or calendar in the Zork Zero package. For several reasons (not the least of which is cost), we have decided to do The Lives of the Twelve Flatheads as a poster. Steve thinks this is a terrible idea which can't work, and thus he refuses to meet with the artist to give him input etc. I have asked Steve to give the poster a chance, but he refuses. I am thus turning to you, Liz and Amy; perhaps one of you would be willing to meet the artist? Thanks.

Steve checks out the competition:

Date: 14 Mar 1988 1218-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Fool's Errand To: JON

I played Fool's Errand because several people have mentioned close similarities between it and Zork Zero, and strongly recommended that I look at the game. It seemed like a good idea, in order to minimize such similarities.

I've finished playing it now, so you won't have to worry about my wasting time on it anymore.

Date: 14 Mar 1988 1215-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork Zero Poster To: LIZ, AMY cc: Jon, Joel, SEM

For the record, I suggested several compromises which were satisfactory to me while costing as little or less than the poster. So much for the issue of cost.

If either of you give input to the artist, you should know that "Lives" has been incorporated into the program, and that the poster no longer has any connection to the story.

Liz stands up for Steve:

Date: 14 Mar 1988 1239-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: poster To: jon

I think this poster issue is becoming a mess. It seems to have escalated since Thursday. The concept of the poster doesn't bother me so much, but the fact that Steve had several ideas, none of which were a poster, and he seems to have no affect on what is chosen for his game, does bother me. And around this poster conflagration have sparked unnecessary little fires.

I realize there's a cost factor involved for marketing to consider, but there should at least be an item chosen that isn't abrasive to the people close to the product.

Hopefully, I don't sound sided, because I really don't have one. I'm unhappy with the way this has turned out and has become less funny than the jokes we made at birthday lunch about Steve huffing home. It only seems to widen the rift between mktg and devlpmnt when this stuff goes on, and I wish it could be avoided. And at this point, the blow up is in the past, so I wish there could be a rectification.

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1127-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: "Lives" To: SEM cc: JOEL

While I am glad the situation came to a reasonable resolution, I believe the result would have been the same - a

week earlier and with less damage to your own image - if you had continued to objectively discuss it last week. Unfortunately childish behavior, besides being entirely inappropriate for a well-respected and well-paid designer, serves to reinforce certain stereotypical prejudices and causes people to stubbornly oppose you on general principle.

Please remember that we are all generally motivated by a desire to do our jobs as best we can within our various constraints. You can't expect to have complete control over all aspects of your products because others are held responsible as well. I strongly suggest that you make more of an attempt in the future to understand the other guy's position and objectively analyze it rather than sticking stubbornly to your favorite position or blowing up at the person and storming out.

If you can follow this advice, I think you'll find other people besides me willing to support your positions in the future.

This appears to be a case of management not hearing what the employees are saying:

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1446-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: [Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>: Re: "Lives"] To: Jon

I'm beginning to feel slightly bewildered. See Steve's reply:

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1439-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: "Lives" To: JOEL

(I feel that) I continued to objectively discuss "Lives" with all concerned — including with Carl, even though Mike kept putting pressure on him NOT to talk to me.

I also wasn't sticking stubbornly to one position; I offered a wide range of flexible alternatives; other people were the ones who were sticking stubbornly to a solution.

I only blew up when I was told that the one unacceptable format had been chosen, apparently by some form of decision-making that I had no input in.

I don't want complete control over my packages, just an equal share of control; especially regarding a piece which is intimately entwined with the play of the game. "Lives" is definitely the most important single package element relating to any game I've written.

Date: 16 Mar 1988 0946-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: The poster To: SEM cc: Jon

I'm in a pissy mood because of the Zork Zero package. I could say nothing, let bygones be bygones, and wait for time to make me feel happier. Or I could say something to you, hoping that you might make me feel better sooner. If not, I'm no worse off, in that I can still expect time to make me feel better.

I'm not mad because you felt strongly about the poster. I AM mad that you virtually blackmailed us into not using it. You rewrote the game so that the poster was unusable, despite the fact that you could have had creative control over the art on the poster (at least, as much control as the art on any other piece) and you could have had creative control over the copy on the poster.

It came down to a matter of opinion: you believed the poster couldn't work, I believed it could. It's possible I was wrong. It's possible you were wrong. But I don't feel that you believe it's even possible that you were wrong. (A quote I saw recently said something like "The biggest mistake is not realizing you might be mistaken.")

You could have called me a no-nothing idiot or something — you've called me worse things many times before. But nothing hurt me so much as your blackmail.

* * *

Now, after all that, comes an apology: I'm sorry I got mad at you when I saw you playing Fool's Errand. It was wrong of me to assume what I did (that you were doing something non-work-related) and it was wrong of me to get mad about that. I'm eating crow here. Please accept my humblest apologies.

Steve explains his opposition to the poster:

Date: 17 Mar 1988 0129-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: The poster To: JON

I'm not sure where to begin.

My feeling about the poster was not simply that I didn't like it, but that it could not successfully perform the function that "Lives" was meant to perform in regards to the game. Having creative input on a piece which is unworkable is of no use.

Yes, that's a judgment call. But in the case of an item which affects the play of the game, my judgment should be what matters. I've designed the game, I've designed the piece, and I'm the most familiar with both.

Dammit, of course I wasn't blindly convinced that I was right. Of course I'll have doubts when other people come to a conclusion different from my own, especially in your case, since I respect your opinions and agree with them 98% of the time. But there were also many who agreed that the poster wouldn't work, and, significantly, the more someone had actually played Zork Zero, the more they tended to feel that way. So, no, I didn't feel 100% certain of my position; but, in the jury of my mind, I felt that it was the right position beyond a reasonable shadow of a doubt.

I DID NOT decide to put "Lives" into the game in order to blackmail anyone. I assumed — since I was told the decision had been made to do a poster — that the decision had been made to do a poster. I made a mistake by thinking that I would be unable to change such a decision, but in all my experience in dealing with packaging issues, I've never been able to change an unfavorable decision no matter how much fuss I made.

I therefore felt faced with a dilemma: I had a game design and a package element which no longer meshed; in the best case, I'd have a game which would be frustrating to play, in the worst case, I'd have a game which was unplayable. Therefore, I made what I thought was the best decision for the design of the game, and moved "Lives" on-line. The package would still have anti-piracy in the form of the blueprint, and the content and presentation of the vitally-important "Lives" would be under my control. I wasn't happy about it, but it seemed to be the best solution to a bad situation.

Yes, I was mad. Yes, I childishly hoped that my decision would upset those who had made the poster decision. But it wasn't done as blackmail; I didn't believe at the time that the poster decision would ever be reversed.

Just how was it "blackmail," anyway? The loss of anti-piracy? The Marketeers were quite willing to throw anti-piracy to the winds — THEY proposed putting it on-line days before I felt forced to!

Obviously, the socially acceptable thing to do would've been to visit the appropriate people and say "I don't feel that the poster is a reasonable alternative; it won't work with the current game design." But if I had, would it have had any effect? Such non-squeaky-wheel approaches have never worked in the past. Look at Brian; he acts ultra-obnoxious, raises a huge stink, and always gets his way; everyone else tries to be reasonable and compromising, and we usually end up getting fucked over. Given such a pattern, the incentive is to be obnoxious and stinky.

Among the more galling aspects of this whole affair is that I come out branded as stubborn and unreasonable. Joel told me so, in no uncertain terms, when replying to my mail thanking him for getting involved and doing so with an open mind. I feel as though I bent over backwards to be accommodating, especially considering that the piece in question was more important to Zork Zero than any package element for any game I've ever worked on. Mike said "Lives" as a color book was too expensive; I offered that I could live without color. Mike said that books had been done too often, I offered that a calendar or a newspaper supplement would be an acceptable alternative. Later, Carl can't talk to me about all this without risking Mike's anger for talking directly to "them." A decision is then made without my presence, let alone my consent. And that decision is for the single concept among the many discussed which is unacceptable to me. And I'M called unreasonable and uncommunicating!

In retrospect, I guess I wasn't forceful enough about voicing my objections to the poster at the meeting when it was first brought up; but it wasn't until I had more time to think about the idea and talk to other people that I became adamant that it was an unworkable idea. I was the victim of my own open-mindedness, it seems. (How ironic.) (Also, as I pointed out earlier, it shouldn't be necessary to be obnoxious and stinky to have one's objections heeded.)

Historical note: At the meeting when the LGOP cover dispute was settled, Mike stated, and Joel concurred, that Marketing should have the major voice on decisions about the outside of the package, but that decisions on feelies should be the realm of the writer (within reasonable cost constraints). I assumed at the time that they were just bullshitting in order to get their way with the LGOP cover. I guess I was right.

In his mail, Joel accused me of wanting total control over my packages. An odd statement, since the decision was made without me and I ended up struggling for, and happy to get, merely a voice in the process.

The thing that has hurt most during this episode has been the lack of support from you. I'm used to getting fucked around by marketeers; I'm pretty immune to that. But at those times, you've always been supportive even when you disagreed with me. That's probably the main reason why I stormed out on Thursday (which I'm embarrassed about and apologize for). I was not only as angry and frustrated as I've ever been at work, but I also felt betrayed by your lack of support.

I also feel sorry about refusing to meet with the artist, but I still don't feel that I had a choice. I felt caught between you and my strong feeling that the poster could not work, and that the poster art was only one of several reasons. Yes, I was still mad and hurt, and therefore I handled my refusal poorly. But I honestly thought that the result of my refusal would be an innocuous poster which would have no connection to game play but which would be pretty and would satisfy the Marketeers, and the result of my agreeing to meet the artist would be to put us irrevocably on the road to an unworkable piece.

I think that a revealing glimpse of the mindset I was faced with was when Mike referred to the poster as what the Marketeers wanted, and referred to the black and white calendar as what I wanted. I pointed out that the black and white calendar wasn't what I wanted, but was itself a significant compromise on my part.

Okay. Ignore the cost of the Beyond Zork book. Ignore Mike's constant mentioning of scratch 'n' sniff as a feelie against which all subsequent feelies must be measured. Ignore the fact that cheaper packaging was supposed to give us a few more cents for feelies. Ignore the fact that full color books used to be standard. Ignore that Zork Zero is meant to attract new players and players who've drifted away since the Zork Trilogy, and therefore haven't seen all those books. The one fact that can't be ignored is that it has been widely-known for many many months that the book of "Lives" was a major element of the Zork Zero packaging — I wrote it before implementing a single line of code, and Mike read it and gave me comments on it long ago — but I have to find out this way, at this late date, that there are major objections to the its basic format! Oh, but I'm probably being unreasonable and immature to think that way.

It's sad that these fiascoes are more the rule than the exception, and that we should have to go through this shit simply to arrive at a reasonable compromise. Between the huge size of Zork Zero, the hassles of graphics, and the pressure being responsible for a crucial item in a stunted product line-up, (not to mention time drain from Danny, etc.), I certainly had no interest in seeing this episode occur. It would've been much easier, and obviously much better for my "image," to say "what the fuck" and go along with idea of a "Lives" poster; but I have too much of an emotional stake in the quality of my games to have lived with that.

I'm glad to get all that off my chest. If you want to talk about this any more, let's do so verbally, you no-nothing idiot you.

Signed, Another No-Nothing Idiot.

Date: 11 Mar 1988 1549-EST
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi
To: MARC

Good News: Danny. We took him in for his 6-week check-up, and he spurted to 11 pounds and 23.5 inches! It

definitely shouldn't be long now before he's pushing Mookie Wilson out of centerfield.

Medium News: Betty. She pulled a muscle in her back and was laid up for a few days, but she's almost completely recovered now. She also had HER 6-week check-up, and she's doing perfectly. (Which is good, cause we only have a couple more weeks if we're going to have another 1988 baby. Just kidding.)

Unbelievably shitty crappy News: Zork Zero. Marketing, of course. We had the packaging meeting last week, and Dornbrook announced that he had decided the main package element (The Lives of the Twelve Flatheads) wasn't a good idea because it cost too much (approx. 45 cents each) and "we've done lots of books as package element so it's not exciting."

Their proposal: Put the portraits of the Twelve Flatheads into the game as graphics. (Thus moving the cost of producing the artwork from their budget to ours.) We tried pointing out that the portraits were anti-piracy, but that didn't penetrate. We tried pointing out that the crufto machines like Apples might not even have graphics, and if they do, won't allow the necessary detail. Bounce-o, right off certain thick skulls. We finally said "It can't be done. We don't have the time and we don't have the disk space." They scratched their heads for a while and finally said "Well, if it's merely an abysmal idea, that's one thing; but if it just CAN'T be done…"

So, as a compromise, I said that I could live with "Lives" being in black and white instead of color, which would cut the price approximately in half. However, "compromise" is a three-syllable word, and therefore not in the vocabulary of your typical marketeer, so they proposed turning "Lives" into a poster, showing all twelve Flatheads in one painting instead of 12 portraits, and with the text in a separate, plain booklet. The cost for this was about 25 cents each, about the same as doing it as a book in B & W. Dornbrook thought that the poster was "a much neater idea" since "we'd never done one" (depends on your definition, I guess) and "people will hang it up in their home or office and we'll get incredible loads of free advertising" (talk about your enduring myths).

I pointed out that it would be much, much harder to get the necessary information and detail into a single group portrait, and that a poster with a separate piece would be less user-friendly, since there are clues to about 30 or 40 puzzles scattered through "Lives," and the player will have to be referring to it constantly while playing.

So, we were all supposed to go away and think about it over the weekend. I came back with two compromise ideas, one so-so (in most opinions including mine) and one excellent (in most opinions including mine). The so-so idea was to do an issue of the GUE News and Dungeon Report with "Lives" as a supplement. The excellent idea was a "Lives of the Twelve Flatheads" calendar, with the illustration and text for one Flathead above each monthly calendar box.

I passed these ideas on. I also heard from Carl that, since we were no longer picturing package elements on the outside of the package, marketing had decided that any money spent of feelies was a waste of money since buyers wouldn't know about them anyway.

Yesterday, I was told to come in early for a meeting at which Carl would show his ideas. It turned out to be me, Carl, and Jon. Carl showed a layout for the calendar idea, which looked pretty good, and a layout for the poster idea, which looked pretty sucky (the text wasn't even on a separate piece... it was on the BACK of the poster!) Then he said, "...and we've decided that we're going to do the poster."

Well, to say that I was pissed would be an incredible understatement, and Jon was uncharacteristically totally unsupportive. He even argued, amazingly, that the poster was EASIER for players to use than if it was in book form. That was when I left, and spent the rest of the day deciding how to salvage the game from this total fucking over.

What I finally decided to do, which is ironically similar to marketing's first proposal, is simply to move "Lives" on line, to where they can't screw it up. Then they can just take their poster and do whatever they want with it (although I could give them some good suggestions). Unfortunately, this takes away the anti-piracy protection, which is too bad, but it's better than requiring information and then putting it in a form which is difficult or impossible for the player to find and use. Also, since putting "Lives" on line takes up around 20K, I'm almost certainly going to have to punt on line hints to make room. This is also too bad.

There are a number of particularly incredible things about all this: No package element has ever been a fully integrated into the game as this one, and yet that's not enough. The exact form and content of "Lives" has been known to all involved for months...in fact, I wrote it before I began implementing a thing!...and yet there's not a

hint until a month into alpha testing that someone has a problem with this. When we redesigned the package to have a cheaper box, it was said that part of the reason was so that we could afford more for feelies, yet I can't even get a 22 cent piece which is vitally important to the play of the game. And I offered one compromise solution after another...black and white, newspaper, calendar...which addressed all of the marketeers wedgeheaded concerns... cost, uniqueness...and they're going ahead with this piece of shit idea without anything resembling input on my part. The funniest part is that they don't like the book idea because "we've done books before" and yet the entire idea of putting in graphics is to attract a whole new set of people! Unreal, huh?

Well, thanks for giving me a forum for getting this off my chest. And hopefully you can be on your guard as the marketeers descend on Journey and begin the task of fucking up ITS package.

Date: 14 Mar 1988 1833-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Victory on a Bloody Field To: MARC

It wasn't pretty, but I was able to Deep Six the poster idea. "Lives" will be a calendar. The forces of darkness and evil have been held at bay for a little longer.

How was the visit by Gayle and Christopher?

Date: 22 Mar 1988 2030-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [Victory on a Bloody Field] To: MD

I think these two are it...

Date: 23 Mar 1988 0943-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Game Terminology To: SEM cc: SWG

Any good book like "Complete Rules of Card Games" has dozens of words in it. I'll bring one in from home. Meanwhile, how about:

BID, RUFF, FINESSE, PASS, SLAM, TRICK, DOUBLE, REDOUBLE, VULNERABLE; CUT, DEAL, EXPOSE, SPLIT, BET, KNOCK, RAISE, SEE, BLUFF, etc.

Also, as standard plays: OPENING, STRATEGY, TACTIC, MOVE, DEVICE, PLOY, RUSE, DEFENSE, REPLY, DODGE, FEINT, GIMMICK, STRATAGEM, DIVERSION.

Date: 29 Mar 1988 1612-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: News To: MARC

I don't completely understand his reasoning, either. But he's a card-carrying technological snob; he won't buy a new monitor for his trans-awesome video system because none of the ones he likes displays more than 500 lines. Never mind that so video system likely to appear in the next 3 years even HAS that many lines; he just likes to know they're there.

Things in MacLand are okay. My project's user interface is almost usable enough to let me start thinking about the story. I hope to put it into testing sometime this summer.

No new resignations announced this week. But it's only Tuesday.

How's Christopher treating you?

Date: 4 Apr 1988 1040-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork Zero manual To: JON

This seems like a major problem. I'm not sure how we can write the manual a month before the FIRST interpreter is supposed to be running. We won't know what commands and features will be on all systems, some, or none. I still have no idea how the on-screen mapping will be implemented and what features it will have and what the interface will be like. I have no idea what's going to happen with programmable function keys. I guess we could start on things like the preface and sample transcript, but final copy of the whole manual in four weeks sounds impossible.

Steve is working on the Infocom novels and Zork Zero:

Date: 5 Apr 1988 1108-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Priorities? To: JON

I feel incredibly guilty about the not getting back to them on the draft of the first book or the outline of the second book.

On the other hand, I feel like I've already spent more time on the project than it deserves, and I also feel incredibly snowed under by Zork Zero — keeping up with Garybugs, implementing Double Fanucci and the rebus puzzle, adding encyclopedia entries and vocabulary words, preparing parser bug saves for Stu, thinking about on-screen mapping...and I haven't fixed any chess puzzle bugs in months, I've been saving them up for a slack period to fix all at the same time because it's so difficult to remember how it's all implemented...and I haven't read any scripts since about a week after Tyler started playing, which means most of Tyler's and Joe's and all of Gary's...and on-line hints still need to be put in.

Bottom line is I'd love it if anyone would take over worrying about the Byron Preiss stuff; I feel like it's turning out so badly anyway that it doesn't matter to me who handles it here. However, I've tried lots of times to get people to read the manuscripts, and few have begun and no one has gotten past about the first quarter.

Date: 13 Apr 1988 1620-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork Zero Changes To: TESTERS at FRED

Double Fanucci is up and running. You'll find it in a new area of Port Foozle, the Casino. Before you try playing it, read the Babe Flathead chapter of the latest "Lives" that I'll be handing out.

There have been some minor changes and some major bug fixes in the chess/hardhat puzzle:

* chess pieces that are sent off in the Construction Site should no longer return a move later; they should stay where you send them to.
* this means that the knight will not simply return with the hardhat. You'll have to send him to Room 0 with the perch and then pigeon there.
* chess pieces should now pick up any item on the ground of a room they're sent to.
* pawns advanced to the last row should turn into queens.
* UNDO should now work after giving directions to a chess piece.

Still to come:

* Fixing it so non-knights can't move through walls in the construction area.
* more syntaxes to give directions to the chess pieces.

Lots of work on the fungus puzzle syntaxes. The following syntaxes should all work (when the cousin's name is Ralph):

```
CALL RALPH          SAY RALPH              YELL RALPH
CALL "RALPH"        SAY "RALPH"            YELL "RALPH"
CALL TO RALPH       ASK TOE FUNGUS ABOUT RALPH
```

Please see how these work On Top of the World vs. elsewhere, before drinking the potion and after, before getting the little fungus and after. Also, are there any other syntaxes which seem reasonable?

Date: 29 Apr 1988 1552-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Zork Zero manual To: DA
cc: SEM, Jon

The Zork Zero manual can be found in <JON>Z0.MANUAL.
Let me know if there's anything else I can do.

REMEMBER REMEMBER REMEMBER REMEMBER REMEMBER
There will undoubtledly be corrections/additions/deletions.

Date: 6 May 1988 1023-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: novice nudging To: SEM cc: SWG, Jon

I like the idea of suggesting inputs to the frustrated player that s/he can do right now, in the current situation. I have been thinking the same thing. It should be easy to call FIND-IN a few times and cobble up some suggestions.

I'm not so sure about your method of measuring player frustration. Let's call it the "blood pressure" method, as in Bureaucracy. I think it's better to do what Moonmist does: respond immediately to certain key words like "let's" and every Nth time give a longer response with examples.

I guess it depends on your model of the novice's mind: do they have "runs" of bad luck, and that's when advice is most helpful (BP method)? Or do they have hard-to-break habits, and some advice (a little or a lot) is helpful whenever they slip up?

Let's talk about this.

Date: 3 Jun 1988 1939-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork0 To: MARC

Liz is the only one who HAS played Zork0 since around mid-April!

(I thought that) one of the feature of the N.P. was that it would be easier to debug and add on to. It does add a lot of mini-features... referring to objects by their location or state, for example... but nothing that's going to knock the socks off the playing public.

On the downside, it has sucked up a lot of man-months (years?) and adds a lot of size to the game (around 10K, if I recall). It also has a tendency at times to be "too smart" — running into problems with sentences which the O.P. would have blithely scanned right over and stupidly done the right thing. Also, as you noted, it's slower.

Overall, I'd call it a wash.

Date: 3 Jun 1988 2253-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork0 To: MARC

Well, if anyone had bothered to ask ME about a year ago, I probably would've said approximately the same thing.

Date: 6 Jun 1988 1630-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork0 Graphics List To: TAA cc: JON

In the <ZORK0> directory is a file called PICTURE-INFO.TXT which contains a list of the 351 Zork0 graphics, along with their width and height in pixels. (The width and height are with the corner at x=0 and y=0, so the width and height are actually one pixel greater than the numbers listed.)

The 351 graphics are now all in their own files, snug against the upper left corner. They live on seven separate disks, which I have on my desk. Note: more graphics may still be added.

Date: 22 Jun 1988 0948-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Problem with Zork 0 pictures To: sem

I've run into a slight problem with a couple of the pictures I've been playing with. I don't know if there are other similar cases, but here goes:

The compass components have a four-color palette, which must be available whenever one of the borders is on the screen. So far, fine.

epilogue-letter has another six colors (all different from the compass colors), needed only with outside-border. We're up to ten colors in the palette so far.

outside-border, in addition to using all six of the colors from epilogue-letter, adds eight more of its own, making eighteen in all. I'd suggest that the artist (or someone) should retouch epilogue-letter/outside-border to use fewer colors, either by using colors from the compass palette or by absolute reduction. My code will do stuff to get rid of the least-frequently-used colors, but were obviously better off if a human does it.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1457-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Demos To: JON

The problem with the status line in Zork Zero (and probably Shogun) is that there's no current way for the author to control the background color. TAA says that this feature will not be installed until after beta (thus not until after press conference). I've only been thinking about getting Zork Zero into playable shape for beta, ignoring ugliness for the sake of playability; I'd never thought about press conf. demos in this light before.

Date: 17 Jul 1988 1557-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Mac II Zork 0 To: TAA, DUNCAN cc: JON, SEM

I'd say it's demo-able, and in fact in quite good shape, with just one exception. That is, the miscolored backgrounds on the status line and encyclopedia text. Jon said that some kludge would be worked out before the press conference to take care of this. Is this correct? Do I need to do anything?

A few peggleboz pegs are still a pixel off, but it's not too bad and I wasn't planning on demo-ing it during the formal press conf.

The maps, which I've been ignoring until now in order to concentrate on the higher priority stuff, all have a

few problems, but I think I can pick one that's not too bad for a demo.

Everything else: borders, compasses, Tower of Bozbar, Fanucci, Snarfem, and the rebus... all seem to be working perfectly.

Date: 17 Jul 1988 2243-EDT
From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Mac II Zork 0
To: SEM cc: TAA, JON

I've extended the Mac COLOR call so that a color id of -1 sets the text color, either foreground or background, of the indicated window to the color of the pixel at that window's current cursor position. (If the indicated window is not the current one, the color is set when it becomes the current one.)

It is probably best to "release" the special color (reset it to the default, or just exit the window) before displaying the next graphic, to avoid problems in tight (16 limit) color environments.

[Needs to be documented in YZIP.]

Date: 26 Jul 1988 0045-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: New Graphical Puzzle Format?
To: LIZ, JON, MATT, CRAIG at FRED, ADAM at FRED, JOE
cc: SEM

I'm considering a change in the way the games (Peggleboz, Snarfem, etc.) are implemented, and I'm looking for comments.

Right now, the text output scrolls by in a window at the bottom of the screen. This window is usually about 8 lines high. (Shorter in the case of Double Fanucci, because of the space taken up by the menu).

I'm thinking of changing the workings of this text window, such that when you make your move, the enter window clears, and the text output resulting from that move prints at the top of this now-blank window.

Here's what I see as the advantages of each method:

Advantages of the (current) scrolling text window —

* It allows you to see the result of the previous turn or two, for whatever that's worth.
* It's already implemented, so I wouldn't have to spend any time making it work this way.

Advantages of the (proposed) clearing, non-scrolling window —

* The result of your move would be the only thing in the text window. Currently, your eye must generally travel up to the graphical window to take in the action there, and then must return to the text window, and separate the new text from the old text. In this scheme, the old distracting text would be gone.
* It would allow a reduction in the size of this window, from 8 to perhaps 4 or 5 lines. This will make it easier to adapt the graphics to different machines. (Andrew has already had to reduce the size of the text window to fit the Peggleboz board in his black & white Mac adaptation.)

Comments?

Date: 6 Aug 1988 0007-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Dubious distinctions.…
To: MARC

Yowser! I'm only up to the mid 200's, and I feel like I've been compiling Zork0 since the dawn of man!

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0947-EDT
From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: schedules
To: joey

I've worked a schedule for games shipping this fall. (Have I already sent you this mail?) Anyway, the schedule DOES NOT have anyone testing BattleTech or Arthur. You and I need to determine priorities and realities. Zork0, Journey and Quarterstaff are the definite shippers, right? Where does Shogun really fit in, and what of the impossible dream dates set for BattleTech? In the second place, we should be testing Arthur, but I don't know where to put that on my schedule either.

Liz

Date: 11 Aug 1988 0056-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: new $skip
To: LIZ at FRED, JOE at FRED, CRAIG at FRED, ADAM at FRED, KURT at FRED, MATT at FRED

>$SKIP CAULDRON will exist whenever I get around to making V232. It will move you to the Banquet Hall along with Megaboz's notebook and the 20 Flathead items. This is very crude — an item will appear even if you have already tossed it into the cauldron; some items may later appear in their "real" spot. This will allow you to get to the end of the game quickly for the purpose of checking endgame-related bugs. Let me know if this new $skip doesn't work as intended.

Date: 14 Aug 1988 1801-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork0 b&w
To: TAA, JOE cc: VELDRAN, LIZ, JOEY

[Please pass this info to Mike K. I couldn't find a login name for him; does he even have an account?]

I have "finished" all the Zork Zero black-and-white graphics with the exception of compass stuff and encyclopedia stuff.

I would've done the compass stuff, except I couldn't find it. Last time I saw it was when Joe was beginning to log the co-ordinates for them. (NOTE: If I recall, the compass part backgrounds needed to be replaced with an invisible color to prevent overlap problems.)

I have logged all the co-ordinates, excluding the above graphics but including all the invisible pictures.

The graphics are all on two disks: Zork0-b&w-A contains all the games and the rebus. Zork0-b&w-B contains all the maps, the title screen, the letters, and the borders.

The two disks, and the co-ordinate log, are on Joe's chair. Backups of the disks are on the disk box on my desk; a xerox of the log is also on my desk.

Many of these "finished" graphics are far from it; the letters, map illustrations, and map titles need more tweaking, and the title screen and borders are crude placeholders. However, every graphic is in good enough shape for game play (i.e. for beta).

I'll expect to see a b&w Mac version up and running when I get in on Tuesday. If Denise hasn't finished all the encyclopedia graphics, use placeholders.

Perfecting the Mac II graphics took about six weeks. I'm optimistic that this can be cut down for b&w Mac because:

* we know more now than we did then
* some of the Mac II problems were bugs in the game code rather than in the pic file, and won't have to be fixed again
* this will (hopefully) get higher priority attention
* to go out to beta, the graphics don't have to be perfect, just playable.

So, with some incredible luck (and a few all-nighters) maybe we can get this *&^%$# thing out to beta by Friday.

If there are questions or problems, we're at the Plaza Hotel in NY until 5pm. Nancy probably has the phone number.

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1219-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: meeting To: sem at FRED cc: bugcorps at FRED

Our "beta" meeting will be Monday @ 2:30. Because we're going to manage only one outside wave it'll be a combo beta/gamma. Joe's handling the beta reports.

Date: 18 Aug 1988 2334-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Zork0 pre-beta To: TESTERS at FRED

Some topics I'd like to discuss at the pre-beta meeting:

* what to do about the fact that the compass and the on-screen maps "give away" the Delta maze
* the number of wand uses — fewer shots increases the need for strategizing and would prevent the wands use for solving the Borphbelly Stew puzzle, but more shots means more fun
* the removal of certain parser comments like "[I assume you mean...]"
* Currently, you can stop time before getting Megaboz's notebook, and then you're screwed, since you can't get back to his hut. One idea: put a fly inside the trunk.

Please think about these topics before Monday. Also, be prepared to bring up any other issues you can think of.

The following is my list of things to do before Zork Zero is done:

mouse control	implementing the COLOR command
more encyclopedia entries	polishing the prose
more vocabulary (stemming "I don't know the word"s)	finishing implementing the MODE command
a parser-based hand-holding feature for the prologue	finishing the hints
finishing the conversion of games to non-scrolling text	putting in CREDITS
and of course, the bug backlog	

If anyone can think of anything non-trivial that isn't on this list, speak now or forever shut the heck up. Also, if you think that there's anything on that list that MUST go in before beta, be prepared to say so.

The hints that aren't written yet:

double fanucci	snarfem	bedbug
goal of the game	squid	getting back from beyond the oracle

Is anyone interested in writing one or more of these? By Tuesday?

Date: 19 Aug 1988 1037-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork0 pre-beta To: SEM cc: TESTER.ADAM

May I write the hints? Huh? Can I, can I?

[PS: Just joking, Steve. I'd like to write them if no one else wants to...]

Date: 23 Aug 1988 1057-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork0 pre-beta To: TESTER.ADAM

Great! No one else has volunteered, so please write away...
Please start with Snarfem and Fanucci, then move onto the others if you have time.

Date: 23 Aug 1988 1143-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Zork0 pre-beta To: SEM cc: TESTER.ADAM

Ok, Snarfem and Fanucci coming up...

Date: 23 Aug 1988 1727-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: new Z0

Release 236 incorporates all the changes from yesterday's meeting:

* mapping/compass now work differently in the Delta; new jester poem first time you MAP there
* new jester scene when he appears in the Otto room
* new entries for Rockville Estates and the architect (Zylo Pickthorn)
* the fly has been moved from the Cairn to the trunk

One other thing: the jester's visits should be less often as you get higher in the FrobozzCo Bldg. This should make climbing the building less difficult.

Joe: please bring this version down to the Mac.

Date: 25 Aug 1988 2303-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: hints To: ADAM at FRED

Sorry; just got around to reading them now.

I'd like to include the mathematical solution to Snarfem as well. Are you familiar with it?
I think the Fanucci section needs to be fleshed out more. Stuff like how the game can end in a draw, how an illegal play can screw up the winning sequence, how to avoid such an illegal play, etc.

Date: 26 Aug 1988 0937-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: zork0 To: bugcorps at FRED

Steve reports that some of us are using $cheat commands to jump around in the game and not really playing the game. $Cheat is for rechecking bugs - not testing. If it continues to be misused, we'll have to have it disabled. Come on you guys, let's get serious.

From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: hints To: SEM cc: TESTER.ADAM

Steve, I'm leaving today... I think you should have Patti write the hints (if she wants to). She'd be the best bet...
Adam

PS: I'll talk to Liz about arranging the autographed Zork Zero.

Date: 26 Aug 1988 1602-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: hints To: TESTER.ADAM

Okay, thanks... be glad to autograph the Z0.

Date: 3 Sep 1987 1003-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: black & white To: EVERYBODY at FRED

How many black or white things can you name? I'm particularly interested in materials:

BLACK	WHITE	Burnt Wood	Birch Bark
Ebony	Ivory	India Ink	Liquid Paper

Date: 3 Sep 1987 1032-EDT From: Alert salt guy <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: black & white To: SEM cc: SWG

coal v. chalk	obsidian v. glass	iron v. aluminum
mascara v. pancake (?)	molasses v. sugar	coffee v. cream
velvet v. linen	soot v. frost	onyx v. diamond
smoke v. steam		

That was fun!

Date: 8 Sep 1988 1153-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: This was somewhat predictable To: swg, sem

The latest version of Zork 0, with CLUES, DEFS2, FIND, INPUT, MISC, PIC, PMEM, PRARE, PSTACK, and TOP all added to segment 0, along with what was there before, no longer fits on apple 2 disks: segment 0 is 234 pages (out of 278), which doesn't leave enough room on any disk for some of the other segments.

Before split gives up, it has

Disk 1: STARTUP & FOOZLE
Disk 2: SECRET, FENSHIRE, & LOWER.

Clearly segment 0 needs to be smaller.

I'll kermit down the information produced by zap (it includes a list of the functions included in each segment), in the slim hope that that'll help.

Date: 10 Sep 1988 0540-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: FUNCTION KEYS To: BUGCORPS at FRED cc: SEM at FRED

Are function keys working ok in Mac Z0?

Date: 12 Sep 1988 0954-EDT From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Mouse v. Zork Zero To: Duncan cc: SEM, TAA, SWG

I'm having trouble with a couple mousy things in on-screen hints.

1. When I do <INPUT 1> inside a REPEAT loop, I want either mouse click or key press to have the desired effect, but it seems to get screwed up if I alternate between mouse and keyboard. I can demo this for you if you want.
2. I want to receive mouse clicks outside the current window (where the hints are PRINTed). But if I use a partial-screen window, it seems that the top few lines on the screen, outside the window, are not sensitive to clicks. (I'd have to change the code to demo this.) Zork Zero does <MOUSE-LIMIT -1> in GO; is this all it should do?

The chessboard puzzle is updated:

Date: 13 Sep 1988 1714-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Just Say No To: TESTERS at FRED

Although I planned otherwise, "en passant" is needed on the chessboard because you can teleport a pawn into the proper position relative to the other pawn. (Craig is due the "thanks" for discovering this.) I've been wondering whether enough players will think of this/care about this to justify the moderate agony of making it work. Do you think it matters if there's no en passant?

Date: 13 Sep 1988 2338-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: bugs To: TESTERS at FRED Status: RO

Batch of Zork0 bugs to be checked are on Liz's chair.

Date: 19 Sep 1988 2331-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: in-house marathon To: TESTERS at FRED

Liz was supposed to be organizing an all-day Zork0 testing session of Boston-area outside testers for one of the days this coming weekend. Does anyone know the status of that?

Zork Zero nears completion:

Date: 21 Sep 1988 1543-EDT
Subject: sports news
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

ZORK ZERO IN PENNANT DRIVE
Magic Number Now at Nine

As the 1988 implementing season dwindles to a close, Zork Zero's magic number is reduced to 9. This means that any combination of winning features and defeated bugs totaling nine days will allow Zork Zero to clinch the division.

"However," says the team's recently-hired General Manager, Joe Ybarra, "there are still numerous obstacles to overcome. We're facing a difficult road series against the Outside Testers, who are always tough at this stage of the season."

Fans, who are flocking in record numbers to watch the team at their Cambridge Park facility, are wondering whether some of the young players will handle the pressure. For example, two young Batterers, Kurt "Hard Drive" Boutin and "Hamburger" Patti Pizer, have been with the team for less than half a season, and have never been through a pennant race before.

Compounding that problem is the recent free-agency of such key players as Jon "Buck" Palace and Gary "Hyphen-Swatter" Brennan, and the surprise unconditional release of veteran Liz Jones, which left holes at several important positions. And although Ybarra remains optimistic, there seems to be little chance of signing any players before the end of the season.

Should the team overcome these hurdles and pop the champagne by September 30th, it faces a difficult post-season battle against the Apple II Interpreters, who are weak at the Graphics and Disk Capacity positions, but whose league-leading Installed Base has gotten them this far.

One other obstacle to be overcome is the erratic personality of team owner Bruce Davis. Following a recent delay, Davis threw a tantrum and called a press conference to announce that he was sending several players to the minor league club. He also threatened to hire Billy Martin as Manager for the stretch run.

Date: 22 Sep 1988 1217-EDT
Subject: New version, new procedure
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

People are spending too much time playing out-of-date versions. Here's a new procedure. When I make a new version (on Fred), I will send out mail. Anyone who subsequently wishes to play the game should do so only with that version. Ask around to see if anyone has brought it down yet; if so, copy it from them; if not, bring it down!

This will apply to new picture files as well.

Here's the first test of the new system! There's a new release: <ZORK0>ZORK0.ZIP.269. It fixes the jester-not-appearing problems, and it might fix the map-mouse-movement bug.

Date: 22 Sep 1988 1650-EDT
Subject: Ugly fat
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
To: swg, sem

According to my sources, Zork 0 still won't fit on the Apple II (I realize this isn't the highest possible priority, but maybe it should get a little attention):

The preload is 111 pages (a page is 512 bytes); that's fixed.

Segment 0 is 231 pages.

A single Apple II disk surface is 278 pages; the maximum size for any other segment, not counting pages shared with segment 0, is therefore 47 pages.

Here are the segment sizes (not counting shared pages):

STARTUP: 4 pages
FENSHIRE: 19 pages
LOWER: 15 pages
SECRET: 30 pages
VILLAGE: 40 pages
CASTLE: 50 pages (won't fit)
FOOZLE: 40 pages
LAKE: 50 pages (won't fit)
ORACLE: 60 pages (won't fit)
HINTS: 56 pages (won't fit)
SOFT: 2 pages

If disks were 13 pages bigger (equivalent to shrinking segment 0 by 13 pages), the game would fit on 7 surfaces (that's four disks, without pictures).

Date: 26 Sep 1988 1003-EDT
Subject: home stretch
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Please concentrate today on all the graphics: the four games, the rebus, the encyclopedia, the maps, the borders/compasses. Tonight will be the deadline for all graphics-related bugs. We will then make one more version of each picture file (color and b&w), which will then be frozen for the rest of the week. We will then spend that home stretch concentrating on the game itself. Note: the current version is 275.

Date: 26 Sep 1988 1049-EDT
Subject: Re: home stretch
From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
To: SEM at FRED cc: TESTERS at FRED, MIKEK at FRED

So, does that mean that we will be final on Friday as planned? It seems that way to me. Does everyone agree?

Date: 28 Sep 1988 0927-EDT
Subject: zork zero news
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

The current version is 278

This version has all mouse and map features completely implemented and moderately de-bugged. Please beat on these, including spending as much time as possible using the map to move around the game.

Here are some new words to try:

TOWER	(at Roof and in Barbican area)
TREE(S)	(at Village Gate, View of Statue, G.U.Woods)
CAGES	(at Zoo)
REMAINS/BODIES	(at Crypt)
SPENSEWEED	(at Lake Botom)
ROOTS	(at Outer Bailey and Under the World area)
FISSURE	(at Fissure's Edge)
GRANOLA MINE	(obvious)
IRON MINE	(at Hollow and Iron Mine)
SHADOW	(numerous places but especially Quarry)
GATE	(at Village Gate)
ICE	(at Orb Room)

Date: 30 Sep 1988 1317-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: new naming convention To: TESTERS at FRED cc: DUNCAN at FRED

As we "near" release, Dr. Duncan suggests that we adopt the following naming conventions, which I endorse:

The interpreter (the icon you click on to start everything) should be called "Zork Zero" — two words, caps and smalls, no hyphen.

The game file, which I create, and which contains all the text and puzzles and bugs, should be called "story.data" — note the period.

The two picture files will continue to be called "pic.data" and "cpic.data" where the "c" denotes the color version.

Date: 30 Sep 1988 1358-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: Re: new naming convention To: SEM at FRED
cc: TESTERS at FRED, DUNCAN at FRED, MIKEK at FRED

Sounds OK to me if we won't have any problems with the manual or the ref card.

Let's be sure to check on that before we make the change final.

Zork Zero reaches Freeze level:

Date: 1 Oct 1988 1531-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: The Big Freeze To: TESTERS at FRED cc: DUNCAN at FRED

Version 286 is, I guess, the "freeze" version. There were several compilation warnings in both (Stu's) parser files and (Dave's) function key files, so if any of those prove to be significant, a new version would be mandated. In the picture file area, a new color picture file is needed: the jester's encyclopedia picture is way off center, and the mouse boxes for Snarfem are a bit off. Tim has details.

The "freeze" interpreter was produced by Duncan on Friday, but has not yet received wide distribution. The final b&w picture file, which was brought down to Joe's Mac on (I think) Thursday, has also not been distributed. MikeK, please collect these four files (the Four Fantastic Files of Famathria). That is, Version 286 (or a successor mandated by Dave or Stu), the new cpic file that Tim will be creating, the latest interpreter from Duncan, and the final b&w picture file. (The final b&w picture file can be identified by the fact that the bottom numbers on the Double Fanucci cards are correct — simply rotated, not mirror-imaged.) Distribute this set of freeze files to everyone who's playing Zork Zero (testers, Curtis, Marjorie...)

Testers: Version 286 "fixes" all reported bugs. One new "feature" (for small values of feature) has been added: a mild tongue-lashing every 5 times you use the hints. Also, $debug and $skip have been removed. Finally, there are some new words to play with: MINE (Granola Mine and Iron Mine), ROBE and CROWN (at Dimwit and the chesspiece kings), BOARD/SHUTTER (at Rest Stop), STALL (in Stable), SLIME (in the Oracle and Icky Cave), CACTUS (Cactus Patch), and VILLAGE (all over the place).

What follows is everything I think needs attention. Anything relating to the interpreter or graphics should be tested in BOTH the color and b&w versions:

MR. MOUSE — Every single mouse-related feature has been installed since the beta-version, and has therefore never received widespread testing. Please try and use the mouse as much as possible: moving around with the compass rose, on the maps, and for playing the games. Also, try and switch back and forth while playing the games. As with other areas, try and do the wrong things as well as the right things.

MR. MAP — This is the other area where the game has changed significantly since beta. Here's how mapping

should work: MAP gets you the map of your area. There are 13 map-areas. The map should only show those rooms you've been in. To leave the map, hit any key. The blinking box is your current location. Clicking on an adjoining (visible) room should move you there. Clicking on an adjoining (invisible) room which you haven't been to yet should move you there but return you to the text screen to get the room description. Clicking on the compass rose should also move you around the map; if it causes you to enter a room you've never been in before, or if you run into a closed door, or if the jester appears, or the game wants to print any text at all, you'll leave the map. Any other mouse click on the map should just beep. As you move around on the map, the compass rose should update AFTER A PAUSE OF 1.2 seconds. The pause is to prevent compass updating from slowing you down if you want to zip across the map. If a click on the compass rose moves you to a room on an adjoining map, the new map should simply replace the old map.

MR. COMPASS — lots of places have been turning up where the compass (and up-down arrows) give the wrong info — showing exits that haven't appeared yet, or not showing exits that have. This shouldn't be systematically checked. (Note: exits should be highlighted if they're VISIBLE, even if you can't go that way for some reason.)

MR. FUNCTION KEYS — that old DEFINE command has come a long way in these last few weeks, but Dave is really anxious to fix more define bugs if they turn up. But please — bugs only, not suggestions for new features at this point.

MR. HINTS — The hints should be thoroughly studied, for lucidity and completeness. Note the addition of several fake questions. Also, everything in the For Amusement section should be tried — it's poor to say "Hey — try this, folks!" and then discover it doesn't work.

MR. HINT SYSTEM — Once again, go wild with them mice, mix your use of mice and keys, do weird things.

MR. COLOR — The newest feature in the family of fine Zork Zero features is the COLOR command. On b&w Macs, this should simply reverse the foreground and background colors, giving you white text on a black background. On a Mac II, the command does a helluva lot more, and is therefore much more dangerous. This feature should be tested with a Mac II set to both 256 and 16 colors — ask Duncan for more details.

MR. MANUAL — When the game went to beta, it was discovered that the syntax which the manual recommended for answering riddles DIDN'T WORK! This was because people (in-house testers) hadn't read the manual. Step One: Read the Manual. Step Two: make sure that there's nothing in it — commands, syntaxes, responses — which is inconsistent with the game.

UNCLE PARSER — The Zork Zero parser has two features which are supposed to help out the terminally confused novice player. Both features kick in if the parser decides the player is seriously chomping. The first feature, which can be activated at any point in the game, simply recommends some inputs for the player to try. All such recommended inputs should be doable at that point, although not necessarily useful. The second feature can appear only during the prologue. Once it kicks in, it stays throughout the rest of the prologue, and recommends the one "correct" thing to do on that turn… EAST, DIVE UNDER THE TABLE, etc. Try and activate these features by typing in all those screwy novice things like LET'S HAVE FUN and YOU'RE A PRETTY STUPID COMPUTER. Act like a novice! Think like a kid! Walk like an Egyptian!

MR. CAN OF WORMS — Finally, there are the various areas of the game which have been festering sources of bugs throughout these long months of testing. Namely, answering riddles, gloops, and of course teleportation.

For answering riddles, 3 syntaxes should work:

```
>ANSWER "FOO"          >ANSWER FOO          >FOO
```

But be creative, try others as well just to see what happens. Try answering riddles on the first prompt as well as on subsequent prompts. Try giving the correct as well as incorrect answers. Try answering with objects that are

present; with objects that are in the game but aren't present; with object and words that aren't even in the game's vocabulary.

For the gloops, try all reasonable syntaxes. All the possible syntaxes will never work; the object is just to try get almost all of the most common ones working. Try things like delivering the wrong amount, or water from somewhere other than the oasis.

You've all been doing such an excellent job of finding teleportation bugs <grind gnash grind> that I doubt you need any instruction in that area. Just keep beating on the intersection of Oracles and Amulets and Pigeons and Perches and Cloaks and Chesspieces and Cabbages and Kings.

A final reminder of whose in charge of what:

Parser King:	Stu	Lord Define:	Dave	Prince of Hints:	Stu
Mr. Macintosh:	Duncan	Everything else:	me		

Well, that's everything on my list! I hope you all have a nice, unproductive week! I'll be in Friday, noonish.

Date: 3 Oct 1988 1351-EDT From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: demo version To: PDL, Challenge cc: SEM, SWG, TAA, JoeY, MD

I'm preparing a demo version of Zork Zero, which can run by itself at retail locations. As Rob & I see it, it will start off with a "slide show" about one minute long that shows off some of the graphics; then it will drop the user (if any) into the game, near one of the mini-games. If the user tries to leave the castle, or if (say) a minute goes by with no input, then the program will start over.

In order to handle the one-minute timeout, all READ's and INPUT's will have to check the global DEMO-VERSION? and, if it's true, do the timeout. And "all" includes library code, like DO-HINTS. So please add a GLOBAL with that name to your game.

Date: 8 Oct 1988 2343-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: new Zork0 To: TESTERS at FRED Status: RO

Please download and play v288. I have the bugs-to-be-checked at home; I'll have them in by mid-morning Monday.

No major changes; nothing special to try; just keep trying everything I mentioned in my mail from last week.

Date: 11 Oct 1988 0042-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: new zork0 To: TESTERS at FRED

There's a new release: <zork0>zork0.zip.289. Please download and play it.

Date: 12 Oct 1988 0112-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: zork0 To: TESTERS at FRED

290 is it. The compass/define problem should hopefully be fixed; it seems to be on Fred, but the Mac is sufficiently different from Fred in this area...

Note: 290 should be played with the most recent interpreter, NOT with the October 3rd interpreter.

Date: 14 Oct 1988 1218-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: is this it? To: TESTERS at FRED

new game file: <ZORK>ZORK0.ZIP.292

new b&w pic file: Watkins is bringing it down

new interpreter dated 10/13: I believe this has already been distributed

NO new color pic file

Play this for a few hours, and if nothing bad shows up, we'll ship it (but we'll still keep playing next week while master are being created, just in case).

Here are the procedures if you find "something bad":

1. Check it to make sure it's repeatable.
2. Ask your neighbor whether (s)he agrees that it's really serious.
3. Check it again.
4. Ask another neighbor.
5. Shoot yourself.
6. Throw yourself in front of a speeding bus.
7. Tell me about the bug.

Date: 17 Oct 1988 1015-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: I'm home… To: IMPS at FRED, BUGCORPS at FRED

...taking care of sick little Danny. I'll be in by mid-afternoon when Betty gets home for the second shift. Until then, feel free to call me at 275-7012 if anything important happens.

Date: 18 Oct 1988 0031-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: >MAKE NEW VERSION.G.G.G.G.G To: TESTERS at FRED

ZORK ZERO V294 is now offered for your gaming "pleasure." Things to concentrate on: magic passages, mapping, compass activity.

Watkins managed to get the jester to stop appearing. He should never do this until time stops near the end. Unfortunately, he didn't have an inkling what he did to cause it. Anyone who can get the jester to stop appearing and can show how gets a cookie. (A really good cookie.)

Danny is mostly better, so unless he has a relapse, I should be in on-timish.

Date: 18 Oct 1988 2259-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: the beat goes on To: TESTERS at FRED

New game file: <ZORK0>ZORK0.ZIP.295
New color pic file: SS:<TAA>ZORK0.MACX1
B&W pic file, interpreter: unchanged

Date: 19 Oct 1988 2339-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: 296 To: TESTERS at FRED

Zork Zero 296. The only significant changes are in the area of turning animals inanimate (or rather, in the area of them turning animate again).

Zork Zero ships:

Date: 25 Oct 1988 1152-EDT From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: JMAC To: MARC

Zork0 just shipped; sorry for the delay getting back to you. I rechecked JMAC for the menu bugs I reported before.

- On-screen menus still get hung up by Mac menus (pick on-screen Game, then Mac Save...).

- The lowcore Menu bit is still not getting set. JMAC.ZIL appears to include the correct ZIP-OPTION. I reported this to Tim.

Re removing the confirmation from Restart and Quit, some things to consider:

- Clumsy/tired/inexperienced mouse users can sometimes aim for one item in a pull-down menu but pick another by mistake. Fwomp!

- Cmd-Q, the standard Mac shortcut for Quit, could be pressed by mistake instead of Cmd-1 (our "F1"), Cmd-S (Save), a Macromaker soft key, etc.

Date: 13 Feb 1989 1146-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: NEW ZORK0 To: DA

V.342

Date: 16 Feb 1989 1145-EST From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Zork0 compass rose To: Patti, TAA cc: SEM

I think I fixed the bug in updating the compass rose after the prologue. The new prologue.zil is on both Fred and spike.

Date: 17 Feb 1989 1615-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: new zork0 To: taa cc: jdarnold, veldran, da

There's a new zork0, V344, that includes all the features JD asked for. Its in /usr/development/zork0.

Two spike-related problems. I tried to use ZDB and was told "permission denied." Also, I tried to use RMAIL in EMACS, and it didn't work; Stu said it was the same problem that he ran into when he first tried using RMAIL.

Date: 22 Feb 1989 1444-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: east vs. west To: taa, da

V345 of zork0, on spike, has the jester's quarters segment problem fixed.

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 89 11:25:46 EST From: joseph@spike (Joe Prosser)
Status: RO

Hi. I'd like to make a new amiga picture file for Zork0, Is there a new file that fixes the encyclopedia fuck-up? What is its name, and where does it live?

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 89 13:10:34 EST From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
To: taa@spike, pdl@spike, sem@spike Cc: swg@spike Subject: Turbo Parser!

... is now installed in Zork Zero, as of the next time it's compiled.

Turbo Parser Mark II (with improved adjective reductions) is now installed in Shogun and Restaurant (~dev/old/h2).

Zork Zero: The Revenge of Megaboz
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Mega-Zork

Infocom Demos and Samplers:

The first Demo:

Date: 14 Mar 1983 0956-EST
Subject: Demo Game
From: Marc S. Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

I have created a Demo Game, intended to be used in retail stores for people who haven't played adventure games before (or are rank novices). Please play the game (type DEMO <cr>) and let me know about your global comments, bugs, suggestions for other points to mention, and the like.

Date: 24 May 1984 1026-EDT
Subject: Sampler, Demo
From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

>From this point on, DEMO will refer ONLY to the Tutorial/Zork I game which was already sent out. SAMPLER will refer to the new Tutorial/Zork/Planetfall/Infidel/Witness disk which is now in testing.

Date: 25 Jun 1984 2333-EDT
Subject: Witness Demo
From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: marc at ZORK, swg, da

I still feel that it is lacking. Here is our opportunity to show off a bit. Many people will never try any complex sentences or bizarre actions in the other demos. 3 of 7 moves are "Wait" currently. I would rather show interesting interaction than wait for the murder. Why not "Ask Monica for a drink," "Kiss Monica," "Turn the dial on the radio," "Handcuff the cat to the chair," or whatever?

One other point - I'm willing to compromise on eliminating the first two moves, but I see no good reason to leave out the one between being let into the house and being shown into the living room. Even a simple >Hello would suffice. Without that move, there is an awfully long chunk of text which seems to lead you by the hand in a very "linear" fashion.

Date: 1 Aug 1984 0853-EDT
Subject: Re: Sampler for Plus 4
From: Dan Horn <DAN at ZORK>
To: MD

Mike, yes, on sampler but look at at least three weeks before product is ready and then it will need to be tested.

Atari wants to include a sampler with their ST computer...

Date: 22 Aug 1985 1703-EDT
Subject: SAMPLER
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: Imps at ZORK

Our beloved marketing department has apparently cut a deal with Atari, so our Sampler will be included in every ST sold. Atari's initial order is, I believe, a quarter million Samplers.

Three minor editorial changes to the Sampler are needed (a space removed, and a sentence each about Mage and AMFV). Volunteer(s), please?

Date: 22 Aug 1985 1718-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: SAMPLER To: JON cc: SWG

After looking at the SS:<SAMPLER> directory, I think the program will have to be compiled again. If the old compiler can still be used, the update should be straightforward. But, if any glitches turn up, we would need at least one round of testing. Thus, I will volunteer only if nobody else does. Maybe this would be a good project for Hollywood.

Date: 23 Aug 1985 1025-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: SAMPLER To: JON at ZORK cc: imps at ZORK

Sampler release 54 is ready, 208 bytes bigger than 53, but still under 124K.

(Note to Imps: Please keep the most up-to-date ZIL files in the main directory for a game, in this case SS:<SAMPLER>. I found that some of the ZIL files in SS:<SAMPLER.R53> were more recent, thus forcing me to check through them all to make sure I was using the right ones.)

...but the Atari deal falls through:

Date: 23 Sep 1985 1125-EDT From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales et al. To: Imps at ZORK

Orders through last Friday: 38,900. Includes 6000 AMFV, 5500 Mage.

The "free sampler in every ST" deal fell through.

Online Computers Plus would like an Infocom employee at their booth to demo interactive fiction; at the Bayside Expo this Thursday to Sunday.

Computerland in Worcester would like someone to demo interactive fiction at their store this Saturday.

Production had quite a few backorders: Apple and IBM samplers; Apple, Mac, and Commodore Hitchhiker's; all STs; etc. [Correction: "has," not "had."]

Infocom's works from different genres

Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception

created by Westwood Associates, catalog #IF2

First message relating to Battletech:

Date: 13 Jul 1987 1122-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Did you know ... ? To: IMPS at FRED

The following appeared on CServe this weekend.

> #: 15965 S0/General/Help 12-Jul-87 15:42:33
> Sb: ACTIVISION/FASA NEWS Fm: Nightshift/SYSOP 76703,657
> To: All
>
> Activision and FASA Corporation have announced an agreement to jointly develop A new type of adventure software based on FASA's line of science fiction adventure and role-playing games.
>
> "The software games that will be created through the partnership of FASA and Activision constitute a new genre of entertainment software created by the natural synthesis of two currently distinct entertainment categories, fantasy role-playing and military strategy," said Bruce L. Davis, president of Activision. Davis added that because FASA's board games require players to make calculations and write down and remember a great deal of information, adapting these games to the computer is a natural evolutionary step. "And, applying the dynamic visual and audio capabilities of computers will add depth and power to the provocative experience that has made BATTLE TECH famous among board game adventurers."
>
> FASA Corporation was founded in 1980 by Jordon Weisman and Ross Babcock. The first products were modules for science fiction games. Within 18 months, FASA began to design and publish their own role-playing games based on well-known science fiction universes, such as Star Trek and Dr. Who. Every year since then, the company has been nominated for several H.G. Wells Awards for game design (winning three times, in '82, '85, and '86).
>
> In late 1986, FASA released the first of a new series of science fiction games, entitled BATTLE TECH. The game and its add on products, CityTech, AeroTech, MechWarrior, and BattleForce have been top sellers. FASA is now the third largest RPG publisher in American and the fourth largest in the world.
>
> Activision markets Activision, Infocom, Gamestar, Electric Dreams, and Personal Choice software, and is the distributor of entertainment software published by New World Computing, Inc. and Lucasfilm Games.

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0947-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: schedules To: joey

I've worked a schedule for games shipping this fall. (Have I already sent you this mail?) Anyway, the schedule DOES NOT have anyone testing BattleTech or Arthur. You and I need to determine priorities and realities. Zork0, Journey and Quarterstaff are the definite shippers, right? Where does Shogun really fit in, and what of the impossible dream dates set for BattleTech? In the second place, we should be testing Arthur, but I don't know where to put that on my schedule either.

Date: 25 Aug 1988 1649-EDT From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: battletech To: everybody at FRED

HELP !!! I'm trying to remember that old puzzle about turning triangles into nine (then remember the solution was spelling out the word 'NINE'; we used to do it with matchsticks).

If anybody remembers how the puzzle went please let me know: I'm putting it into Comstar as a graphic puzzle to access your stocks at a critical moment in the game . Or, if anyone can think of an even better hair puller that's easy to do graphically let me know.

Date: 29 Sep 1988 1236-EDT From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: battletech-gamma To: testers at FRED cc: joe at FRED

the latest copy of battletech is on curt's hard disk. it is in the sub-directory '2BTECH'. This incorporates all the changes and bug reports which are fixable.

Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception
Working Titles & Nicknames List

(none on record)

Z

Fooblitzky

by Mike Berlyn, Marc Blank, Brian Cody, Poh C. Lim, and Paula Maxwell
Catalog #GS1

First message relating to Fooblitzky:

Date: 9 Jun 1985 1624-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Fooblitzky To: MD cc: jon, lim, bls

The problem with your way of doing things ("a suggestion in the rules that the game could be made easier or shorter by having all players watch the selections") is that it doesn't at all address the issue, since, by definition, it implies that people already understand the rules and will see how the change makes it easier and shorter.

I would suggest merely explaining the game in the simple version (no secrecy, no need for fooble distributions, etc.) and THEN show people the more complex and more strategic version with NEW RULES ADDED. This addresses the following points: 1) difficulty levels 2) easy start-up 3) shorter directions at first. Additionally, it doesn't water trade off ease of learning for complexity of game play.

Date: 10 Jun 1985 1326-EDT From: Poh C. Lim <LIM at ZORK>
Subject: Fooblitzky To: JON cc: BLANK, MD

Hi,

Here is a short summary of Fooblitzky that could be used as a first paragraph in the rules. The English is terrible, and so you may want to try to rewrite it, or even just write your own version from scratch. Keep the following points in mind if possible:

a. This paragraph has to be short if you want it to be read.
b. It should give a flavour of the game so that people will not think that buying and selling are the only thing that you can do in Fooblitzky.
c. Remember to emphasise that the goal is to IDENTIFY and bring the items to the check point. A lot of people just brought four items to the checkpoint and were disappointed that they did not win the game.
d. Emphasise the importance of note taking and using the worksheet. The worksheet has a good summary of the game for those who do not read the rules. (Someone thought that the 'D' in the superboard was the DINER. Looking at the worksheet would have corrected this misconception.)
e. Mention that the game consist of two parts. The first part is to select the correct items. Beginners do not know what to expect and so may think that the game has already begun!!!

Mongrolia Summary

The game Mongrolia is a game of strategy for two to four players. The aim of the game is to obtain the 4 right items and to bring them to the CHECKPOINT. This game has two parts. In the first part, each player gets to specify one of the right items secretly. In the second part, each player gets to move in turn in the city of Mongrolia. Each player can go to 6 kinds of stores (DRUG store, GROCERY store, HARDWARE store, PET store, SPORTS store, and TOY store), CHARITY central, CHECKPOINT, LOCKERS, PAWNSHOP, PHONE booth, RESTAURANTS and UGH (Underground Gliding Highway). The players can also get into accidents at CROSSWALKS (ending up in the HOSPITAL), BUMP other players, or encounter the CHANCEMAN if the player remains on the sidewalk at the end of the turn. If the player do two things — remember that the aim of the game is to identify and take the 4 right items to the CHECKPOINT, and keep a good record of the items in the worksheet provided — the game will not only be comprehensible but more fun.

Date: 29 Aug 1985 1610-EDT From: Poh C. Lim <LIM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: FOOBLITZKY ON THE IBM To: SCF cc: JON, MD, LIM

Hi,

I am glad to hear that we will have a full time person on Fooblitzky come this Tuesday.

As I have mentioned earlier, (I think this is what I said,) we have both IBM and ATARI version of Fooblitzky to test now. There are two components of Fooblitzky that needs to be tested, namely, the game and the interpreter. The game is the same for both the IBM and the ATARI version except that the items in the shops do not move. (This is known as iteration among the game developers.) So, in principle at least, debugging the IBM version of the game is the same as debugging the ATARI version of the game. Of course, game bugs that is found in the ATARI version but not the IBM version is always welcome ...

The ATARI version of the game should be debugged with special attention on finding interpreter bugs. There are several known interpreter bugs. The main one is the paging bug which causes very slow display of images while the disk is accessed frequently. Disk access is also known to fail. And SAVE and RESTORE should be exhaustively tested to make sure that it fails gracefully when there is no disk, when the disk is write-protected, etc. The game should also be played on as many versions of the ATARI machines (400, 800, 800XL, 1200, etc) with as many memory configurations as possible so that we know what machines Fooblitzky can and cannot run on. Of course, if other bugs are found when these tests are made, so much the better.

The IBM version of the game should also be debugged with the interpreter in mind. Recent changes to the IBM version with respect to the joystick, the internal clock, the paging scheme, the auto-numlock, etc. should be examined carefully. Since the joystick is intimately related to the clock on the IBM version, the use of the joystick on both the faster and the slower versions of IBM (ie. IBM-AT vs. IBM-JR, etc) should be tested and compared. The game should be played on as many versions of the IBM and IBM compatible machines as possible with as many memory configurations as possible so that we will know what machines the IBM versions can and cannot play. Moreover, for each version, we should test for the case where the joystick is in and is not in, the game port is in and is not in, the time delay that the interpreter uses (ie. is the interpreter's one second close to the real time one second?), and other machine dependent features. Of course, if other bugs are found when these test are made, ... I would recommend that a simple ten minutes set of operation be used to test for these various versions — it would be obvious by then whether the game can run on a given machine in a given configuration by then — and that exhaustive testing of the game (as opposed to the machine dependent part of the interpreter) be done on a fast machine or on a machine that will probably have the highest sales figure. Probably exhaustive testing should also be done on the fastest and the slowest machines to root out the bugs due to unusual speeds. By the way, save and restore should also be tested for these various machines to make sure that they work correctly and fail gracefully if there is an error.

I hope that I have covered all the relevant points. Subjective observations like the speed of the various versions of the IBM and ATARI games are also welcome for they may be caused by some real bugs or misfeature that could be fixed easily. Feel free to call on me to help out in the testing in any way if there are any problems or questions.

LIM

Date: 30 Aug 1985 1316-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Fooblitzky To: md, bls

Have you seen it running on the Jr? It is VERY slow. I still claim, by the way, that the IBM version plays much better (i.e. faster) than the Atari version, even though the Atari ANIMATION is clearly faster. What slows down the game are things like time for the roulette wheel to come up, etc.

My personal opinion is that the game is cretinously slow on EVERYTHING. I'm not so sure I would sell it given how badly it performs, but it isn't for me to decide.

Date: 6 Sep 1985 1446-EDT From: BLS
Subject: Reply to your Fooblitzky note. To: BLANK cc: MD

We all agreed last week on what needed to be done. Given those parameters, it was mutually felt that everyone could make that date. Both the micro group and testing have had months to look at this game and test it and it is way past when we should have set the ship date for the product.

Date: 6 Sep 1985 1528-EDT From: Barry L. Star <BLS at ZORK>
Subject: [Memo about Fooblitzky] To: MD

These notes are part of the Marc discussion. Sorry that they're out of order.

---

1) 6-Sep Marc Blank Memo about Fooblitzky
2) 6-Sep Marc Blank Re: Reply to your Fooblitzky note.

Message 1 -- **********
Date: 6 Sep 1985 1435-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Memo about Fooblitzky To: BLS

The only problem is that testing can't agree to a date. They can agree to test the game, but not to approve it. My impression is that the game is unacceptable at the present time and that there's no guarantee that it will become acceptable by Oct. 1.

Message 2 -- **********
Date: 6 Sep 1985 1449-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Reply to your Fooblitzky note. To: BLS

I understand what you're saying, but you've got to understand that there are serious concerns about whether the product is worthy of being shipped, especially in its current form. It may very well turn out that the speed problems simply cannot be solved, especially by the Oct. 1 deadline. When it comes right down to it, the product must meet our standards of quality. Those standards can't be rushed or ignored.

Date: 8 Oct 1985 0842-EDT From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at ZORK>
Subject: Fooblitzky To: Imps at ZORK, Micro at ZORK, Lisa at ZORK, Heidi at ZORK

Today is allegedly the last day of Fooblitzky testing. Yesterday at the Consumer Op meeting I asked for volunteers, but no one raised their hand. We really need help! If we can get 2 or 3 games going (they only take one to two hours - take a long lunch!) it would be incredibly, unbelievably helpful. Testing will be at breakfast until about 9:45. Come by after that, or I'll come looking for you!

Date: 4 Dec 1985 1559-EST From: Tom Veldran <TOM at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

A real Fooblitzky is here. In the real box and everything!

Scotch in Lim's office!

Fooblitzky
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Mongrolia

Z

Infocom's books

the "What-Do-I-Do-Now" adventure books & novels based on their games

Date: 8 Jun 1983 1946-EDT
Subject: Book 3

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: consumers at ZORK

Book Three, "Zork: The Cavern of Doom", now available for alpha-testing.

Excerpt from a message that shows the inception of the Infocom novels:

Date: 19 Jun 1986 1515-EDT
Subject: All sorts of stuff

From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

I have all sorts of interesting info that I acquired at meetings today. Here is some of it, in no particular order of importance. I certainly have more details about most of this stuff, so see me if you're interested.

Joel, Chris, and I met with Byron Preiss, who is interested in books based on our games. It looks pretty good. They are most interested in doing a series of books for a given game, and the games they are most interested in now are Wishbringer, Planetfall, and The Witness. We would have some involvement, but nothing very time-consuming.

Date: 4 Jun 1987 1210-EDT
Subject: PLANETFALL BOOK

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I have an outline for the first of the Byron Preiss PLANETFALL novels. If anyone is interested is reading it, I'd be interested in your comments.

Excerpt from a message on various topics:

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1441-EDT
Subject: Mostly boring stuff

From: Chaaa on Planet J <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

Below are the notes I took at this morning's meeting. (Joel et al. wasn't here last Thursday, which is why we had the meeting today.)

The Wishbringer and Planetfall books by Byron Preiss will be out next June. Brian, who has read the manuscript, should give his comments to David Harris.

Date: 18 Nov 1987 1806-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Planetfall Book
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Who's interested in reading the first draft of the first Planetfall novel? (Warning: it's not exactly great literature.)

Date: 5 Apr 1988 1108-EST
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Priorities?
To: JON

I feel incredibly guilty about the not getting back to them on the draft of the first book or the outline of the second book.

On the other hand, I feel like I've already spent more time on the project than it deserves, and I also feel incredibly snowed under by Zork Zero — keeping up with Garybugs, implementing Double Fanucci and the rebus puzzle, adding encyclopedia entries and vocabulary words, preparing parser bug saves for Stu, thinking about on-screen mapping...and I haven't fixed any chess puzzle bugs in months, I've been saving them up for a slack period to fix all at the same time because it's so difficult to remember how it's all implemented...and I haven't read any scripts since about a week after Tyler started playing, which means most of Tyler's and Joe's and all of Gary's...and on-line hints still need to be put in.

Bottom line is I'd love it if anyone would take over worrying about the Byron Preiss stuff; I feel like it's turning out so badly anyway that it doesn't matter to me who handles it here. However, I've tried lots of times to get people to read the manuscripts, and few have begun and no one has gotten past about the first quarter.

Journey: The Quest Begins

by Marc Blank — artwork by Donald Langosy
***Chronicles* series, catalog #IJ1**

Journey's inception:

The following is a rough description of the project, which is tentatively titled "Journey."

* This is the first part of a trilogy of games in the fantasy genre. The fantasy world will be original (i.e. not derived from any of the current Infocom games.)
* The game will feature multiple characters under the player's control. Unlike traditional fantasy role-playing games (RPG's), the characters in this game will have personalities and characteristics other than those related to strength and fighting.
* The characters will, in addition, have "initiative" (i.e. they are capable of acting without the command of the player.)
* The game will be heavily story-oriented, and therefore less puzzle-oriented. There will be a great deal of exploration to be done before reaching the end of the Journey, which is a quest into a strange and unfamiliar land.
* The game will use none of the traditional substrate from previous Infocom games; input and screen-handling will be done in a novel and keyboardless manner.
* The game is designed such that conversion to an audio-capable medium will be straightforward and desirable. Graphics will be included in the game as appropriate to the target machine; they will be used primarily to enhance the "sense of place" of the game.
* The game will include some variant of on-line hints which will be helpful for players; however, the intention is to make the game far easier to use than previous Infocom games.
* The story-oriented, keyboardless nature of the game is designed to be more presentable to a mass-market audience, while retaining enough gaming interest to attract present Infocom customers as well as players of other fantasy RPG's. Combined with the use of graphics and the ready adaptability of the text to audio, this game can be viewed as "CD-I ready"; the same would be true for any other medium with a similar range of capabilities.

Additional design documentation and a partial prototype will be available at the time of the "design" milestone as described in the contract addendum.

Journey: Issues and Answers

1) What are the puzzles like?

   The word "puzzle" doesn't accurately describe the interaction. Since many of the choices available to the player are story-oriented (especially in the first level, i.e. first four stones), the player may or may not even perceive them as puzzles. Presumably, most players (if not all) will be able to survive the first level without too much trouble, though they may have gotten one or more characters killed by their carelessness or poor choices. The puzzles in the later part of the game would be more difficult.

   Among the "puzzles" in the current prototype are 1) making judgment calls, often based on information received earlier, 2) finding an appropriate combat stance and strategy in fights, and 3) interacting with characters so as to get the most information/advantage for your party.

Since this game is substantially new, I could not say for certain what all of the puzzles might be. Presumably, there will be input from testers, imps, and others as the game proceeds through development.

2) What level of graphics support is needed?

I am shooting for about 100-150 graphic images, which would average about 20% of the screen, or about 25 full-screens worth of images. Depending on what the testers, etc. say, I can imagine this being plus-or-minus 25% or so. The only graphic effect I asked Chris for is the ability to "fade" from one image to another (of the same size.) This is not critical, but would add "sexiness" to the presentation; at the least, fade to/from black would be nice. Other than that, the XZIP specification will be enough.

By the way, I sent Chris a file (<CLR>JOURNEY>THINGS) about a week ago which indicated the "system" oriented stuff that JOURNEY needed (not only graphics, but windowing, scripting, etc...)

3) What sort of play time will there be?

Since there will be multiple ways of succeeding in this game, I believe that Journey will be much more replayable than other Infocom games (i.e. there will be lots more to see and try.) I envision that it would take 2-4 hours to get through the first part (finding the first four stones.) I would estimate the same additional amount for the 2nd and 3rd parts for a total of 6-12 hours.... Additionally, there will be time for replay, and this will likely be quite variable. In a CD-I version, play time would be increased, due to the difference between time required to read and time required to speak the same or similar text.

4) How big?

I am planning on having the game be in the 210-256K range, at the moment. It could easily get larger, but the technology for multiple-disk games appears not to be at hand, and I'm not inclined to jeopardize the timing of the game on a hope and a prayer. In addition to the game, there will, of course, be graphics, the size of which would better be determined by Chris and his tools staff.

From: Marc Blank

I just re-read your last message regarding future games, and I wanted to add the following:

I'm interested in doing whatever will do best in terms of selling games; taste and winnage for fun and profit, and all that...

A collaboration is fine, but let's not wait six months hoping one will come along; now is a great time to start laying groundwork. My goal is to have another game a bit earlier in the season than Checkpoint, and this should be no sweat. I'm more than willing to COMMIT to a schedule of 9 months from start to Dysan (Checkpoint will be 6.5 months, so this is pretty trivial; clearly faster times are also possible.

Overall, I want to be a high-quality, high-reliability supplier of games, and I hope that the Checkpoint experience has and will continue to bear this out.

Regarding "ground-breaking", naturally I'm interested in doing this; every game I've been involved in has added something new. As to genre, I'm more than happy to hear suggestions from you, but I can obviously come up with my own, if you have no preference; maybe Mikie has an idea.

I'd be interested in a two or three-game deal (doesn't matter much to me). As I mentioned earlier, I believe that an initial advance for the multi-game aspect is reasonable as it commits me for a longer-term exclusive IF deal, with a Checkpoint-like deal for each game as they are approved. I consider the advance, by the way, a sign of your commitment to me; it is the reciprocal of my commitment to you in terms of time and talent and willingness to do what YOU want done (as opposed to the attitude of many Imps).

Twiddles: I mentioned previously the idea of sharing phone expenses over a certain amount to fairly share the burden of getting things done on time (Checkpoint has required a bunch of daytime calling, but I believe it has paid off for BOTH of us.) I suggest $4000 as the point at which sharing occurs.

Another possible twiddle is the advance itself, which I would prefer to see increased somewhat, but not

necessarily a lot. You know, not only has the game gone well in terms of schedule, etc., but I have also invented real-time and other hacks (including hints), and gave valuable ideas about on-line bug reporting. I guess I'm saying that I have value over and above the games themselves, and perhaps more so than other outside imps in terms of knowledge of the system, etc.

Sorry to waste so many bytes; all of this is negotiable, of course. I just want a fair deal and the chance to work hard to make the best games for our mutual benefit.

Send back ideas, comments, etc. Thanks

Subject: Re: Hi

From: Marc Blank
To: CLR

Re: phone lines - working now, don't know what the problem was. Sigh.

Here was my idea, for what it was worth - all negotiable:

We enter into a multi-game agreement (2 or 3 games, perhaps) in which I agree to exclusively produce computer IF for Infocom.

I would like, perhaps, a 10K advance for signing the deal (i.e. for the long-termness), followed by a more typical deal for each title accepted by you (i.e. money in the same range). This provides some cash for the development of new titles and discourages trying to kludge something together that might be less than optimal, though acceptable.

I would agree to produce to completion within 9 months of signing the product agreement, the finished (Dysan-ready) game; we've seen already that I'm pretty reliable at producing games under pressure and on-time.

I have no problem with a collaboration, though depending on who/what, I would imagine it taking a little longer for reasons beyond my control. I presume we would have to modify the royalty structure somewhat, which is ok in principal, so long as the advance isn't affected (since it's for work done...)

Date: 13 Jul 1987 1056-EDT
Subject: Re: Hi

From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
To: MARC

Hi,

We are still very interested in further games from you. The main issue is what genre make sense for the next game and are you still interested in possible collaborations? I asked Cindy Weiss (PR person) to look into spy authors. No response yet.

The real-time stuff in SPY is a good hack and will serve to differentiate the game. It would be optimal if your next game (or games) also broke similar new ground (either genre, technological or collaboration). Send me any current ideas you have for future games.

As far as the deal is concerned, are you looking for a contract to cover multiple games? What kind of other twiddles are you interested in?

Finally, your modem lossage seems very similar to problems I have when my phone line gets excessively noisy. Is that a possibility? Do you hear static when you make voice calls?

Cheers, Chris

p.s. We ran SPY on the Atari ST (one of the working XZIPs) and it seemed to work. Not so lucky on the C128 and Apple II but should work soon.

Date: 17 Jul 1987 1650-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Product idea… To: MARC cc: jon, prof

Definitely an intriguing idea. Any idea how much they would want? Keep up the consing of ideas.
—chris

Date: 21 Jul 1987 1546-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Hi etc. To: MARC

Some further thoughts on the multi-game contract:

1. A signing advance of $10k should be no problem.
2. Due to the uncertainty of the market for any game these days, we would not be comfortable about raising the per game advance at this time. If it turns out that your games continue to be wildly successful in the current market, we'll be more flexible. Unfortunately, we won't know that for a while.
3. We need to see the total phone bill situation for Checkpoint before we can make a decision on modifying that part of the deal. Do you know what the total is likely to be at this point?
4. Something to keep in mind about collaborations. Obviously, we are only interested in doing collaborations if we believe the collaboration will add significantly to sales. The more the collaboration will add to sales the higher royalty we're willing to pay. In a situation where an outside developer (such as yourself) is collaborating, the maximum total royalty we can pay is 15%. Presumably, any decision to collaborate that makes sense for you, the collaborator and us would have to yield enough revenue for all parties to do at least as well as they would without the collaboration. However, in a collaboration, we would not lower your advance since that is payment for work done in some sense.

I don't know if that last paragraph made any sense at all. It does imply that if you collaborate with the Firesign Theater we must believe the additional sales will merit a higher total royalty and you must believe that higher sales merit a lower royalty.

By the way, so far contacts with intrigue writers have not turned up anything yet. Such a collaboration probably doesn't make sense for the next game.

Oh well, comments? -Chris

Date: 21 Jul 1987 2023-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi etc. To: MARC

More comments:

1. Adjusting game #3 advance based on prior performance should be doable if we can invent a formula.
2. Phone bill hacking: some flavor of protection seems to make sense. Maybe something about if getting the game out in a timely fashion is going to cost more than $4000 and both parties agree that it is important, we enter phone bill splitting mode. The cutoff could be different than $4k but you get the idea.
3. Depending on how we think a game will do we can adjust advance up to a total of maybe $100k (45 you 55 them). I am not as familiar with Firesign as others here are so I'm not sure how high we would go in that case.

I need to talk more to others (Joel, Mike, PDL, Steve etc.) to try and get a sense of how a Firesign game would do. My fear is that they may not be known to a wide enough audience. Any data to the contrary would be appreciated. Yours in hacking, Chris

Date: 23 Jul 1987 1628-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: NEXT PROJECTS… To: MARC

I haven't given it much thought, but here's what little I thunk:

The Zork universe, as I understand it, was defined as it was written. It was fun for the writers to create the universe, and add to it, and it was fun for us players to learn about it, and exchange lore, and recognize or remember the rules that govern the universe. It might be fun for writers to create a different fantasy universe, and for players to learn about it.

Specific examples: there are no grues, say, so darkness isn't dangerous and players don't need a light source. The Tolkien-inspired bits, like geography, might be more Oz-like. Treasures are less "traditional" (gold and silver, etc., or scrolls) and more in tune with the universe (for some unknown reason, dried flowers or bits of string may be highly valued).

Again, I haven't thought much about it, but I didn't think of it as being BZ-like. Instead, like Zork, Hitchhiker's, and LGOP, I think of a free-wheeling, anything-goes environment. There aren't any rules in place, so the writer can make up whatever rules he wants to as he goes along.

This is the development agenda, in approximate order (but of course you know how unreliable schedules are): Beyond Zork (10/87), Spy (11/87), Sherlock (1/88 I think), Confetti (Berlyn's game, serious of course, non-puzzle-oriented — 3/88 we hope), Shogun (by PDL, 6/88 we hope), Restaurant/Hitchhiker's II (6/88 we hope), something by SEM (6/88 we hope — many of us are meeting next week with SEM to help him decide what he should do next), something by Amy and something by Jeff (both around 9/88 we hope). And, of course, something by you.

Neither Amy nor Jeff (nor SEM) has decided on a next project. I wouldn't worry about your choosing something "too similar" to what they're doing. Chris and I (at least) will ensure a diversity of games.

Need I remind you that the paragraph before last is extremely confidential? Please keep it to yourself.

Have I answered some of your questions? By the way, if you WERE to attempt the creation of a new universe (which others might want to use), I'd recommend a bull session with the Imps.

This may be related to Journey:

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1323-EDT From: Captain Bug <GARY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion To: MARC

1) FIGHTING MONSTERS USING TACTICS.

2) BUILDING UP CHARACTERS

3) FOLLOWING CLUES TO THE SOLUTION OF A QUEST.

4) LOTS OF SPELLS/MAGIC ITEMS TO PLAY WITH WORST:
   1) USUALLY TEDIOUS TO BUILD UP FIRST LEVEL CHARACTERS
   2) FIGHTING MONSTERS GETS BORING SINCE USUALLY SAME OLD MONSTER.

I've now come up with about a dozen pages of notes regarding the new RPG game, and I figure it will be about 12 months work (as opposed to the 7 that Border Zone will have taken when it's done). This is due to:

1) New I/O system and user interface
2) Multiple characters, etc.
3) All new mythology, etc.

On the good side are:

1) A game appealing to RPG fans; we've all noted that *Bard's Tale* has sold 250K+ for both games, *Might & Magic* has sold 40K units just on the Apple II in the past 6 months, etc. The game has high potential if done well.
2) Start of a series which, if successful, will reap large rewards in the future.

What I'm getting at is that this game will require, probably, nearly twice the effort as the previous one, though I feel that it could payoff an even higher multiple than that AND has the chance of being a great success both in terms of games sold and Infocom's image.

Please consider with Joel, Mikie, and whomever, the issue of the advance for THIS particular game (it needn't become a precedent for either follow-up games or other non-RPGish games.) Not only will there be a game to show for our efforts, but hopefully also a series of others, as well and tools to make them available quicker.

I'll speak to you later about this; I thought you should know what's being considered at this end. If it's too ambitious, it's clear that a game could be done in less time and for less money (though I believe that even with a higher advance, the game will cost less and have less hassles than with most internal Imps.)

I believe that the experience with Border Zone has shown that I am capable of delivering (at least) as much as was promised, on time (in fact, must earlier) and with few headaches. I'd like the opportunity now to go the next step for out mutual fun and profit.

Date: 1 Sep 1987 1138-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Contract To: MARC

Joel and I discussed the contract issues and have the following counter proposal:

1) Advance 67,500.
2) Graphics and/or sound. Infocom and you mutually agree on what has to be done. The sense is that if the cost is relatively low, you pay (via additional advance). If it the cost is higher, we share. The main point is we can't spend your money without your agreement (and visa versa).
3) Bonus of $2500 if done on or before 9/1/88. This is the only bonus structure. It doesn't really help to get the game earlier than that and basing the bonus on weeks seemed too detailed.

We agree on the rest of your frob. Let me know your reaction to this proposal. Thanks. -Chris

Date: 4 Sep 1987 1406-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Contract, etc. To: MARC

We agree to $70k advance. Our view is that newly-generated input/output/data-structure is covered by 3b as being enhancements to development system. The increased advance covers your increased time doing this extra work.

Reducing the "nothing happens" effect:

Date: 14 Jan 1988 1529-EST From: Cajan Lope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey, etc. To: MARC

It's interesting: I was discussing magic just yesterday with Bob Bates, whose next project is a game based on Arthurian legends. He said that he found it very frustrating in the Enchanter series when "nothing happened" when

he cast a spell. ("Frustrating" is the wrong word; "disappointing" is the right word.)

In Journey, at least, you can reduce the disappointment by not making the spell an option at all times. To prevent telegraphing the solution to the player, you can make spells available often if they do something interesting. Very important: "interesting" does not mean "helpful." Certainly give players the option to "cleesh" another character anytime; seriously, why not? It's fun. (I'm using old spells just as examples, you understand.) On the other hand, "rezrov" might be available only if there's a locked object around.

So the story proceeds. Suddenly "rezrov" is an option, and the player thinks "Ah! A locked object is about! I'd better rezrov it!" But the object might be a locket worn around a maiden's neck, or a zipper; in either event, casting "rezrov" is embarrassing and interesting but unhelpful.

Another possibility is keeping the available spells two levels away from the player. Instead of seeing "CAST" as an option (a very tempting option), the player sees "READ"; amongst the things the player can read is a spell book, and within the spell book only interesting spells are legible. Frankly, I don't think this does a lot: it increases tedium.

Some amount of "nothing happens" may be inevitable, and a small amount isn't catastrophic.

Date: 15 Jan 1988 1623-EST From: Cajan Lope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: Marc cc: Jon, CLR, joel

I just received your invoice, and passed it on to Joel. He wants a couple more things from you before we pay you the $15K advance:

1. A written summary of the story (this needn't be more than a couple of paragraphs)
2. A brief description of the player's experience (does the game have multiple endings, is the tenor of the puzzles different, etc.)

We (Chris, Joel, and I) feel this shouldn't take you long to do at all, and it will help Joel and Chris in their understanding of Journey, and also assure them that you have thought through these issues.

If you have any questions, or if you have a problem doing this, please call me or Joel directly. Thanks.

Date: 19 Jan 1988 1423-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Questions and Answers To: MARC, JON cc: JOEL, clr

Thanks for the info. One further thought:

I think (please discuss with Chris) that given the number of pictures required, we will be forced to use more than one disk, even on the PC. Therefore we must develop a method to handle multiple disks cleanly and you should then be able to make the game longer if it makes sense to do so.

6-12 hours of play time does not seem long enough for a (presumably) $49.95 game. Do you think that there is a sufficiently compelling reason to play the game repeatedly once all stones have been found to get it closer to, say, 30-40 hours or should the game be longer in the first place?

Date: 19 Jan 1988 1222-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: continued from previous message… To: marc

[Grumble, grumble. I wanted to change something I had just written. Reflexively, I hit the uparrow key which could me out of text creation mode. Then I tried "EDIT TEXT". Would you believe I ended up in EMACS? I didn't even know we had EMACS on this computer! Who knows how to use EMACS?]

As I was saying, there are just a few more points that I think need clarification?

1) What are puzzles like in Journey? Maybe give a couple of examples.
2) What level of graphics support will you need? How many and what type of pictures? Any special animation effects?
3) How much total play time should the average player get?
4) How big will the final game be? How many disks?

The rave reviews roll in...

Date: 20 Jan 1988 0943-EST From: Alan J. Cope <JON at FRED>
Subject: "Neat" To: Marc

Remember I said your game is "neat," to which you responded "As in tidy? clean? well-groomed?"

In The Maltese Falcon, the Fat Man tells Spade that he had Miss O'Shaughnessy, and the falcon, trapped aboard the steamship La Paloma, but she managed to slip away. "It was neatly done, sir," he chuckles appreciatively.

And so it is with Journey. It is neatly done, sir.

Date: 21 Jan 1988 1649-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: LIZ

I've looked at Journey and I think it's sexy. Like an frp but better story. Interested in seeing more and more.

That's about it in testerland. We've been trying to learn more about frps as a group, because up to now only Gary's been a player. And if we're going to join the forces, testing needs the experience to critique, etc..

Sigh. That's about it. I'm looking forward to the products that are supposed to be in testing soon, because this whole new world of graphics seems to be something that will perk us up.

Date: 28 Jan 1988 2055-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: DA

Thanks for your comments; I don't know what version made it down to the PC (I assume you played on a PC...), so I'm not sure what places you've been.

If you have any ideas, specific comments about places/"puzzles", etc. please send them along. I'm feeling my way through this, and I need all the comments I can get.

BTW: If the version you played was downloaded before about Tuesday, there are a few places you haven't seen (in the caverns.)

Oh, one other thing: how long did you play with it before you think you saw everything?

Date: 28 Jan 1988 2101-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da

Another thing: it's not possible at this time to get the game to script; that's another reason I need comments (I can't see what you did/didn't do!)

Date: 28 Jan 1988 1034-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: marc

I guess I have been everywhere you can go so far. Very fun. I have never read Tolkien(?) but know of it and this reminds me of that place and style. (I did see the movie.) It seems a very natural extension of IF but doesn't seem like IF at all.

Really cool. Now stop reading this mail and write some more!!!

—Wood

Date: 29 Jan 1988 1916-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: DA

By the way, I notice that you were playing on the 20. I'm not sure if you know this, but the keyboard interface isn't near its final form and it's a lot kludgier than using a mouse...

Date: 31 Jan 1988 1655-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: DA

I was thinking that if you've got any puzzle/scene ideas for Journey, let me know. I'm on the lookout for good material!

Date: 9 Feb 1988 2253-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: DA

There's a lot more to see, if you want to take a look at Journey. If you do, PLEASE use the GAME command, then the CONTROLS command, and set Scripting to ON. That's the ONLY way I can see how the game played and thus, what things you've tried.

Clearly, many CONSULTs, SCOUTs, and objects don't exist yet; that doesn't mean you shouldn't try them, since it is sometimes useful.

Have fun.

Date: 9 Feb 1988 1748-EST From: Mr. O'Jezebel <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Greetings To: MARC cc: JOEL

Just fine, thank you.

BTW, your info about graphics looks reasonable. Before your artist gets started, we owe you some technical specs.

Date: 11 Feb 1988 1415-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: GAYLE

There is a lot more stuff in Journey now, if you get a chance to try it. If you use the 20, please make a script. To do so, use the GAME command, then the CONTROLS command, select scripting ON, then DONE to return to the game. This messes up the screen a small bit, but that can't be avoided for now...

Date: 16 Feb 1988 1113-EST
From: Alan J. Cope <JON at FRED>
Subject: I'm Back
To: Marc

I'll try to play Journey myself. Would you rather I play on the 20, so you can read my script? I WON'T be playing today, but I will definitely play by the end of the week. I'll ask Hollywood, Gayle, and JD to play if they have time.

I recall that I promised to collect the Imps' opinions of Journey for you. I'll do that too.

I just talked with Joel, and he thinks I'll have to spend 75% of my time this week on Infocomics (sigh), and divide the other 25% between Journey and Restaurant (an outline just arrived from Michael Bywater). I'll try to give Journey as much attention as I can.

Date: 16 Feb 1988 1405-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Scripting in JOURNEY
To: JON, GAYLE, DA, JOEL

To start a transcript (and PLEASE do so if you're playing on the 20), just hit a Control-B at the first (or any) prompt. An awful lot simpler than the other way....

Date: 16 Feb 1988 1457-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Sigh…
To: JOEL, DA, GAYLE, JON

New! Improved! You can now just type JOURNEY to your exec to run the game; also, autoscripting is on for hassle-free game play.

Date: 19 Feb 1988 1500-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Issues
To: JON

I'm compiling a list of questions/issues for people who have played with Journey for a while. Feel free to add to it - it's in <MARC.X> JOURNEY.ISSUES.

Date: 19 Feb 1988 1128-EST
From: christopher o. erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Welcome
To: MARC

made it as far as the ellipsis on the 9th day at the tower

here are a few suggestions that I have:

1- The text refresh needs work (the way it scrolls up) it is very distracting: once again this might be the fault of the hardware rather than the program.
2- The first fighting sequence appears to serve no purpose: nothing is gained (information or goodies) and the bandits simply flee after a few rounds. Why?
3- Is there some way for the player to save significant text (such as map at beginning, dream sequences, etc.): or are these not significant to completing the quest?
4- Players have no idea (in inventory) of the gold they have on hand: they appear to be able to buy anything they want with no problem.

5- After lake I could not back-up to re enter cave if i chose to.
6- How's the legend for the forest coming? Also; when I examine the amulet it simply says it's blue.
7- Perhaps a legend (or graphic at the beginning) might be helpful with regard to the 4 stones, 'the two' and the anvil that the wizard speaks of in the tower: if you mentioned it earlier I lost it somewhere.
8- That same Zip20 bug continued to happen at the same location: is this the only aggressive encounter planned?

All in all I'm really impressed with the 1st person narrative concept of this: and the plot is enjoyable. If possible could you mail me a flowchart (or storyboard) of the entire scenario to facilitate tracking? It would be a great help. Also, feel free to call me direct: my extension is 301.

Keep me posted
Christopher

Date: 20 Feb 1988 1332-EST From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
Subject: hi To: marc

Hi marc.
I've already played Journey a little. I like it a lot, especially the independence of the characters. I haven't seen any disks floating around here lately, but when I do, I play it some more.

Date: 23 Feb 1988 1341-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: So… To: DA

Have you hugged your Journey game today?

Journey will have three parts to its story:

Date: 23 Feb 1988 1530-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: TESTER.JOE cc: TYLER, MARC

Oh, sorry. JOURNEY is seen as the first part of a series. The Part II I refer to (and everything I refer to in JOURNEY) is still within the JOURNEY scenario (i.e. the game JOURNEY will encompass what you've seen plus a Part II and III, though not necessarily described as such in the game.)
Part I is the search for Astrix and the three minor Stones; it ends when you've been to the three major areas (caverns, high country, and forest) regardless of how well you've done. If you've found the three, then the second part begins.
Part II (as I see it, though subject to change) will be the search for the Two, and Part III will be the search for the One.

Again, this is all subject to change depending mostly on the comments of people like you.
My long-term view was that the sequel would follow this group (with some changes, perhaps) on some assault upon the evil to the north.

Back to Part I: if the two of you discuss the game, you'll probably find that there are things that one or the other of you haven't seen (hermit, Sunset Tower, warren, and Dark Presence come to mind) One thing I'm trying to figure out is how important this should be in the later course of the game...
Please write back with comments. Thanks.

Date: 23 Feb 1988 1647-EST
Subject: Journey

From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
To: Marc

Thanks for the info.

I think the 2nd and 3rd parts should definitely take place on the same planet. Since the will probably not involve the Nymphs, Elves, and Dwarves, they should not take place in exactly the same rooms. Half the fun of playing is exploring new turf. I Don't think that finishing part I should get one beamed to part II. Tyler and I were discussing the idea of putting a door to part II somewhere in the part I setting - maybe make it a puzzle? - this would integrate the parts more and be fun too.

A good way to beef-up part I could be by making it so that the player has to experience everything in order to finish the part. The player who finishes without solving all the puzzles could either not know they exist, or not want to go back. By involving all the puzzles Part I could be beefed up using as little space as possible and in the process tie together the geography.

When playing part I, I could not help but feel that I was being guided. Sometimes it was because I had only one option, other times it was because I did have more than one option, but the others were short dead ends that left me frustrated. Perhaps replacing some of these "busy" options with more productive ones, or adding them if there are too few.

I finished the game in 3-4 hours. plus one bug filled hour in front of an IBM once. I think completing the game and seeing everything you wanted to are one and the same. The game is a whole lot of fun, but I couldn't see my self sitting down and replaying the finished product.

I think that the puzzles should be harder and should involve more interaction among the party members (i.e. Praxix levitates Tag who drops the rope.) I think that the puzzles in part II should require info gotten in part I. The implications of what was done in part I should weigh heavily in Part II.

Date: 23 Feb 1988 1732-EST
Subject: journey

From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
To: marc cc: joe at FRED

Joe's letter pretty much sums up my comments on the game, but I was just thinking about the issue of making every puzzle/place necessary to the completion of the game. When I read your suggestions for the second time, it seemed as though you might be suggesting that in the second and third parts of the game, your party might have different bonuses according to how much of part one they had solved. I think that's a great idea- it would integrate the whole game. The main thing I feel about puzzles/geography is that it should not be gratuitous- everything should have some purpose, even if the end of part one can be reached without seeing everything.

Date: 23 Feb 1988 1522-EST
Subject: Journey

From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
To: marc

I just finished part I!!! I'm unclear on what your format will be. The title page says that this is part I of a trilogy, the 2nd part that you mention in Journey.issues is not the second part of the trilogy, but rather the second part of part I. Will part II have the same characters? perhaps 10 years later? If you can tell Tyler and I what those plans are, we can better address your questions.

Date: 23 Feb 1988 2017-EST
Subject: Journey

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: GAYLE

This would be a good time to play for a few hours, if you have the time. Comments are badly needed; also, the later I get input, the harder to maintain my schedule! Of course, if you haven't got the time, then that's ok.

Questions to be Answered:

I. Should the 2nd part be in the same geography as the 1st or should they story take you to a strange new land?

II. Should I "beef up" the 1st part (i.e. more to do with elves, dwarves, etc.), even if it means taking away from the latter parts?

III. What improvements would make the first part more enjoyable?

IV. What is thought of places like the "warren" in the forest and the "far end" of the caverns, which pose problems but which are NOT needed to successfully finish the game (i.e. if you don't see them, it's currently OK.)

V. How many hours of play did the first part take? Including all replays? In other words, how much time would you spend with it before you've 1) finished successfully and 2) seen everything you wanted to? Do you consider the story replayable? Is it fun?

VI. What improvements to the keyboard interface make sense for the poor mouse-less player?

Date: 24 Feb 1988 2021-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: It's 9PM; Do you know where your Journey is? To: DA

(No message was sent, just the header.)

A game-stopping bug is discovered:

Date: 24 Feb 1988 1300-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc cc: tyler

I'll send you comments on writing/interface later, after I've completed Chapter 1.

But for now- I'm just writing to tell you that there's a game-stopping bug in the forest, specifically in the river area. Once you're on the river, the game seems to get trapped in a sort of endless loop, where you are forever approaching the falls, but never reach them. (see my transcript, #4). Had to quit to get out of it.

Date: 24 Feb 1988 1530-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc

I just finished part 1! Here are my comments on writing/interface (I will be sending you separate message with some new criticism/bugs/suggestions).

I think the interface/concept is excellent- a really fine departure from the traditional Infocom I.F. In some ways, this new system is truer to "computerized" fiction than traditional IF. It reminds me a little of those "Choose Your Own Adventure" books, where you read a page of the story and have to choose from two to four pre-written options. The drawback to this type of IF is that it's more fiction and less interaction. But if you think about it, most FRP's almost completely lack player interaction. (they are all menu driven.) I don't know how die-hard Infofans will re-act this, but I think it has the potential to move IF into a whole new area. Really- I see a lot of potential for variations on this interface.

I like that you've presented the story in past-tense, making Journey seem more like a story than a game. The writing is really good and well-planned as far as smoothness and consistency are concerned (of course-there are still a lot bugs in this area—what i mean, though, is that the existing transitions between path segments are smooth.) You have captured the "fantasy" tone really well without being overbearing (no "thee's" & "thou's", thank god). Occasionally, though, you are prone to some hackneyed fantasy prose- some examples that come to

mind- “The Old Forest of legend... of wives’ tales and fairy tales” and “We laughed long and loud for the first time that day.” Also, stay away from inverted sentence structure. The main point: you have written this in a style that captures the essence of fantasy without the tiresome psuedo-medieval banter that appears in other games- so my criticisms are aimed at the points where you depart from that style.

That’s about it. I really like the game- it really has a lot of potential. I think, too, that it’s the perfect game to have illustrations- because it’s like a fairy tale. Oh- that reminds me- something else I wanted to say- that I like the places where you have multiple responses for the same action- for ex- if Praxix casts a levitation spell that annoys someone, the next time he does it they respond differently, etc (Actually that’s not a very good example but I guess you know what I mean.) I think the way to plan this out is as if it were being printed out while it was being played, and that if someone were to read the transcript, he would find a coherent storyline.

Date: 24 Feb 1988 1601-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc cc: tester.joe, tyler

Okay, will do. For now (get ready!) here’s a bunch of things I jotted down while playing this afternoon.

First thing- I found another crash. It’s not fatal, though. I didn’t get a chance to make a save where it occured, but my last transcript is #8. It occurs in the Dwarven caverns near the orcs (you have a choice of goin g right or left- and right is the “eerily glowing” passage.) If you go right you a Zip 20:

```
Warning in COPYT: Destination out of bounds
WPRINT: ?CCL14/ COPYT BUF,CL,LEN
WPRINTD: ?CND1+4/ CALL WPRINT, STACK/A
  STACK/ -22906492246 A/TEXT WINDOW
```

The rest of this will just be random observations:

- when a RESTORE is made, it would be nice if the last screen of the save is shown, since the player may not remember where he last was.
- in the same vain, perhaps you could have some kind of location name appearing in the status line.
- the day doesn’t always change when you sleep- I’ll try to catch this when it happens in the future and let you know. But watch out for that.
- oftentimes, the options you have are inconsistent: for example, when you’ve left the tavern and gone past the fork in the road, there is no way of getting back to the tavern (no BACK option).

Date: 24 Feb 1988 1102-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: Marc

I played a bit this morning. I REALLY enjoyed it!

A few notes:

1. Occasionally the narration doesn’t acknowledge the fact that I chose an action through a particular character. For example, when I selected Esher to examine the lake, or Praxis to examine the hut, I read a purply but objective description of the lake or hut — as if I had selected TAG to do the examining. Shouldn’t it at the least say something like “Even Esher was impressed with the lake” or “Praxis wrinkled his nose disdainfully to hide his fear”?
2. After Esher was bitten by the snake, I chose to split up the party. The text said “‘I [Bergon] shall remain here to tend to Esher’ ... But Esher would not leave, preferring to do what he could to keep Minar comfortable.” Obviously a mistake, probably easy to fix; perhaps in another scenario Minar was bitten by the snake.

3. When Praxis is at the bottom of the tree-stump hole, he can go "Up" or "Head back." I was confused at first; I figured up WAS heading back (since he came from that direction). I figured it out, but you may want to try making it clearer that "Head back" (in this instance) means "Proceed on a new path that happens to take you back where you came from."
4. Similarly, on the 6th day, when Praxis looks at the map, he says "The path is ahead of us and to the left." I was unsure whether I should go left here, or first proceed and THEN go left (the latter was my guess, and I was right, so it's not a big deal).
5. At one point I looked at the top of my screen and noticed that it said 1th day. I haven't felt any significance to the passing of time.
6. When Praxis examined the rune that said "Prison" (after Hurth had already done so), there were TWO "Enter"s under the Party commands.
7. In the Sunset Tower, we saw the Sunrise Mountain, in which we hoped someday to meet Astrix. But we had already met him.
8. "Consult" still seems mostly useless.

I DID enjoy "playing." It has a very different feel, and even though I saved before trying dangerous actions (as I've been trained to do), I never restored. I think that's a good sign: whatever happened didn't seem "right" or "wrong," but sustained my interest so that I wanted to go forward.

Good job, so far! I'll speak with you later.

Date: 24 Feb 1988 1623-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc cc: tester.joe, tyler

Okay, got your last message. Here's some other notes:

- two options that would make the game more interactive are TALK and USE.
- On the standard responses for the spells (when they're not needed)- in some situations they are really inappropriate, like when you're on the raft trying to save everyone's ass, and Praxix seems to be having some good-humored fun. Maybe you can have 2 sets of defaults: one for "peaceful" situations, and one for dangerous ones.
- at the present time, the EXAMINE option is sometimes broken. For example, when you are at the fork in the road after the tavern, for some reason, Esher has no options, so you can't examine the map.
- Is there going to be a system of money? Although I haven't tried it yet, I noticed the SELL option when you are in the store.
- related to last one: any limit on spells- I notice that sometimes a spell will disappear from the list after it's been used successfully, and others don't. Not that I'm a fan of the D&D method of spell points. But will there be a explanation as to how magic works in the JOURNEY universe? Can new spells be acquired?
- Praxix should have a legend on Wizards; I'm intrigued by the idea of Wizards being a RACE- perhaps he could explain that. (and how magic works).
- also a legend and description of ORCS. I like you've done with Dwarves and Elves- very original concepts in this age of D&D imitations.
- structural bug I noticed- I'd been to fight the orcs to get Minar back, and was forced to retreat. On our way out, we heard a scream, which was implied to be Minar's death throes. Yet, I returned to same spot later, and re-fought the orcs, won, and rescued Minar, supposedly dead. Also, there didn't seem to be any recognition/ implication of having been there before- it was as though we'd just arrived.
- one more plot question: Tag has a mysterious dream about a bird in the beginning of our quest. He implies that he found out why later. Will the answer to this riddle appear in a later chapter?

Date: 25 Feb 1988 1013-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: Re: By the way… To: MARC

No, I'm not a fan of computer RPG's, although I've been playing a lot of them lately, since Infocom is exploring that area.

But in my young teens I used to play D&D, and I loved it. But what I liked about it was the story, puzzles, etc. I always found combat dull, unless the monsters were cool.

I've read a lot of fantasy though (Ursula K. LeGuin, Tolkien, Marion Bradley, etc.) so its not like I'm hostile to the genre. It's just that I'd like to get away from all the dumb hack-n-slash stuff, which to me, plays up the worst aspects of D&D and drops the best altogether.

Date: 25 Feb 1988 1722-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc

Read your legends on orcs and wizards- perfect-esp Wizard tale because it ties game together more.

A few more questions:

Why is Minar's initial description so disagreeable- I haven't found a path that leads me to be believe there is anything mysterious about him. How does he know that we are in great danger? Why does he want to join our party?

By the way, there are a lot of places where a character suddenly commits an action who is either dead or not in the group. Do you, at this time, want these specifically reported?

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1641-EST From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 60 #3 Other To: MARC

With regard to general comments: I enjoy the narrative style of the story: I think it adds, rather than detracts, from the storyline. In playing without a mouse I find that it is tough going with arrows through the menu: whenever I travel over a blank spot in the menu I need to remember where I left off. Maybe a way of jumping to activated commands would be useful (such as directly from cast to defend without the two spaces between).

All in all I'm excited by what you have done so far. I'm looking forward to the ellipsis and discontinuity disappearing; so I can follow the story through. Is it possible for implementation of a save file (text file) of how the user has done up to a given save: so that at the end of the game he could print out his own short story that he created determined by the paths he chose for the story? Just an idea

Date: 29 Feb 1988 2126-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Keyboard Input To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

Arrow keys will now skip over null (empty) commands, thus saving some keystrokes. All arrow keys now wrap within the given command area (party vs. individual.)

Report strange occurrences, as usual....

Date: 1 Mar 1988 1020-EST From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 60 #3 Other To: MARC

Exactly… The script feature would allow (as I understand it) a runtime text dump: I was thinking of a text file which saved only the actions: specifically in short story narrative mode such as the storyline. It might be a

interesting marketing ploy in that users could then exchange stories, compare, etc.

Will take left fork to end of story and get back to you. Hope to do it before I'm out next week

Date: 1 Mar 1988 1505-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 70 #8 Other To: GAYLE, JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

Regarding your "cursor wouldn't move" problem...

Did you try to move the cursor with arrow keys or with the space bar? Remember that space bar is the best way to move to the individual commands area.

Date: 1 Mar 1988 1658-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 70 #11 Other To: GAYLE, JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

I don't understand what you're saying.

Date: 1 Mar 1988 1801-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [GAYLE at FRED: JOURNEY version 70 #11 Other] To: GAYLE

I am completely confused by this.

Date: 1 Mar 88 1628-EST From: GAYLE at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 70 #11 Other To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.GAYLE.4; file pointer 25226

During the whole wood elf/Esher-healing scene, the command screen was changing and presenting new options. But I wasn't able to use any of the commands because I had to scroll through text first. Commands should remain constant, unchanged between "moves." (Do you understand what I'm trying to say or is this all just jibberish? Let me know if I'm being unclear.)

Date: 2 Mar 1988 1558-EST From: Amaranthine Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

Yes, I have played a little of it, and plan to play some more. You've really got the Tolkienesque atmosphere down well (I hope, intentionally) and I find the story intriguing. If it looks sexier on the micros than it does on the 20 (no problem there) I think it could be a big hit.

Date: 3 Mar 1988 1504-EST From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 60 #3 Other To: MARC

Your right: the left fork is worth exploring further. My gut hunch is that this technique you are using (narrative mode) is going to knock their socks off when it's released. This, I think, is going to be big.

How's the text refresh problem going: if I remember correctly, this was a language problem (or is my senility showing???). Does the text still refresh if it is ported to a micro?

Also, have you given any thought to implementing a version of this on either Compuserve or the source (Mons the graphics)?? Might be good P.R. for 'JOURNEY' if we dumped a mini-journey into something like compuserve a few months after release... Just an idea.

Look forward to meeting you in person in approx. a week.

Regards, Christopher

Date: 3 Mar 1988 1642-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Graphics
To: JON

I'm beginning to think that my graphics person is down to 50/50; could you move at all toward showing your guy (the Zork0 person) the game and seeing if he can help?

Date: 4 Mar 1988 0905-EST
From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 60 #3 Other
To: MARC

I agree on the pre-release P.R. Along with CES perhaps a leak at the MacWorld expo in San Francisco (mid-April); or another direction entirely: perhaps book publishers/distributors along with the computer people. Justification is that this might have a broader base of appeal than strictly gamers; and I think we need to let other factions know about this. Ah, the joys of having something truly original to blast the market wide open with.

Don't know if you have talked with Stu Galley about windowing on ZIP: he has an action item from me to get me an estimate of when it will be implemented.

Thanks for the lead to talk with Mike Dornbrook. Will look into it.

Date: 7 Mar 1988 0851-EST
From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi!
To: MARC

"Hello yourself, and see how you like it."

Yup, enthusiasm here for Journey is high. I've watched people playing it, and look forward to a real Alpha version.

My project (code-named Timesink) is also chugging along. Cardinal Toolbox is proving to be much more flexible than I'd been led to believe; and the C development system I'm using is spoiling me rotten. These machines are EVIL, Marc.

Laurel's fine (did you know we got engaged?).

Joel announced that CD-I was dead at our last company meeting. He brought back a fat folder full of DVI literature. Comments?

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1424-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Hi
To: JON

Things are moving along here; I'm most of the way through the first part of the second part (i.e. the 5th stone.)

Chris E. and Gayle will be here on Saturday, presumably to be discussing Journey. Chris claims to have found a good graphics person and sound person at Activision.

Is it at all clear how responsibilities are dividing up between the two of you in this sort of thing? It seems a little confusing from out here.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1426-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Schedule To: JON

By the way, here's my tentative schedule...

3/15 - Stone 5	7/1 - Beta
4/10 - Stone 6	8/1 - Gamma
5/1 - Stone 7	9/1 - Xemag
5/5 - Pre-Alpha	10/? - Ship
5/10 - Alpha	

Does this sound about right to you?

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1614-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Keyboard Input To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

It's now possible to select object names by using the first letter of the object's name.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1717-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 99 #14 Game-stopper To: DA, JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

Regarding unable to move cursor over to Individual Commands - have you tried space-bar??
By the way, I can't imagine where the bug is, how you got it, what you were trying to do, etc....

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1719-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [DA at FRED: JOURNEY version 99 #21 Other] To: DA

Probably the game just didn't check whether he was around anymore.
There are probably a bunch of bugs like this...

Date: 9 Mar 88 1700-EST From: DA at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 99 #21 Other To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.DA.2; file pointer 53327
Yow! With Hurth in the lead, we continued into the dark caverns. Hurth is dead. Maybe my game is munged at this point.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1722-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 99 #14 Game-stopper To: DA

Oh, yeah, they're linked to the script. On the other hand, the stature of the screen display (what's up, what you've tried to select, etc.) can't be part of the script.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1725-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Tell ya what… To: DA

Why don't you QUIT out of the game (so I can read the script) and restore back to your current point (uh, I guess you'd better SAVE first...)

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1727-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 99 #14 Game-stopper To: DA

Space bar is the only defined way of moving between windows. Right arrow will work IF there's a legal command to the right of the cursor. This is a side-effect of "improving" the interface such that the cursor isn't allowed to move over an "empty" command.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1735-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [DA at FRED: JOURNEY version 99 #19 Comment/suggestion] To: DA

No, it's pretty evil but it's not the evil one. I suppose there might be another option, but you can't fight this thing, only stop it.

Date: 9 Mar 88 1646-EST From: DA at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 99 #19 Comment/suggestion To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.DA.2; file pointer 50906
I think I'm near the Evil One in the dwarf tunnels. The place where the light is dulled. We are only given one choice—Back at this point. Seems a bit too directed. I've been in the game awhile. If it is the Evil One, let me go in if I want to—and get killed I assume.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1739-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: OOPS… To: DA

Stupidly, I deleted the script of your I wanted to look at! I'd appreciate comments when you're done playing (general stuff) since I can't look through what you did and ask specific questions... Sorry.

More on Journey's three parts:

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1845-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: DA

There are three stones you can get in Part I (which is all you've seen.) It seems you've gotten two of them, which means you haven't gotten the one from the Dwarves - more to do in the caverns, then....

The intention was to make the first part easier than the next two (which are in development.) I wanted to make it such that NOBODY could die without first seeing a lot of the story.

The 2nd and 3rd parts should be somewhat harder to finish, but who knows? The first part of the 2nd part (ie. the 5th Stone) will be in an early but viewable stage by next week.

I'll re-read your message through again later; I agree that the Elves and Nymphs are similar - I should change that! Any ideas are welcomed here, as elsewhere in the story.

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1840-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: marc

Okay. First, its kinda buggy so following the story was rough sometimes. But it maybe I'm not used or don't totally understand how to use the cursor.

I really liked the swimming in the caves, after what's his name disappears into the lake. Real fun exploring, seeing what your mind has created and comparing it to what I expected to see around the next "corner".

Some things seem very easy to me. I'm sure I'm stating the obvious. When I saw the Build raft and the swift current I knew right away to go up stream and build the raft. When a careless elve(?) started a fire I knew to help them and they would give me the amulet. This is of course after I was given the amulet by the dwarves. I saw a pattern developing. Maybe too predictable.

There did seem to be a pattern with Minar (I think). He disappeared in the lake and also was captured by the orcs (I think). He seemed to be the bait or ticket to adventure. Meeting the elf and meeting the nymph (in the cave, is that a nymph?) seemed quite similar. They were both friendly. Maybe too friendly.

I think most of the reason both incidents seemed the same was because you could hide or greet them. (Kinda dumb, I know). Maybe meeting the nymph should be a little different. Maybe she is a bit stand offish at first or is tending to Minar when you pop up in the pool and startle her. She reacts in a somewhat defensive manner. Something a little different.

I really like the exploring. The interface on the 20 really SUCKS. Hard to stay in the story mentally. Because its in the first person and I sorta feel like I'm getting away with something by reading this guys private note, I don't want any interruptions. Anyway I really like exploring, maybe I like it more then most people. I don't think you could just have a game of exploring for most people, but you could for me. Of course the first-person prose helps a lot.

I did want to draw a map. At first only because I wanted to test every branch, so with a map I could tell where I had been. But later, I kept getting into parts I had already been to, so I wanted a map to avoid them. My map wasn't very good so I think that's why I went to parts I had already seen.

It is very fun. And quite easy. I think the challenge will be making it last a long time. I think I got pretty far for the time I was playing. But I'm not exactly an novice.

I need to play again with a good map so I can get to more of the game. Briefly I: Escaped the prison with dwarf and fought the orcs and got the amulet. I crossed the river and met the wizard. I met the elf and she gave me an amulet after I helped put out the fire. And I met a nymph.

Is there a lot more? Are all the stone in there?

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1736-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Jon, Chris, etc. To: JOEL

I'm a tad confused about the roles of Chris and Jon regarding Journey. Can you illuminate me?

Date: 9 Mar 1988 1833-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jon, Chris, etc. To: MARC cc: JOEL

1) Jon is responsible for Journey.
2) Jon and I asked Chris to consult with you because of his FRP knowledge and because you seemed in need of more feedback than Jon could immediately provide (due to the Infocomics crunch).
3) Chris, being very gung ho, is probably going further in the interest of being helpful than is either required or expected.
4) If you encounter any particular problems, talk with Jon. I'll mediate if necessary.

Date: 13 Mar 1988 1529-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Chris, Journey, etc.
To: JON

It seems that Chris considers Journey to be HIS project, which runs counter to Joel's message to us regarding roles, etc.

I have no problem at all with Chris' helping out (e.g. he's found a graphics person and a sound person at Activision who he likes.) I'm a little worried about how certain he is about his role in managing it.

I would appreciate not getting in the middle of this; it would be best if you didn't mention my sending you this note but rather felt out the situation with Chris.

Date: 14 Mar 1988 1922-EST
From: My Bright Sugar <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: marc

I started playing it in more earnest today. Very favorable first impressions. However (there's always a "however") there are a couple game play things that I find frustrating:

1) The limited menu has its advantages, most of which are preferable to its disadvantages. But, for example, (this is the only real menu disagreement I've had so far) Minar becomes the "scouter" instead of Esher, after he joins the group. But I didn't trust him yet, so I still wanted Esher scouting, but, because of the menus, I couldn't. Seems a bit too tight. Also a bit nit-picky at this stage of testing.

2) You REALLY need an UNDO option! Frequently, faced with the options of Proceed and Return/Head Back, I would Proceed one step, intending to head back in a sec, to discover that at the next step I couldn't Return. An example: the choice, after the V'ren saves Esher's life, of Bergon's Route, Praxix's Route and Elf Home. I was curious what the Elf Home was, so took that — and was unable later to find a route to take me back to look for Bergon, caught in the Snaketrees. If SAVing was less messy, I might not mind as much, but Undo would be better; that or more entangled geography, so we COULD go back to find Bergon's (probably dead by this time) body the next morning.

I like the menus as an alternative to IF, but I think I'd prefer them with more power (I might be a minority on this). So, maybe you could have Esher on AUTOMATIC scouting, so the player doesn't have the tedium of telling him to do so all the time. A WAIT option would have been nice when the brigands were starting to defend themselves — to see if they'd renew the attack and kill us, or run away (you do use STAND later). Another approach is more variation (perhaps crucial) to the EXAMINEs between Esher's description and Praxix's. Now it seems to make no difference who looks at what — if it's the wrong person, the right person takes over and does the right description for you, so why bother offering the option of the wrong describer?

Otherwise, and in the main, I really like the new approach to both the gameplay and the storytelling.

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1941-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Fighting.…
To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

Fighting has been greatly simplified in terms of interface (i.e. it's interface is the same as in the rest of the game.) It may be buggy, but that's life...

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1157-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey
To: SWG

Thanks for the comments. Menus are indeed somewhat tricky in combat; this will be changed later.

I'm very resistant to Undo; I feel it undermines the whole idea behind the interface and story design - that there's no reason to save/undo because the story will continue no matter which path/decision you make.

If you play more and have more comments, please send them along.

Date: 15 Mar 1988 0922-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC cc: SWG

First impressions: I like the multiple viewpoints. I miss the "freedom" to make up my own commands; or maybe I don't like it when the story moves on to a new locale and there's no apparent way to back up (maybe Undo would help); or maybe I just wish the menus had more commands in them. However, I think the "granularity" is satisfying: I'm glad that the story proceeds in chunks that are not nitpickingly small (as in "You can't look in the box until you open it.").

I found the past tense disconcerting in "Brimstone" (Synapse) but not so much in "Journey" — maybe I'm getting used to it. Menus are sometimes tricky, especially for combat: I hit down-arrow (mouseless that I am) to select the next character, and inadvertently changed his strategy too. Cheers!

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1059-EST From: My Bright Sugar <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

As to 2), I disagree (your feeling that I shouldn't get another chance to look for Bergon when I choose Elf Home instead). One has to be more forgiving with a menu system, I feel, because two word descriptions don't always explain the options clearly. The reason I chose E.H. was partly confusion, caused by the lack of explanation of the possible choices:

I had just briefly followed "Bergon's Story," then "Praxix's Story," then back to Tag meeting V'ren. Suddenly there was a menu of choices unlike any I had seen before:

Bergon's Route Praxix's Route Elf Home

I reckoned that perhaps this meant I could jump back to "Bergon's Story" or Praxix's, or see what V'ren was doing (thinking "Perhaps Elf Home meant 'follow the elf home'"). The previous 3 sub-stories had all returned to the same chronological and geographical point; this would, too. If Elf Home wasn't what I expected, I supposed, I could change my mind then and have the party search for Bergon (not realizing I'd be shoved into a rather linear little sub-story).

Now, Marc, I have only played through this scene once, so I'm obviously not up to crack on all the possible alternative routes. I also see a lot of the Infocomics mentality in my approach. On top of that, you could argue that I should have just SAVEd, which isn't THAT painful. So, I grovel at the base of your terminal. If this is the only case I run across, I'll stop complaining.

Testily yours, Amy

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1204-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC cc: SWG

Maybe what I want instead of Undo is a way to Review (as on a dictation cassette) what just happened in the story but has now rolled off the top of the screen. In an adventure game, I would just LOOK again to help evaluate my options.

Date: 15 Mar 1988 1806-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc

You must only read the real books. The stuff I ingest is half and half. I think, why else would this text seem so different to me?

Maybe it's IF mindset, (but strictly in my defense) I think it's natural to feel misgivings when a door closes behind you. This is a new approach, and I was just a little surprised when I couldn't retrace my steps.

If you give me a hard time over everything, how'll I ever get to report anything? You're a funny guy.

Date: 21 Mar 1988 1634-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Forests… To: DA

I'm writing another section of forest; do you have any good forest ideas for puzzles, etc., that you'd like to see?

Date: 21 Mar 1988 2103-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Talking Tree To: DA

Amazingly enough, I have a talking tree in this section (actually, it isn't REALLY at talking tree, but it sure seems that way!) I like the waterfall idea; if you've got more, let me know. I'm hoping to have the second part of the game done within two weeks. Thanks again!

Date: 21 Mar 1988 1758-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Forests… To: MARC

Well... I have always liked a talking brook or tree. You know, like in the folklore of Hercules and those guys. My first inclination is to have the talking brook or tree ask you something, but there isn't anyway for a player to respond (right?).

Here's a really stupid idea...consider it food for thought:

You hear a humming noise coming from the east. You follow the sound to a brook, where the sound changes some what to that of a voice gurgling water. Laying in the brook is a recently fallen tree. You move the tree and either the tree or the brook start talking—giving you some kind of info.

Not a very hard puzzle, not much of one at all. But kinda neat, huh? Well, it is food for thought. Maybe you might want to read some of that Hercules stuff for ideas.

Actually, maybe it isn't the brook that talks, it might be a waterfall.

Date: 23 Mar 1988 1228-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 163 #44 Other To: GAYLE, JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

Thanks for the note. I'm happy and sorry that you're leaving Infoco; happy for you, sorry for Infocom. From what Mikie says, it sounds like a great opportunity. Congrats!

Date: 24 Mar 1988 2050-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: GAYLE

Chris says you're working on a creative focus for Journey. If so, why don't you give me a call so we can talk about it.

The first discussions of Journey versus Infocomics:

Date: 28 Mar 1988 1723-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: ERHARDT

Gayle, on the phone, said that you've described Journey as "an all-text Infocomics." I believe that such a description is the kiss of death for the product, and I'd be in the upset to angry range to hear it so described, especially to people on the outside, including Activision.

First of all, the most interesting quality of Infocomics is its comic book style of graphics. An all-text Infocomics sounds like an all-text comic strip - boring and pointless.

Second, Infocomics are not interactive, they are voyeuristic. The story cannot be changed; it is an almost entirely passive experience. Journey has dozens of puzzles, paths too numerous to count, various endings and results. Apples and oranges.

Most important, the market for Infocomics and Journey are greatly different; telling an Infocom player (or an RPG player) that Journey is somehow like an Infocomic is a lost sale. Period. The fact that Journey has a limited range of options is entirely like current RPG games (which have a very limited set of commands,) and very similar to Infocom's current games (which appear to have more choices than they really do.)

On the scale of interactivity from one to ten, with Infocomics being a two and Infocom's current line being a nine, Journey is most likely a seven or an eight. If you must compare Journey to other things, why not compare it to RPG games which are much closer in spirit.

Sorry to flame on about this, but you've touched a nerve here. If, in fact, you didn't say what has been attributed to you, accept my apologies, but take what I'm saying to heart.

Date: 28 Mar 1988 1807-EST
From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey
To: MARC

straight from the horses mouth here is what I said. I said that Journey could best be compared to the current line of Interactive Fiction as if it were the graphic novel of Infocomics. In no way was this meant in a derogatory manner: rather I hope I was showing the high regard with which I view the Journey concept. As you will probably agree, there is no way of actually describing Journey (part of the reason Gayle is writing her creative focus): therefore I used my 'Graph Novel' analogy to represent the first person interactive presentation of the storyline.

Date: 28 Mar 1988 2142-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Part II
To: JON, JOEL, MD, ERHARDT, GAYLE, ELIZ, TYLER, TESTER.JOE, DA, AMY, LIZ

Part II of Journey is available for pre-pre-alpha viewing. It can be reached two ways: by finishing Part I (the legit way) or by cheating, using the Part Two command at the opening set of commands.

Note that the Part Two command will put you into part two with four characters (optimal) but without having

seen the hermit in part I. This ends up causing a death in the party, sad to say, but the whole 2nd part can be played to completion (at least, I hope so.)

Comments, etc. are greatly desired.

Date: 29 Mar 1988 1005-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Double your pleasure, double your fun To: Marc cc: Erhardt, Joel

Christopher and I would both like to continue working on Journey.

Christopher's involvement so far has been extremely useful and fruitful. Given that he's lined up the artist for you, and that he's on the road more frequently than I so will see you more often, and that he's so damned knowledgeable about the spectrum of computer games, it makes a lot of sense for him to stay involved. As for me, I'd like to stay involved because I like the game so much, because I think I can offer you useful specific input, because I'd like to work with you, and because I'd like to work with Christopher.

Since you know what my job is as much as anybody, you know that I perform triage every day. Thus I attend to the sick and dying in hopes of making it well (not to mention any comic-book-like products or anything) and leave the healthy and robust Journey alone. But, understandably, you want feedback, even if it's reassurance. Well, I honestly believe I will be able to play Journey, and give you feedback, starting today.

Christopher and I have no trouble working with each other — I don't feel like he's stepping on my toes or usurping my turf or anything. If YOU don't feel awkward working with both of us, then let's give it a try. We'll just have to make sure details don't fall through the cracks because of wrong assumptions. ("I thought YOU were doing that!") Let me volunteer to write the first draft of the instruction manual (which, by the way, I think should be much shorter that an i.f. or RPG manual).

Let me know if you have problems or misgivings about this ambiguous approach to project management. I just thinks it makes sense for both of us to stay involved at this point.

Date: 29 Mar 1988 1211-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Double your pleasure, double your fun To: JON

All that's fine with me; the more people taking an active role, the better. I would be disappointed if you weren't involved. By the way, you should play some more if you find the time...!

Date: 29 Mar 1988 1915-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: What?? To: DA

You're not playing Journey? Get with it!

Where to provide hints?

Date: 30 Mar 1988 1452-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hints To: MARC cc: ERHARDT

I strongly believe there needs to be SOME way in which players can get hints. I'm not opposed to "standard" on-line hints (a la Border Zone) unless you think that would be way too space-consuming for the benefit.

At first, I was going to suggest that you provide hints only for the most likely bottlenecks. But when I started to list what those were, the list got pretty long: getting the four amulets, getting out of prison, dousing the forest fire,

crossing the chasm in the stairway... I'm sure there are others. Still, that may be the way to go, and NOT beef up the hint section with fakes or for-your-amusements.

Date: 30 Mar 1988 1714-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: JOURNEY To: MARC

I'm confused by the section in which Praxix get separated from the party. What is the tree? Who is Umbar, and did they really meet? What are the ruins, and on the other path, what is the machine? And why do they leave so quickly once Praxix gets rescued, ending the game?

Date: 31 Mar 1988 1242-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: JON

Have you finished the first part yet? Do you need help (after all, there will be hints in the real thing...)
I'm leaving in about an hour (for the weekend: Passover, etc.), so get back soon if you do. Alternatively, Tyler has finished the first part (and much of the 2nd.)

Date: 31 Mar 1988 1256-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: pt 2 To: marc

There aren't too many general comments I can offer at this point since the bulk of my comments on part 1 can be applied to Pt 2. I like the puzzles in this chapter (even tho' they're buggy right now) and I also think that there is a greater sense of movement in this chapter. I often get confused with what's going on, though. I don't know exactly why- maybe you just need to spell things out a little clearer (like-explanations for why we leave one area for another, maybe little reminders of what the quest is all about- sometimes it seems like I'm just wandering through each section without thinking about what I'm doing.) It will be easier to make comments on the story line once I've completed this chapter.

Date: 31 Mar 1988 1306-EST From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hints To: MARC

I think the hint concept is sound: but presentation should be in a manner constant with the 1st person narrative mode: an example might be hints from particular characters which are suited to their own personalities. I strongly lean away from typical on-line hints for this game. Another option is graphical hints (which can oftentimes mislead as well as help)

Date: 6 Apr 1988 1431-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey, pt 2 To: marc

Just finished this morning. My main criticism of part 2 is that right now it's very buggy. For example (it seems to me- I haven't fully checked this) if you heal Bergon immediately, you can't access the mines, so you lose. Also the problem (which you know about already) with adding Umbar to the party when you've already got five members. You could probably get around this by allowing Umbar to take you downstairs and give Praxix access to the stone even if he won't be joining the party.

It seems to me that part 2 is shorter than part 1. Also, part 1 seemed more exciting- there were more characters, more geography, and in general part 1 had unexpected twists while retaining a coherent plot line. To be frank: I don't like part 2 as much as I liked part 1. It needs beefing up in terms of alternate paths (of which part 1 had many) and also in terms of purpose. What I mean by "purpose": It often seems like I'm being led around arbitrarily without making a decisions myself. It is of course, necessary to the structure of this kind of game to lead the character around; the trick is to maintain the illusion that the player is making the decisions. A suggestion for testing this quality: if one would simply to hit return on the obvious defaults throughout the game and still win- then the player is not truly making decisions. Which is a messy way of saying that the game needs more puzzles that can be rationally solved, instead of just selecting what seems obvious. The snaketree puzzle seems to fall into the "rational puzzle" category and there should be more like that. (Even though I initially criticized it- I was in "default" playing mode, and couldn't deal w/ a real puzzle when I saw one.)

Parts I liked- Praxix defeating the orcs- although the geography-dealing with the cross-passageways—seems a bit confusing. I also liked the part with the tree in Umbar- at least, I'd like if it were beefed up more. It seems funny. We need more info on Umbar, though. Also- whatever happens to Bergon in the Orc camp? Even if they've gotten both stones, it seems that they should get to Bergon and try to rescue him before returning to Astrix. Bringing us to another point: I don't think you should "win" automatically by getting both stones. You have to get back to Astrix, so maybe a couple more pitfalls could be thrown in along the way (the orc-camp for ex.). That's all for now- is there more specific things you'd like me to comment on?

Date: 6 Apr 1988 1522-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc

yeah, maybe "default" isn't accurate. But there are some very obvious choices that approach being simply defaults. Also- I didn't say that part 2 was -easier- than pt 1- but it doesn't seem as exciting-it somehow seems simpler. I like the puzzles involving reagent, etc. I'd just like to see more.

Date: 7 Apr 1988 1538-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [TESTER.JOE at FRED: JOURNEY version 219 #148 Other] To: tyler, jon, erhardt cc: liz

FYI (see also my reply which should be the next message...) Any comments are welcome.

Date: 7 Apr 88 1413-EST From: TESTER.JOE at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 219 #148 Other To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.JOE.11; file pointer 74610
I should be able to enter the cleft as many times as I want. Why can't I go back to the new mines? The game kicks out after I go into the cleft twice. This is a frustrating restriction.

Date: 7 Apr 1988 1537-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [JOURNEY version 219 #148 Other] To: TESTER.JOE at FRED cc: journey-bugs at FRED

Herein lies a crucial issue! For Journey to read and feel like a story, it is necessary to disallow the sort of back-and-forth movement that other Infocom games allow. In terms of a story, it seems unlikely that the heroes would cover the same ground twice, unless some new information or plot twist allowed for it. In terms of telling THIS story, what should Journey reply on the 3rd, 4th, and 18th time you enter: "We entered the mine again for the 18th time, but there was nothing there, just like the last 17 times?"

This same device is used throughout the story, almost from the word "go". If you've got

some idea of how to allow another entry and make it seem interesting, I've got no problem. I just don't want people bouncing around the geography.

Any further thoughts are appreciated.

Date: 7 Apr 1988 1630-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Progress To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

Many bugs fixed; Part Two is far more playable.

Discussions begin on when Journey can ship:

Date: 11 Apr 1988 1623-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Journey schedule To: Marc, Liz

Okay, so I forgot. Shoot me.
When do we expect Journey to go into alpha?
I am still expecting Journey to "need" a shorter-than-usual testing period. Do either of you expect otherwise?

Date: 11 Apr 1988 1803-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [Journey schedule] To: JON cc: JOEL, ERHARDT, LIZ

I'm expecting "full" Alpha by 5/10 at the latest, Beta around 7/1, Gamma 8/1, and Xemag 9/1, with shipping near 10/1.
I suppose we'll see how much testing it needs; I guess that the schedule is doable (I still think graphics will be the weak link in the chain.)
>From this end, I'm committed to doing what it takes to keep on schedule.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1231-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: [re:mail] To: MARC cc: LIZ

I'm meaning that the three scenarios are complete in terms of puzzles and storyline, and implemented. Also, I don't think it should go to beta people until the graphics are integrated. Do you agree? If the schedule became so tight and we really needed the input, it could probably be sent out as text only, but ideally I'd like to have all elements for beta testing.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1301-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [re:mail] To: LIZ, JON, JOEL

Well, I'm against anything that delays shipment of the product. Most people seem to like the game without; I think it's unreasonable to expect graphics by the beginning of July. I think as long as they are there for Gamma (i.e. some outside testing), it will suffice. After all, it's not as though the pictures will require lots of testing.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1759-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [JOURNEY version 3 #178 ZIP20/crash] To: JON

I can't imagine what this is; if you ever see it again, let me know.

Date: 11 Apr 88 1017-EST From: JON at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 3 #178 ZIP20/crash To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.JON.6; file pointer 44059
Praxix is stranded on island with Umber; when Praxis returns to Courtyard,
I get a ZIP20 Warning in GETP: zero object. WPRINTD:?CND1/ GETP OBJ,P?SDESC
WPRINTCHR:?CCL3+6/ ICALL2 WPRINT,CHR CHR/ 0
H;; ZDDT ...
WPRINT:?CND1+4/ CALL WPRINT,STACK,A STACK/ 0 A/ TEXT-WINDOW

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1143-EST From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: [JOURNEY version 219 #148 Other] To: MARC cc: TESTER.JOE

Tyler and I were discussing this. Just as you need a plot twist or new information to go BACK somewhere, you should also need new information as a reason to NOT go back somewhere. In the case of the cleft, give the option to go back in a third (and last) time but have someone feel that it would be detrimental to Bergon's health. In the case of the hole let the reader try and fuck around down there for a couple of turns but have the whole (cistern?) cave in on whoever's down there. It makes the reader feel that it's not the game that's stopping him/her but rather the situation in the story. The reader should never think it's unfair that he can't go back somewhere but rather that the consequences of his choices disallow it.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1044-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: re:mail To: marc

The schedule you propose looks right. My only concern is that when you say "full alpha", you're meaning is that all three scenes are intact. That's what I'm expecting, and that's what I intend to be alpha. The interpreters will most likely be the hitch in the plans. Currently, I believe only the Mac interpreter will be ready. However, if your beta is planned for 7/1, there's a good chance that you'll be "safe" re: outside testing.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1231-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>: re:mail] To: MARC cc: LIZ

I'm meaning that the three scenarios are complete in terms of puzzles and storyline, and implemented. Also, I don't think it should go to beta people until the graphics are integrated. Do you agree? If the schedule became so tight and we really needed the input, it could probably be sent out as text only, but ideally I'd like to have all elements for beta testing.

Date: 19 Apr 1988 1557-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Schedule To: JON

Are we in sync on the Journey schedule these days? My sense was

Alpha 5/2 Beta 7/1 Gamma 8/1 Xemag 9/1 Ship 10/1

Is this about right? How do graphics fit into this schedule?

Date: 19 Apr 1988 1636-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Schedule To: MARC cc: jon

My schedule matches yours, except I thought Alpha was 5/10, not 5/2. No matter.

Graphics: How did your meeting with the artist go? Tim thinks the Mac and Apple II interpreters will be ready for in-house testing around mid-May, with the IBM interpreter maybe a month later. Given that some debugging will be necessary, I'd say Journey beta around 7/1 is believable.

Am I correct in assuming that the graphics will not be necessary to play and/or finish the game? If I'm correct in that assumption, then we can begin beta "on schedule" even if the graphics aren't completely done or if the interpreter is buggy in putting up pictures.

Date: 19 Apr 1988 1756-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Schedule To: JON

What you say is correct; graphics will enhance the mood, but won't add anything important. If the Mac interpreter is ready in mid-May, that means it's possible to have the demo Chris and Mikie were talking about at CES in June (Journey on the Mac with about 8-10 pix ready.)

My 5/2 date for Alpha may be a little optimistic, but that's the date I'm shooting for; I'm now about halfway through the 3rd part. If I only knew how the game ended…

Date: 22 Apr 1988 1515-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: AIM, CD-I, etc… To: MARC cc: JOEL

Fine idea. Do you, by any chance, know the dates of the meeting?

BTW, we still expect to be able to demo graphics software at CES on the MAC and possibly Apple II. Of course, they probably won't be fully debugged.

Date: 23 Apr 1988 1822-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey Preload To: JOEL cc: liz, duncan, jdarnold, marc, jon

I remember telling you, at some point, that Journey would be much less of a memory hog than our other games, making it (most likely) quite a bit faster on the lower end machines.

Here are some interesting statistics:

	Size	Preload
Journey	190,000	12,000
Zork Zero	220,000	54,000
Beyond Zork	260,000	48,000

It should be interesting to see how it runs!

Date: 23 Apr 1988 1700-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: JON, ERHARDT, LIZ, JOEL

There is a "pre-alpha" version of Journey which is ready to be tested. Actually, I believe it is an "alpha" version as described in my contract ("a version ... in which the geography and all puzzles are substantially defined, the story is substantially complete…")

In fact, just about everything's there; there's some fleshing out to be done, but that's alpha for you!

Sorry that I've gotten this done early; I never have been one to follow schedules! Have fun!

Date: 25 Apr 1988 0847-EDT
From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hints
To: MARC
cc: ERHARDT

Your hint mechanism sounds good. Unfortunately, I can't think of any way to put in a "For Your Amusement" section. (I do NOT consider that a major problem.)

Date: 25 Apr 1988 1618-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

Aren't all those things in "Have You Tried…" ?

Date: 25 Apr 1988 1206-EDT
From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: pt3
To: marc

I think I just finished PT3- I'm not sure I got the optimum ending or not- I landed on the wizard's isle, and Astrix gave Tag the One. I found PT3 pretty intriguing- the plot against our life, getting to poke around a town, etc- a good departure from the first to parts.

But I finished PT3 in about an hour and a half- at least half as long as it took me to finish the first 2 parts. The storyline is exciting up until we arrive on the Misty Isle- here the ending seems anticlimactic, because after all this travel and questing there is no climactic confrontation with evil, which, by this time, the player is certainly expecting.

PT 1 & 2 never reveal much about the Evil from the North- we don't really know what it is, person or group or thing— and the damage it is doing is described as being somewhat circumstantial rather than direct (sort of general bad luck on the southlands). The way the story is set up in 1 & 2, the reader is lead to believe that all will be revealed in the third part- the nature of the evil (why how & what is causing the blights), the nature of Astrix (which you do explain), what the anvil (mentioned in earlier parts) has to do with our quest, etc. There are still a number of loose ends.

Date: 26 Apr 1988 2109-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey Marketing
To: JOEL
cc: JON, ERHARDT, MD, ELIZ, MARC

For the record, I'd like to state my opinion about the marketing of Journey.

First, and most important, the game must be marketed aggressively. The entire campaign, from package design to ads to the CES presentation must make a strong impression. We can't say "Oh, we don't know what it is exactly, but people seem to like it." This would be the kiss of death for product sales.

My strong feeling is that we must attempt to bring both old-time Infocom players AND Fantasy RPG players to the game. If this proves successful, I can imagine selling 75,000+ games without much difficulty. If, on the

other hand, we come across with a mushy message, we could lose BOTH groups.

I propose the following:

1) Invent a category and a "tag" which clearly targets the two big market segments. I suggested the name "Role-Playing Fiction" earlier; I still believe it's the best name (certainly I've heard none better.)

   The argument against this seems to be "but it's not a role-playing game." To which my response is "So what; we're not calling it a Role-Playing Game - we're inventing a new title." The fact is that both IF and RPG players seem to like this game - what's wrong with being aggressive in reaching them. It would be different, by the way, if this name were misleading (which I don't believe it is; look how many games call themselves "adventures.") or if the group that bought it didn't like it (which they probably won't.)

   The goal is to get these two target groups to pick up the package and look it over. Let's face it: calling it Role-Playing Fiction will certainly get the RPG people to take a look. Once they've seen the package, presumably they'll understand what the product is like.

2) Make sure the package describes the product and has a beautiful screen shot on it. The screen shot will be very appealing to both groups, in my opinion. The description will help buyers distinguish this game from others they may have played (story, etc.)

3) In terms of the "storylike" nature of Journey, I think you could do worse than say "For everyone who loves Lord of the Rings" or words to that effect. My guess is that 85% of Infocom fans and 99% of RPG fans love reading fantasy - clearly, trying to tie Journey in with their own favorite stories can't hurt. This is why Hollywood likes the game, by the way - it reminds him of his favorite fantasy stories.

I'm sorry to go on like this, but I'm starting to get frightened that this product will get murdered by committee, resulting in a wishy-washy don't-know-what-it-is approach that benefits neither our customers nor our balance sheets.

Naturally, I'd appreciate any and all comments.

P.S. I forgot to mention something I consider very important. We should send very early copies, perhaps tied in to the CES stuff, to some select group of non-disclosured press (Bob Lindstrom and Keith Ferrell come to mind.) The best thing that could happen (and we used to do this all the time) would be to have (NO!) pent-up demand for the product when it is released, and lots of rumors and word of mouth. It sure does work for the Bard's Tales of the world.

Date: 26 Apr 1988 2129-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Hints To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

I have implemented HINTS for the first part of the game; the remainder will be in by late tomorrow. HINTS is only an option after an ending is reached and all hints are relevant to errors of commission and omission in the play of the game (i.e. different ones will appear depending on what you've done.)

Comments, as usual, to my attention. Thanks.

Date: 28 Apr 1988 1535-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics reminder… To: MARC

Hard to say whether 100 pictures will fit. They may.

In the King Arthur game, we're assuming most of the pictures will be about half-screen high by high-screen wide; that is, quarter-screen. Stu figures that such graphics are 160 pixels wide by 100 pixels high, times 4 bit

planes, equals about 8K. But we have can compress that quite a bit: how much exactly is unknown, and it depends on the picture, but on average Stu and Tim think "half" is safe. So 8K pictures become 4K; 100 such pictures would be 400K. No problem for an 800K disk, and probably no problem (space-wise) for two 350K (approx.) disks.

A concern I have is the aspect ratio of the images. On the 20 it looks like the area you left for graphics is taller than it is wide. I guess a standard ratio (for TVs and many other video displays) is 3 by 4. We don't HAVE to use a 3 by 4 ratio, of course, but it's pleasing to us. I'd guess square would be better than 4 by 3, say. What do you think? How flexible can you make Journey? (I recognize we wouldn't want to make the text window very narrow either.)

Date: 1 May 1988 2338-EDT From: Shinghatsubai <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: JOURNEY To: marc cc: md, jon, erhardt

general comments after a few hours play (please forgive any stream of consciousness within)

The quest is very well constructed and once drawn in, there is great desire to continue and find out what's next. I think the beginning needs work to draw you in sooner. My first revelation occurred at finding Garmilon (Garlimon?) but I'd already traversed quite a distance. The introduction of Minar is an opportunity to add some enticements into the story, as is the first combat with the thugs.

I love (LOVE!!!!) how easy the game makes it to play. Things like spells are very obvious as to when to use them (for the most part—I still don't understand far vision) like levitating in the Tower or out of the Dwarf prison. In the dwarf prison, it was great to see the response to drop the rope (Thinking we might be running around in circles, I SURREPTIOUSLY dropped the rope TO MARK THE PLACE where we had been). The game responds by telling you what you are thinking.

The universe seems to be very consistent and complete according to its own definitions.

I think its fantastic that no matter how stupid you are, you can't do anything that will kill you. The choose X, you try X or you think about trying X but but decide not to, and returning you to the previous point with one fewer option is neat.

more to follow at some point soon

Date: 2 May 1988 1056-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Fake Pictures To: MARC

It's described in ZD:PICS.TXT. If you have any questions, let me know…

Donald Langosy is chosen as the artist for Journey:

Date: 2 May 1988 1010-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: JOEL

I'll be in CA (northern) all week. BTW, you can feel free to leave me voice mail at 415-329-0800 x215.

I assume you know by now that Donald Langosy will be doing the graphics for Journey. He did an excellent job with Shogun.

Date: 2 May 1988 0914-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: More… To: MARC

The descriptions might be alright, but I'll show them to Donald just to be sure. My guess is that some of the "panorama" images will show less than what you're describing, but it's much better to give Donald more info rather than less. (By "panorama" I mean something like forest to the left, mountains to the right, a river on the horizon — that sort of thing.) Most descriptions look fine, though. Donald may be coming in today.

Date: 2 May 1988 1018-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: JOEL

We still expect to have something demoable at CES.

Re voice mail: All you have to do is call that number and then dial my extension from a touch tone phone, leave a message, and hang up. Incidentally, Infocom people with mail boxes there have the same numbers as their Infocom extensions. (I wonder if you still remember them...)

Date: 2 May 1988 1051-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: CES To: MARC cc: JOEL

All YZIP features except graphics should be installed before the graphics support is added. Therefore you/we should be able to check out everything except the pictures by mid-May. Of course, this will only be on the MAC (& maybe Apple II).

Date: 3 May 1988 1502-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
Subject: graphics To: marc

I'll be helping Jon and Donald Langosy with the illustrations. I read text file in <marc.x>. I guess Donald was having trouble with understanding about the point of view (or lack thereof) you had in mind.

My understanding is as follows:

Since you don't want illustrations for every location, you also don't want a given picture to be connected to a given room, i.e. when you leave the cave, you don't want to change pictures, and you also don't want the picture you have up to look out of place in the new location.

This would make overhead scenes and maps an ideal solution. But you can't use them everywhere. What else will you have? Just how room specific will a picture be?

When I get a reply, I will call Donald.

Date: 3 May 1988 1603-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Donald To: MARC

Donald shares your excitement about his artwork for Journey and really enjoyed talking with you about it. In fact, he's on his way to the library for books on the landscape around LA, so he can see what the environment you envision looks like!

We just bought an Amiga with a PC emulator, so I can bring home Journey disks. I'm sure we'll be playing the game a lot in the weeks ahead, and I'll keep checking with Liz to make sure we have the most recent version.

Date: 4 May 1988 2012-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: DA

If you want a YZIP version of the game, try <MARC.X>JY.ZIP; this has been observed to work in the YZIP on the 20. Let me know what happens.

Date: 5 May 1988 1421-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: YZIP vs. JOURNEY
To: MARC

YZIP does everything in pixels, rather than character positions. Does Journey? I have updated YZIP20 to reflect this fact, which probably breaks YJourney in all known cases. On the other hand, better to get it working as much as possible on the 20 rather than lose later, right?

The following summarizes the stuff that's impacted by being serious about pixelery. (Pixism?)

In addition to the junk below, notice that PICINF, DISPLAY, and DCLEAR now take/return args like CURSET (i.e., Y before X, instead of vice-versa.)

Date: 5 May 1988 1019-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: YZIP vs. Pixels
To: duncan, jdarnold, gandalf
cc: taa

In YZIP, several instructions whose arguments have sometimes been interpreted as "character positions" are interpreted as "pixels" instead. These include:

HWRD data word (screen height in pixels)
VWRD data word (screen width in pixels)

CURSET y,x	;input coords in pixels	WINGET (some slots)	;all position and size slots
CURGET tbl	;output values in pixels	WINPUT (some slots)	;ditto
SPLIT y	;size of screen 1 in pixels	PICINF p,tbl	;size of picture in pixels
MARGIN l,r	;size of margins in pixels	DISPLAY p,y,x	;location to display picture in pixels
WINPOS w,y,x	;location of window in pixels	DCLEAR p,y,x	;area to clear, location in pixels
WINSIZE w,h,w	;size of window in pixels		

As far as I know, only the IBM PC XZIP uses a pixel-based addressing scheme currently.

The reason for pixel-based rather than character-based screen addressing is to accomodate two possibilities; (a) different-sized fonts, and (b) variable width fonts. Fonts and font-sizes are per-window, rather than global to all windows.

I hope this doesn't screw you too badly. You can get little routines that encapsulate the opcodes and treat their arguments as character positions from the end of <A5>MISC.ZIL if you want.

One of the spells changes name:

Date: 7 May 1988 2139-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Spell name
To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

I'm looking for an alternate name for the Far Vision spell, since that name seems to be ambiguous, at best. I decided not to call it "Fireball" since that sounds like a combat command. Any ideas?

Date: 9 May 1988 1542-EDT
Subject: Far Vision

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

It's now called "Flare."

Date: 8 May 1988 1645-EDT
Subject: Journeying

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: MARC

I finally found a few minutes to sit down and play with Journey. Okay, I admit it. I'm impressed. If I weren't working on a Mac, I'd even be envious.

Once you turn off the useless graphics (which make the text box MUCH too narrow), the game is wonderfully easy to play. I figured out how to navigate the choices and lists without a glance at your docs. You seem to have struck a very useable balance between interaction and simplicity, and resasserted the expressiveness of our traditional all-text presentation. If I weren't deep into Timesink, I'd probably steal (er, adopt) some of your ideas in another title.

A few suggestions:

1. Leave a one-character margin on both sides of the text box; otherwise, the text looks too cramped, especially on dumb micros with blocky character sets. (Beyond Zork illustrates this.)
2. Bother Tim incessantly about the need for proportional character sets in the YZIPs. I gave up trying to convince him of anything (hence my Mac), but maybe he'll listen to you. A game with as much text as yours would really benefit, and the customers would love it.
3. Provide a mechanism for scrolling back the text box by some useful amount (1 boxful?). I found myself missing parts of paragraphs because of accidental keystrokes and/or laziness. Users of graphics-oriented machines expect scrollback in text windows.

Hopefully, I'll be able to play more once I can download it to a Mac.

Date: 9 May 1988 0909-EDT
Subject: Re: Graphics

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: MARC

We DON'T yet know how much room there will be on the disk(s) for graphics, so I don't know how "reasonable" a 130-140 total is. And I don't know how we'll handle machines with less memory — whether we'll have fewer graphics on those machines only or fewer on ALL machines for consistency. And I don't know when we'll know answers to these questions.

I know it's reasonable to pay Donald 30-40% more than originally estimated, and it's reasonable to assume it will take him longer to do more graphics.

When you say "either we limit the number severely (30-40) or we do it right," I don't understand where you chose the 30-40 range from. If you're talking about full-screen graphics only, then I understand, but of course, it's still uncertain whether THAT'S a reasonable number. And going to full-screen graphics sure screws up the look of the screen you had in mind.

All in all, I'd say this is not an auspicious beginning to Monday morning.

Date: 9 May 1988 1017-EDT
Subject: Re: Journeying

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: MARC

Will it sell? Show me the package and the marketing; tell me the price, the ship date, and a list of which

distributors we've wined & dined lately, and whether Mikie thinks it has enough hit potential to advertise. Then show me the interpreters; how they perform, how attractive they look, how much they "feel" like the machines they run on.

So many essentials are out of our hands!

Critics of Journeyvision will complain that it isn't interactive enough. (The negative reactions to Infocomics will fuel this sentiment.) The counterclaim must be that traditional IF isn't rich enough. By freeing yourself from worrying about POINTLESS interactions, you buy yourself time and space to improve the quality and quantity of the writing.

It's sad that the other Imps do not support what you are doing with more enthusiasm. Have mercy on them; Dave is stuck in a "collaboration" he has come to loathe, and Steve is the ONLY person who EVER played Beyond Zork with the maps and windows turned off throughout. ("Didn't understand them.") I'm a bit surprised at Stu; on the other hand, what you're doing certainly doesn't capitalize on the strength of our Z system; that is, the parser. At any rate, you're not alone in dealing with silent hostility. Steve, Jon and Tim have yet to show the slightest interest in what I'm doing; they won't even stick their heads in my door to look at the screen.

Date: 9 May 1988 1529-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: MARC

Having seen how the inverse-spaces window dividers look on the MAC, I'd tend to suggest that they be (a) bigger and (b) more decorative. The screen looks "clunky" if that's the right word.

Perhaps Donald can come up with something?

Date: 9 May 1988 1620-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journeying To: MARC

By "disabled commands," I mean that the SAVE, RESTORE, SCRIPT and QUIT commands in the Mac's standard "File" menu are disabled (greyed out), and don't do anything when you select them. The only way to perform these actions is to go through Journey's own menu system. Mac (and other) users expect those functions to be there, and will howl and stamp their feet if they're not available. (It might even cost you a mouse or two in your MacUser review rating.)

What's needed is some way for your game to know if one of those choices has been selected by the user. Previously, the ZIP just stuffed the appropriate text string (QUIT<CR>, etc.) into READ's input buffer as if the user had typed it himself. Since you don't use READ, some other means of communication must be devised.

Date: 9 May 1988 1630-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Mouse vs. Keys To: MARC

It does no harm to show the key default, even if the user is mousing. By a happy coincidence, the Standard Mac Interface (genuflect) specifies that the current "default" action can always be performed by hitting the return key!

Date: 9 May 1988 1530-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

How about a picture frame around the picture part? (Only semi-non-serious, here).

Date: 9 May 1988 1545-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journeying To: MARC

Just spent a few minutes with Duncan on Mac Journey. More suggestions:

- Inverse video looks icky on many machines, especially Mac. You may want to outline your windows with thin border lines instead.
- "Bold" typefaces look REALLY bad on the Mac and ST. Beyond Zork avoids them altogether when the host is a Mac. You may want to devise another method of highlighting menu choices on those machines, such as inverse video, color, or boxing.
- It would be nice if you could rename the members of your party. D&D people LOVE to make up their own names, or use those of their favorite campaign characters. It's a cheap thrill.
- Mouse-oriented machines usually provide some kind of visual feedback when a menu item is selected; e.g., the selection "flashes" on and off a few times before it becomes highlighted.
- A more flexible method ought to be devised for the host OS to communicate system commands to the game (such as SAVE, RESTORE, SCRIPT and QUIT). The usual mechanism for doing this (stuffing text into READ's input buffer) doesn't work with Journey because you never call READ. It's disconcerting to pull down the Mac's FILE menu and see all the game commands disabled. Same thing will happen on STs, Amigas and GSs.
- Is Journey flexible regarding the column width of the screen? I notice that the Mac version doesn't quite fill the entire width. (I won't even bother to raise the question of resizable windows ...)
- Have you got it set up so that users can use either mouse input OR key input, but not both? If so, why? If not, remind me to kick Duncan.

Please don't get upset over my hysterical flames! :-) I think the efforts made to make B. Zork look snappy on individual micros were well worth the extra CONDs. Of course, you may find it a bit hard to judge, being 3,000 miles or so from the micro room ...

Date: 9 May 1988 1623-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Mouse vs. Keys To: MARC

Why ask the user what he's using at all? Why not just accept both at all times?

"Modes are the devil's work."
— Cardinal Toolbox

Date: 10 May 1988 1146-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: More Journeying To: MARC

Spent some time last night playing Journey on my Mac at home. Pardon my ignorance as to how far along the project is (or is assumed to be) at this point, and for not knowing what intentions you may have already announced.

- Tolkien is doing 78 RPM.
- The raft sequence is a good type of puzzle for this format. Requires some, but not too much, thinking; plenty of clues; and a chance to save yourself if you're screwing up.
- What's the right thing to do with the orcs in Part One? The first time, I flanked a character around to sur-

prise them, but lost the fight, and the wizard took the big dive. Your "Musings" implied that I'd done the right thing. So I tried again, flanking a different character. Same end, same "Musings." Am I missing something?

- Are the characters going to have different perspectives when they EXAMINE the same object, varying effectiveness when FLANKing, etc? These features are so obvious and desirable that I assume you just haven't gotten around to them yet.
- At many points, it seemed that your selection and highlighting of menu choices were telegraphing "the right thing to do." Is this intentional?
- In contrast to the above, some frequently offered choices (such as SCOUT and CAST) were not often useful. It's okay and perhaps necessary to have a few useless choices, but maybe you should make the "useless" text more substantial, so that the reader won't be lulled into thinking such actions ALWAYS yield a generic response. Sending Esher to SCOUT a boring location could yield bits of local color or hints: "I saw nothing save a squirrel and a few chipmunks, running past in great haste; methinks they sense some peril in this forest."
- Large sections of the story can be raced over by hitting the RETURN key repeatedly. Are you subscribing to the Snyder/Cornyn Couch Potato Theorem?
- The stories and legends are great ways to flesh out the background and make the menu choices seem worthwhile. Are you planning to add more? It'd be amusing to hear different characters' version of the same legend (assuming the differences were interesting). Ditto on advice: Instead of just one "group" opinion, how about offering each character's opinion on important choices, such as whether or not Strider (er, Minar) should join the party.
- Except for the orc problem, I polished off Part One in less than an hour, including all stories, legends, EXAMINEs and obvious pathways, not to mention the premature demise of 2 party members. Liz tells me Parts Two and Three are even shorter. How much more do you intend to flesh it out? It seems to me that this thing ought to approach the size of a novel if it's going to offer a good value to the buyer, especially if Dornbrook tries charging $40-$50 dollars for it.

I intend to finish playing the latest version as soon as I figure out the Orc problem.
This format holds great promise!

Date: 10 May 1988 1431-EDT From: Shinghatsubai <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Query To: MARC

I've put in about 6-10 hours (??-rough guess). I have successfully completed neither part I nor part II. In part I, I recovered only 2 amulets (stones?) before the evil took over. In part II, I made it into the mine, found the reagent, but not the Stone.

Date: 10 May 1988 1448-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Journeying To: MARC

Aak! Relax! I thought Valium was easy to come by in your part of the world.

The similarities between Journey and Tolkien don't really bother me at all, and I'm sure our canonical fans will eat it up anyway. I only mentioned it for its amusement value; it seems we're doomed to follow T's footsteps forever, or to retrace our own. (At least you're not doing another Zork. Maybe you should remove all the Zork references.)

Regarding the orcs: No, I hadn't lost any party members in that run-thru, and I thought I issued the FLANK

command before the orcs knew I was there. I'll try it again to be sure. I don't have time to play on Fred, since I'm supposed to be slaving away on my own project; politically, it's more convenient to bring a Mac version home. Sorry.

The other testers take four or five HOURS to complete Part One?! Am I missing an entire CONTINENT or something? Or is it that the Mac version responds so much more quickly than Fred (it's instantaneous)? I'm quite sure I tried all the paths, examined everything offered, and saw all the stories and legends; I even read the descriptions of the graphics! I didn't hurry, either; in fact, I found the whole experience rather relaxing. Yours is the first Infocom title I can imagine playing after a hard day at the office (assuming I ever had one).

Who can say how "value" is perceived? Compare your (presumably double-spaced) 90-page document to the 300-400 pages of a typical novel manuscript. Yet word count doesn't tell the whole story (to coin a phrase); the time spent manipulating the user interface matters as well. With a book, this consists of turning the pages. With our old games, you had to type a lot and (usually) wait for your disk to grind. Your game lies somewhere between, but much closer to a book. If the story stays close to its current size, I suspect many users will polish it off comfortably in an evening or two. Is this what you had in mind?

Date: 10 May 1988 1505-EDT From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: Re: Advice To: MARC

Here are some thoughts-

The purpose for the quest needs to be presented more urgently- not so much in the beginning of the game, but rather as they get farther on their quest, the group should find more and more info on the exact nature of the "Evil" in the land. Bad things should happen along the way, suggesting that there is not much time left- also indications of how evil the Evil really is. If the info increases as the game moves along, this will create a sense of intrigue and suspense that I feel the game in its present form is some what lacking. (In other words: right now you have adventure & action- what the story needs is a feeling of uncovering a mystery.)

Some more specific suggestions:

A more spectacular ending at the end of part three- more on these wizards, and esp. more on the Evil- maybe a minion of the evil could appear to the wizards or something- anything that would make the player simultaneously feel that he has accomplished a lot, but that he is intrigued enough to want to buy the sequel.

More on the men in the Inn- who sent them? Are they just thugs, or something more sinister? (There is a suggestion that they may be magical—they disappear just outside the inn, and also the comment- 'what do you know about hell?' suggests that the speaker may indeed know a great deal about hell...)

In general- I don't think you need much more in the way of puzzles or rooms, but you need to provide more information that can be gained easily (by Examine, or Eavesdrop- or very simple puzzles). I think this would make the ending more satisfying.

Date: 10 May 1988 1521-EDT From: Shinghatsubai <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Query To: MARC

After having Astrix return me to dwarf-land in Part I, (I think, I'm not positive) that it crashed because Esher had died. I don't think I went back to part I after you fixed that bug, since 1) it was a new version and may saves were useless; 2) I wanted to get a good taste for all of it, rather than complete it all.

I haven't had the opportunity to go back and finish part II yet. As I was looking at the musings on part II, however, they didn't work right as we discussed.

Date: 10 May 1988 1509-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Advice To: MARC

No more legends please. I'll have some more comments later.

The first artwork is critiqued:

Date: 11 May 1988 0939-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics To: MARC cc: Joe, jon

Yes, Joe and I saw maybe 4 or 5 images. The first one, Lavos, is excellent, and perhaps my favorite so far. (I was worried about it — just like the first sentence of a story can set the tone perfectly or not, so too with graphics, I think.) There was no mistaking this as a (small) town surrounded by wilderness, and an indistinguishable man carrying a full sack is seen (though he's not the focus), suggesting that people do live here. (That is, it doesn't look like an abandoned ghost town.) Two buildings are prominent — one foreground on the left of the road, one further down the road on the right — and at least one other, smaller building can be seen beyond the tavern, though it's slightly off the road and looks more like a residence than the two prominent buildings. The building appear to have thatched roofs; I don't recall what the walls were made of.

Another good image was the group of bandits, at least four and maybe five or six tough guys coming out of hiding behind some huge boulders. Each bandit looks a little different — they're individualized — one short and dark, one bald with a dark beard, one fat and hairless (I called them Moe, Larry, and Curly), etc. Most of them were carrying clubs, though at least one guy had a long knife. They were definitely threatening (my Three Stooges joke was just that, a joke) but they were nonmagical — as human as the sack carrier in Lavos — which seemed right.

Nightfang the snake was drawn pretty much as you described it, but I felt I had missed the most exciting part. That is, we see a large snake in the foreground, lying on its side, its head severed from its body; behind it we see a party member slouched against a tree. I suggested that we see Bergon's sword, either just before it hits the snake or just after. I explained the image lacked the excitement and the action I envisioned. Donald will redo this image.

The Fork and the Canyon were fine — pretty sky and interesting landscape, a cross (in Donald's words) between the Alps and the American Southwest. The Forest Ridge also looked fine — or so we told Donald — but after he left, I changed my mind and I want Sunrise Mountain to look more mysterious. It does have clouds around it, but to me it looks a bit too picture-postcard. So I'll call him and suggest more mystery, more magic for the mountain — maybe more clouds, or a more threatening shape to it or something.

That's all I remember seeing. He had started others but didn't show them to us, and the ones he did show us aren't completely finished, so he didn't leave us a copy. Overall, I was quite pleased.

I'm a little worried, though, at my reaction to the Nightfang image. So many of the images are non-action-oriented. But Donald is intentionally keeping a "magicalness" out of the first few images, until the party gets a little further. And Donald and Joe reminded me that it really is necessary to show the changing landscape so the player sees the progress. I guess, though, I'll suggest to Donald that he put more time and effort into the images where something is happening: the elf-home and the forest fire, the dwarves and the river crossing, etc. I'm very pleased with the bandits image, and that happens pretty early on; so as long as non-landscapes keep coming up regularly, I think it'll be OK. (I want to avoid players just seeing one "room" after another.)

A good start, I think.

Date: 12 May 1988 1149-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Advice To: MARC

I love magic puzzles and I think they are an important feature in Journey.

I think that Tag and Praxix have bonded (I hate that term.) If Tag could learn some magic it would be great.

The player would get to use magic on a more personal level as Tag developed, and more difficult magic puzzles could be installed with Tag and Praxix working magic in tandem.

Perhaps If Bergon had some latent magic power it could be used to tie up the Hurth dissappearance loose end. It also would send him into the sequel.

I think that there are enough new places but more puzzle should be implemented.

Date: 13 May 1988 1415-EDT From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: puzzle To: marc

That sounds like an excellent idea. You should give some subtle hints that Praxix is using some kind of powder, but not say what it is.

By the way, today's my last day. So good luck with Journey!

Date: 16 May 1988 1526-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Opinion requested.… To: journeymen at FRED

I was toying with the idea of disallowing SAVE except at the end of each chapter, or some other convenient point (the end of each "day", for example) Is this an altogether horrible idea? I'm just afraid that, when faced with a problem, people will just SAVE everywhere, not realizing (or understanding) that making a wrong decision isn't the end of the world.

Perhaps I'm over-reacting.

Date: 16 May 1988 1621-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion requested.… To: MARC at FRED cc: journeymen at FRED

I don't like it. Personally, I save LESS often in Journey, because the story continues. I think it's much better to be "less Fascist" — let the players save whenever they want.

Date: 16 May 1988 1534-EDT From: Kurt Boutin <KURT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion requested.… To: MARC

Saving at the end of the day would be fine. It would disallow people saving every other step. Good idea. Thanks for the welcome also!

Date: 16 May 1988 1624-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion requested.… To: MARC cc: LIZ

Yeah, I think you're overreacting. It's usually not a very friendly feature when the game dictates where the player can save. I don't see a problem with having the player save everywhere/anywhere/somewhere. That's their choice. I don't really see it hurting anything.

Date: 16 May 1988 1546-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion requested.… To: MARC

I think that's a good idea.

Date: 16 May 1988 1547-EDT From: Shinghatsubai <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion requested.… To: MARC

Conceptually, I disagree with a disallowal except at certain points (what do you do when they start serving roast beef in the dining hall and your not at a convenient save point?). Maybe a solution is a auto quit save (like ROGUE, for instance), where the act of saving will force the game to quit.

????? ????? ?????

Date: 16 May 1988 1644-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: [Re: Opinion requested....] To: Marc

Palace's powers of persuasion, a prized pressure point of pure pigpoop, perhaps?

Date: 16 May 1988 1637-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Opinion requested.… To: JON

Ille Duce and I both think that if people can make saves whenever they like, then before you know it, they'll want proscuitto and ham for breakfast.

Actually, you're right. I just hate it when people do that. I wish there was some way to make that route less viable. It's the same with invisiclues though.

Date: 16 May 1988 1728-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New Version To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

There will be a new version tomorrow which includes an additional puzzle in part three; the "logical" solution involves two clues, one on part one (in a legend,) and another in part two (in the course of completing it successfully.)

Date: 16 May 1988 1648-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: JOURNEY Interface To: MARC

Since Jon is working on the Journey User Manual, I decided to try to play. Yikes! I really like the idea of the interface, but the actuality is very confusing. Of course, I realize that it's primarily intended to be mouse-driven, and few VT100s have mice, so it's going to be a little confusing.

1) It's very unclear what the arrow keys are supposed to do. In general, they seem intended to move like they would if the command area was a spreadsheet. Sometimes, though, they don't move at all, sometimes they move to somewhere that isn't what I expected, and sometimes they do the right thing.

2) The use of space seems even more confusing. What, in general, does it do? I couldn't figure it out.

3) Keys which don't do anything should feep! rather than making me afraid they did something I didn't notice. This includes the arrow keys if what you tried was illegal for some reason.

4) Why is "Part Two" the initial highlighted choice?

5) How can I make the silly thing "Quit" without having to completely reenter my choices for Graphics, Scripting, etc.? Every time I've played I end up turning on or off scripting before I can Quit. In fact, why isn't Quit a top-level Game option?

6) I would suggest making [Cancel] a top-level option (if there's room) at essentially all times. I might even (mimicing 1-2-3) make Escape be that command (not that Escape works when you're in arrow-key/keypad mode on a VT100).

What I saw of the story, I liked.

First draft of the Journey manual:

JOURNEY INSTRUCTION MANUAL

* Preface

Pestilence and disease, famine and drought - all of these plague your land. But nothing is known of their cause, and hope is fading. A party was assembled to seek the aid of a distant Wizard in the faint hope that he might offer assistance. But the party was never heard from again and, in desperation, another party is sent, the one you are about to lead on a fateful Journey into the unknown.

Whether your party meets the fate of its predecessors, or returns triumphant, is in your hands. Your party of four is led by Bergon, a strong and fair man, and a carpenter by trade. The Wizard, Praxix, wise yet unpredictable, provides the party with knowledge of lore and magic. Esher, the well-respected (if somewhat curmudgeonly) physician, has also been asked to make the trek. Finally, Tag, apprentice food merchant, has agreed to tend to the party's provisions and make a diary of its adventures.

In Journey, the decisions you make, for the party and its members, are woven into an epic tale of danger and mystery, of breathtaking beauty and heartbreaking loss, of desperate struggle and, finally, of ultimate triumph. The tale is told by Tag, and the story of the Journey is seen through his eyes.

Your Journey will provide you with many hours of enjoyment and many hundreds of difficult decisions. But unlike other games you may have played, there are virtually no dead ends. Any action you take will advance the story toward one of its many endings. But there is only one ending that is the best. To lead the party to its ultimate victory is a challenge worthy of only the bravest and most clever.

* Getting Started

* Load the Game

If this is your first time playing Journey, you should read the Reference Section at the end of this manual for loading instructions specific to your computer. Also, it would be prudent to make a backup copy of the disk(s) that came in your game package. Put the original disk(s) away for safekeeping.

* The Journey Screen

When you have successfully loaded Journey, your screen will look something like this:

<start screen>
<the three major areas should be labeled A, B, and C>

You will note that the Journey screen is divided into three distinct areas.

A) The story of the Journey will appear here. Frequently, however, there is more to be told than can fit within this area. In that case, the word "MORE" will appear at the bottom; you can view the rest by pressing any key on your keyboard (or clicking your mouse).

B) You will glimpse the world of Journey through the handsome illustrations that appear here.

C) All of your selections while playing Journey will be made in this area, which is itself divided into three sections, described below in the **Playing the Game** section.

* Selection Methods

You can make selections with your mouse, joystick, or keyboard. If you have two of these devices (e.g. a mouse and a keyboard), you can make selections with either of them or both.

Mouse: Point at, then click on, your desired selection.

Joystick: Move the joystick to highlight your desired selection, then press the joystick button.

Keyboard: Use the arrow keys to highlight your desired selection, then press the RETURN or ENTER key.

* The Initial Menu

On the startup screen, five options are displayed in the lower left corner.

Start sets you off on your Journey.

Background relates the events leading up to your Journey. If you are playing for the first time, it would be worthwhile to read this prologue before selecting "Start".

Change Name allows you to personalize your Journey by renaming the narrator of the story from Tag to one of your own choosing.

Help summarizes these instructions.

Game displays a group of options that do not affect the story, but rather the play of the game (e.g. saving your place, making a transcript, etc). These options are described in detail in the **Game Option** section.

* Playing the Game

After you have selected "Start", your screen should look something like this:

<2nd screen>

In playing Journey, you have the task of making decisions not only for your party of characters as a group, but for the individuals as well. As each decision is made, the story will move inexorably forward.

Looking at the bottom portion of the screen, you will see that it is divided into three areas.

A) The first column lists the "Party Commands," those actions which are taken by your entire party as a group. Most often, these will involve moving from one place to another. On the screen (above?,) you would select "Proceed" to continue down the road or "Enter" to enter the provisioner's shop.

B) The second column lists the members of your party. When your Journey begins, there are four: Bergon, Praxix, Esher, and Tag (the narrator). During the course of your Journey, characters may be added (by choice) and lost (rarely by choice); all such changes will be reflected here.

C) To the right of the characters' names are those actions that the characters can take at any given moment. On the screen (above?,) you will see that Bergon can get the advice of the group ("Get Advice"), Praxix can cast a spell ("Cast"), and Tag can drop things ("Drop") and check on what he's carrying ("Inventory"). These options change frequently during play to reflect the circumstances of the story (e.g. Tag would have an option to "Pick Up" something, if there were anything on the ground worth taking).

Many of the actions that you can select require additional information (e.g. which spell to cast, which object to take, which legend to tell). When you select one of these options, a list of possibilities will appear, as in the example (below?) in which Praxix is about to cast a spell. Simply select your choice from the list, or select "[cancel]" to change your mind about taking that course of action.

<bottom screen showing Cast options>

*Notes for keyboard users

1) A quick way to move the highlight bar back and forth between the Party Commands section and the Individual Commands section is to use the spacebar.

2) You can quickly highlight **and** select an option by typing its first letter. However, the highlight bar must be in the Party Command section to choose a party option or in the Individual Command section to choose an individual option.

3) You can select "[cancel]" with your backspace key.

* Hints - The Musings Option

Your Journey will be long and challenging, and it is unlikely that you will see it through to a happy conclusion until you have played for some time. Do not fear: all of the obstacles and pitfalls you face can be overcome in a logical manner, yet some may baffle even the most sophisticated player.

If you should reach an unsatisfactory ending, you will have the option of reading some of the narrator's "musings," providing thoughts made in hindsight about the decisions made during the Journey. Each "musing" refers to a particular place or event in the story, and you should refer to those for which you need some additional guidance. Of course,

rather than using these musings right away, it would be more enjoyable to first experiment with different courses of action.

* The Game Option

The "Game" option is always available as the last of the Party Commands, at the lower left of the screen. Selecting this option displays a menu of control functions that have no direct effect upon the story, but rather upon the playing of the game. The options are:

Save allows you to make a "snapshot" of your position in the story (a book-mark, if you will) so that you may return to that precise spot in the story at a later time. Unlike other games you may have played, there are virtually no dead ends (places where if you make a mistake you "die" instantaneously) in Journey, and therefore no need to "Save" your position frequently; indeed, you will probably enjoy the flow of the story more if you avoid using "Save" altogether during your first times through the story.

The exact procedure for "Save" varies among computers, so you should check the Reference Section for the correct procedure for your machine.

Restore returns you to a previously "Saved" position. As with "Save," the exact procedure will vary among computers.

End Session ends your play of the game, either by quitting ("Quit") or by starting over from the beginning ("Start Over"). Another menu will be displayed allowing you to choose between these two options. Remember, you must "Save" your game before ending a session if you wish to "Restore" your current position.

Controls: causes the Controls Menu to be displayed. The controls are:

Script On: This allows you to use your printer to make a transcript of the story. You may wish to use this feature to aid your memory about events earlier in the story, or just to have a souvenir of your Journey. If you select "Controls" while you are already making a transcript, you will note that this option has become "Script Off;" this option can now be used to end your transcript.

Refresh: This option refreshes the screen display, in the unlikely event that it should become garbled by a power glitch or other such nuisance.

Version: This will display the release version of Journey as well as the serial number of your copy of the game. Please include this information in any call to Customer Support.

Check Disk: This option performs a check on the contents of your game disk(s) to ensure that they are undamaged. If you suspect a problem with your disk, use this option to "verify" its contents. If the disk checks out "OK," then the problem is either in your computer's hardware or is a bug in the game.

Note

All of the Game Menu and Controls Menu options can be accessed with function keys (if your machine happens to have them.) The keys are defined as follows: F1 - Save; F2 - Restore; F3 - Start Over; F4 - Quit; F5 - Script on/off;

F6 - Refresh; F7 - Version. In the case of Start Over and Quit, it will be necessary to confirm your choice by hitting the same key again.

* Tips for Enjoying Journey

- Try to play as much as possible without using "Save" - remember, all puzzles can be solved logically and without resort to using "brute force." If you become "stuck," refer to the musings option after reaching an ending.
- As a convenience, you way wish to make "Saves" every so often in the story. Certainly, it would be appropriate to make a "Save" each time you come before the Wizard Astrix.
- There are no "dead ends" in Journey; feel free to experiment and take chances.
- Utilize the options available to you; if more than one character can take the same action (e.g. examining something,) do not assume that the result will be the same.
- If you are using a keyboard, remember the available shortcuts (spacebar to move between Party and Individual Commands, and using the first letter of choices to make a selection.)

* We're Never Satisfied

As with other games, except: Attn: Dread Lord

* If You Have Technical Problems

As with other games.

* About the Author

Marc Blank, a graduate of MIT and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, is one of the original founders of Infocom. He co-authored the original mainframe version of Zork in 1977 at MIT, and went on to become one of the pioneers in the field of interactive fiction. At Infocom, he co-authored the Zork Trilogy and Enchanter, and was the sole author of Deadline, the first interactive mystery, and Border Zone, Infocom's first tale of intrigue. Marc considers Journey to be his second greatest departure from traditional interactive fiction, the first being his move to Southern California in 1986.

Marc lives in the sleepy town of Agua Dulce with his wife, Cezanne, and a growing number of feline offspring. With any luck, he's finished mowing the lawn and pulling weeds from the garden, and is happily back at work.

* Copyright, etc.

As with other games, except:
Journey and Border Zone are trademarks of Infocom, Inc. Zork, Enchanter, and Deadline are registered trademarks of Infocom, Inc.

Date: May 17, 1988 To: Jon
Re: Journey Manual From: Stuart cc: Mike

Overall, I think the manual is promising. The overall set-up of the manual seems to be easy to read and understand. I would suggest the following ideas as possible improvements.

1) The introduction separates YOU and TAG. That is a distinction that should blur as you play the game (PLAY the ROLE of Tag). I think this type of information is better conveyed in the standard I/F way of saying YOU ARE...
2) The introduction is much too short, thus giving it the appearance of less importance. Each of the ideas brought out in the introduction should be fleshed out into a paragraph.
3) The obligatory "About the Story" should be included. When you pick up a new game and actually read the manual, you want more than just all the technical info. Perhaps the storyline of this section could involve Tag reminiscing over his diaries, or something equally hokey.
4) Separate the ideas of showing the screen set up and of getting started. GETTING STARTED should include:

loading—see reference card	how to select in Journey
first time playing, select background	to begin the adventure, select start

5) The next section should be a screen set-up section. The descriptions of the areas of the screens need to come alive more.
6) PLAYING THE GAME should revolve around the differences between a party command and a individual command, rather than just mentioning them. You should also make mention of how parties become separated and what to do then.
7) I think GAME SELECTION should be more of a definitions page, highlighting each choice at the start of the paragraph. I think that would make it more easily digestible.

Please let me know if I can expound any better on any of these ideas.

Stu Galley has some comments on the manual:

Welcome back

The final version of the manual prior to its Macification is in <KIRSCH>Manual.txt.4. It is currently being loaded into pagemaker (yea even as we speak). I added the new menu section for SCRIPT ON, changed some grammatical things (A punctuation mark is outside the parentheses if it refers to the sentence itself, but inside if it refers to the text inside the parentheses.), and (on Stu Galley's recommendations) changed a fair number of verbs to active voice from passive. I'll send you the next available version. I'll be in Milwaukee from today until Monday, so please leave me voice mail 415-329-0800 x320.

I'll be in the office until about 2 my time today.

later much., stella

Date: 18 May 1988 1625-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Next version… To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

The "Game" commands and controls are all handled differently (and more simply) in the next version to be compiled (about 30 minutes from now.) Try it out, if you like, and send comments.

Date: 18 May 1988 1128-EDT From: KURT
Subject: hint To: MARC

I hate to do this but I'M STUCK!!! I always get the white stone but after that it always seems like I can't do anything but get back to a disappointed Astrix. HELP!

Date: 19 May 1988 1749-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Philosophical question.… To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

There are a number of points in Journey in which the correct thing to do can be determined by brute force. In a few cases, however, it is possible to "mix it up" (as we do with other games) by changing some things each play.

For example, the correct path to Astrix could be randomized, making players take along the map (or at least see it.) Another case comes to mind in Part Three, where Tag must figure out which mixture leads to which spell.

The question is: is this sort of thing fair? desirable? appropriate?

Date: 20 May 1988 1142-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Philosophical question.… To: MARC cc: LIZ

For the most part, the response to randomized geography in Beyond Zork wasn't real favorable. I see no problem with brute forcing some things. That's the way of a lot of elements of our game. The map is necessary in other areas, so it doesn't seem important to hit the player over the head with it.

liz

Date: 20 May 1988 0953-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Randomness To: MARC

I like random factors, but

1. They make the game harder to write.
2. The make the game MUCH harder to test and debug. Example: a conventional InfoGame takes *n* expert tester 20-30 minutes to play through. Beyond Zork's randomness increased this time to approximately 2 1/2 hours.

You pays your money ...

Date: 23 May 1988 1048-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: JOURNEY To: MARC

The game commands seem much more user-friendly now!

Date: 24 May 1988 0836-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Philosophical question.… To: MARC

I think it's fair. People will have to figure out why, and it will increase replayability.

Date: 27 May 1988 1716-EDT From: Inhalation Booth <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: MARC

Had to switch to testing Shogun. I like the atmosphere and interface. I found the character branching a little confusing.

Date: 29 May 1988 2209-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Webba's map, etc. To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

The map and corresponding correct location of the path to Astrix have been randomized; from now on, it will be necessary to check the map to find out which is the correct way; the other paths, of course, are booby-trapped.

Date: 31 May 1988 2121-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: The Color of Essences To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

The colors of the essences are now randomized at the beginning of each play; therefore, it's worthwhile to pay attention to the clues given. Later this week, I'm adding changes that make "brute-forcing" the demon problem, in the words of Zork I, "slow and tedious."

Date: 31 May 88 1306-EDT From: JOE at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 37 #334 Comment/suggestion To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.JOE.34; file pointer 2352
Being able to name your character cheapens the game and is totally out of place in this serious story. The amount of pandering it expresses is sickening and the cheap gimmickyness of it destroys everything that the text and graphics do so well.

Date: 1 Jun 1988 0006-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Change Name To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

If you use "Change Name", you'll find that Journey refers to you as <your name>; this is due to the kludgy display code that I'm using. The micro versions will print the right thing.

Date: 1 Jun 1988 1650-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Re: Journey theme music?] To: MARC

Let's see: Russell is continuing to work on Journey music, but I don't expect to receive anything new from him until Christopher's return from the West Coast sometime in mid-June. (He's going there Monday the 9th, I believe, and returning on the 11th.) So, there's really nothing new.
Donald didn't make significant progress over the 3-day weekend, but he's been working steadily the past two days, and he's planning on coming here on Friday morning to show Joe and me what he's got. He hopes to be done with all Part I graphics within a week. He said he liked his hermit and his new nightfang, but the stairs — "all these stairs!" he said — are driving him crazy. I'll give you more info after I see the stuff.

Date: 3 Jun 1988 1536-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Just wondering.… To: MARC

I think there will definitely be a curiosity factor due to graphics and such. Beyond that I have no idea what will happen. I think it's a pretty strong lineup, and I hear the industry is worried that there will be too many RPGs this fall, so maybe I.F. is due for a revival. One can always hope.

Date: 3 Jun 1988 1008-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help requested.… To: MARC cc: LIZ

Why limit CAST in the first place? It usually seems best to allow the player as much "freedom" as possible.

Date: 4 Jun 1988 2007-EDT From: Consulting Debugger <GARY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

I LIKE IT. IT'S LIKE READING A GOOD FANTASY ADVENTURE NOVEL.

I GOT FIVE STONES, BUT TOTALLY MISSED WHERE I MIGHT HAVE FOUND THE SIXTH (DON'T TELL ME)

IS THERE A WAY TO AVOID LOSING ONE OF MY PARTY MEMBERS TO THE ORCS IN THE NET/ PIT TRAP? (PLEASE ANSWER YES OR NO). I THOUGHT I NEED THE WIZARD TO DO IT BUT THE STORY TOLD ME THAT I GAVE UP.

I DIDN'T BOTHER REPORTING TYPOS IN THE LEFT WINDOW BECAUSE I ASSUME THEY'LL BE GRAPHICS IN THE FINAL PRODUCT.

I LIKE THE MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS AND THE NEED TO CONSERVE MAGIC. IT WOULD HELP IF YOU COULD FIND OUT HOW MUCH DUST THE WIZARD HAD SO YOU COULD FIGURE OUT WHICH SPELL YOU WANTED TO THROW IN A PARTICULAR INSTANCE (YOU'D ALSO NEED TO KNOW HOW MUCH DUST WAS USED FOR EACH SPELL)

SOMETIMES I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO SECTIONS THAT IT WON'T LET ME GO BACK TO, E.G. THE OLD MINE IF YOU LEAVE THE MINE AREA.

ARE THERE HINTS??? ARE THEY NEEDED???

Date: 4 Jun 1988 2008-EDT From: Consulting Debugger <GARY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Progress To: MARC

I DON'T KNOW WHERE ONE PART ENDS AND THE OTHER BEGINS. DOES THE FIRST PART END AT THE WIZARD WITH FOUR STONES?

WHAT DOES CHANGE NAME DO?

Date: 6 Jun 1988 1315-EDT From: Kurt Boutin <KURT at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Re: Unique commands....] To: MARC cc: KURT

I meant that it didn't matter. If you put Tell Legend or Tell Story in each circumstance, it wouldn't make much of a difference. Actually Tell Story would be better because Tell Legend would give a feeling of Legends only, whereas Tell Story would allow either to be used.

Date: 6 Jun 1988 1827-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: New Journey To: MARC

I'm having so much fun finding bugs that I have been neglecting my bug-checking. Kurt and I are thinking about splitting the game. Me taking part one, him part two. Just to speed up that process.

comments? Suggestions? Good night.

Date: 6 Jun 1988 1527-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Unique commands.… To: MARC

I think "Use Mix" de-magicifies the Mix. I like Focus Mix or something like that.

Date: 7 Jun 1988 0953-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: re: hintsmail To: marc

I think the hints s.b. explicit at the end. There shouldn't be any puzzle to getting an answer.

Date: 7 Jun 1988 1112-EDT From: Kurt Boutin <KURT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Testing.… To: MARC cc: KURT

I think the hints are fine the way they are. And go ahead and put a newJourney in if you want.

Date: 7 Jun 1988 1843-EDT From: Jennifer M. Raiser <RAISER at FRED>
Subject: Re: Your script.… To: MARC

It takes an Ivy League education and special talent. I like your game because it is actually fun for (ahem) novices (in the Catholic sense) like me to play. Cheers.

Date: 8 Jun 1988 1457-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: pix To: marc

We have seen some since you left. We saw yet another nightfang picture. I wasn't really satisfied but Jon seemed so. Of all the pix, that scene has proved to be the hardest one to empathize with. This version is a picture of the nightfang only. It is colorful and has dorsal plates. To me it looks a lot like the head and neck of a dragon. We saw a greatly improved version of the Nymph-Chamber. This time Donald renovated it greatly giving it stone walls and made the viewpoint from under one of the arches. The banners are back and look less like posters than before.

We saw hermit pictures as well. I am confused by the landscape here.

Jon liked the setting that Donald provided; a drier, barren slope with a hut on one side. Being near a lake, I envisioned it as being a little more woodsy. but since it's merely a landscape scene, we were satisfied with it. The hermit is great. He looks old and crufty and Donald made his eyes look really sick.

I thought Jon was providing you with a description of these. I'll do it as well from now on, that way you'll get both points of view. Or at least one.

These are the only ones that come to mind. I'll send you more comments immediately after our next viewing.

Date: 9 Jun 1988 1259-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Back and Forth To: JOE, KURT, MARC

I've gotten a few comments regarding the frustration at not being able to return someplace after it's been seen; the most common place this has been reported is at the mines in part two. Are there other places that stick out in this way?

Date: 9 Jun 1988 1641-EDT
Subject: Towers...\

From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: marc

I'm confused about something. The stairs to sunset mountain begin under ground. I always thought that sunset mountain was in a massive, hollowed out mountain. Yet you can see sunrise mountain from it. When did the stairs break the surface? I'm not gonna play anymore until I here from you. So you'd better answer quickly.

Date: 10 Jun 1988 1150-EDT
Subject: Pix

From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: Marc

Hi Marc.

Jon, and I just finished viewing more scenes. They are really great! Jon is tremendously pleased as am I. We saw the final Nightfang shot. This one is a shot of the snake alone and alive. It looks less like a dragon and more like a snake. I've got the disks and will make copies for you if you wish. Right now I've got a weird bug to look into and will get back to you with more details in a few.

Date: 10 Jun 1988 1248-EDT
Subject: Thoughts

From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: Marc

The text you have written now handles the stair/junction/highgate/tower scenes perfectly. The reason I was confused yesterday was because it was the first time I made it to sunset tower. The left stair goes from the junction to the tower and stays underground the whole time.

The second time you get to the junction (when hurth shuts the door behind you) you should not have the option to retrace your steps ever, since your running for your life.

It would be nice if, When Praxix yells "we must flee the halls", Hurth could have the choice of herding them into the jail OR the stairs. These are both reasonable places to flee to, and it gives the player a chance to get the brown stone as well.

Date: 12 Jun 1988 1005-EDT
Subject: Re: Jail

From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: MARC

How about this: First Praxix makes the whole party invisible, then the sheriff enters and sees them gone, the sheriff just happens to smoke a cigar, when he comes into the cell to see what happened, his smoke makes them cough or indicates their outlines and the sheriff laughs and relocks the cell.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1827-EDT
Subject: Bio

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: JON

<MARC.X>BIO.TXT is an updated version of my bio; I assume it will come in useful some day.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1056-EDT
Subject: hi

From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: Marc

Hi Marc. How's it going?

Journey seems to be coming along fine.

I think I was burnt out this spring. Its reflected in my grades as well as my productivity. I'm sorry if it affected you.

I'm going to be reporting What I think are grammatical errors. Not having a degree in english, I may be wrong. What I think is an error may just be a conflict in our respective styles, but better safe than sorry though. Please don't misinterpret my lack of expertise.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1013-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Part I To: marc

I think I've been pretty methodical and thorough in testing this part; if there are any branches I've missed please let me know. I'm moving on to part two.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1214-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Cedrith To: marc

Is the lonely tower of Targh the tower where Praxix finds the stone? Who buried Cedrith? Tell me about Cedrith.

Date: 14 Jun 1988 1437-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: N To: MARC

HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD THE PARTY BE ABLE TO GO BACK FROM A PLACE.
— IF THEY'RE GETTING CHASED - 0 (FLEEING THE DARK FORCE UP THE STAIRTS IN SCENE 1
— IF IT'S A CRUCIAL DECISION - 1 (LEAVING THE MINES IN PART TWO TO GO TO THE VESTIBULE BUT NOT BEING ABLE TO GO BACK.)
WHAT ABOUT IF IT ISN'T A CRUCIAL DECISION?
IS DOING THIS GOING TO GIVE AWAY TO MUCH ABOUT WHICH DECISIONS ARE IMPORTANT?
THIS LAST QUESTION, TO ME, IMPLIES THAT IT SHOULD BE THE SAME FOR CRUCIAL AS WELL AS NON-CRUCIAL DECISIONS.

Work begins on more graphics:

Date: 14 Jun 1988 1700-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Part II Graphics To: Marc

Donald is almost ready to begin work on graphics for Part II. Joe and I went over your list of ideas (in GRAPHICS.ZIL) and tried to find ways to make the images more visually striking and interesting. Donald expressed some frustration at the number of cave-like illustrations in Part I, and so we've tried to add some spice to the Part II graphics since most of it is underground.

HURTH-SHADOW: The opening of the stairs leading down could look like a mouth; in the rocks above are shapes suggestive of huge eyes.

MID-STAIR: One character could be gesturing strongly to go in one direction, another character gesturing strongly to go in the other.

ORC-VIEW: We could see an orc in the foreground of this picture; over his shoulder in the background we can see 2 or 3 heads (party members) peeking around the corner.

PRAXIX DIVERSION: The orcs are eating humans a la Night of the Living Dead, or are engaged in worship or a sacrifice (complete with altar), or are doing something equally interesting or grotesque.

NARROW SLIT: There's no floor, so the characters have to shimmy their way across using all fours.

DEAD-END: It's full of creepy-looking stalactites and stalagmites.

FLUME-POOL: Looks like a whirlpool.

MINE-JUNCTION: To make it more like a mine, put in tracks, maybe a cart and/or picks. Veins of gold and other colors are visible in the rocks.

OLD-MINE: A trail of dust crumbles down from above, suggesting imminent collapse. Also, there's a particularly glittery and attractive rock in the wall.

ACTIVE-MINE: As in the movie Predator, a shape of diffracted light suggests the presence of the miner. (It's invisible — you can see the rock walls through it and everything -- but there's this ghostly light.)

MINER: Carrying red stones. Looks like Yosemite Sam? Maybe non-human? (Marsupial-like?)

MINE-HOLE: Seen from below; we're "looking up," and we see 2, 3, or 4 heads looking down at "us."

MINE-FIND: Not just a bone, but a skull is found.

MASSIVE-DOOR: Made of ivory, or some other interesting material (not wood).

VAULT: Has marble walls.

COFFIN: The coffin itself is like a sarcophagus.

CEDRITH: Since the white stone around his neck can be taken, it should be a "stamp." When the player takes the stone, the expression changes somehow (horrified would be more interesting than amused).

TALKING-TREE: Like the apple trees in The Wizard of Oz.

DUNGEON: Add a skeleton in shackles. Or an open iron maiden with spikes and a skeleton (or something) inside it.

TROVE-STONE: Please! Can the single glowing stone be ANY color but black? Red, green, blue, yellow, pink, white, orange, ...

ORC-TRAP: A person is hanging upside-down, one leg caught in a loop trap.

OUTSIDE-ORC-CAMP: The orcs are eating something gross or are worshippping -- whatever they weren't doing earlier.

ORC-TENT: The trap victim is bound much like an insect is bound by a spider: in a cocoon-type encasement.

Comments? Additional suggestions?

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1705-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Puzzles To: MARC

because I'm the only one testing the game, and not even full time, I can't take the time to just play the game through. That should give you some idea. I always like more options, whether they do anything or not. These can enhance any puzzle just by adding more things to mentally juggle.

Date: 17 Jun 1988 1538-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Have you ever tried.… To: MARC

Not that I can recall. I think it's a good idea though. Do you have any form of list yet?

1. Steal the stone from the dealer in Zan.
2. Order several drinks at Lavos (Perhaps the game could let you order as many as you want, with the game ending before it starts and you trashed!)

Date: 17 Jun 1988 1653-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Testing Journey To: Marc

I've been going through the three parts as separate entities because they need testing that way, and because it will really let me get to know the game. When I know the game I'll be able to test all three (like I did with the reagent most efficiently. I'll be moving on to part III now.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1003-EDT From: TV <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: Mac Journey To: Marc

I was playing the Mac version over the weekend and noticed that the text window can only be scrolled by hitting the return key. I find this distasteful. It should be mouse-controlled. Also, has the idea of using a standard Mac scroll bar been discarded for reasons political and/or technological.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1213-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Dark Shadow To: Marc

You've made this puzzle too easy. If the party could see the bird through breaks in the clouds, then perhaps the reader could take it from there.

If you haven't noticed, there is a new tester and her name is Patricia. She seems pretty sharp.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1509-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Essences To: jon, liz, kurt, kirsch, gary, joe cc: marc, pdl

At the moment,

Fire + Earth = Glow	Earth + Wind = Elevation	Water + Wind = ??
Fire + Water = Lightning	Earth + Water = ??	
Fire + Wind = Flare		

The question is, what should be in the place of the question marks? One of the answers should be "Fog;" the other is not determined.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1558-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

To tell you the truth, I'm just kind of exploring & getting a feel for it. I will, however, be glad to supply feedback when I can.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1612-EDT
Subject: Re: Essences

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: MARC

Water + Wind could be Cold.

Earth + Water could be Healing.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1613-EDT
Subject: Re: Graphics

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: MARC

I don't recall discussing it, but I think it's a good idea if we have time. Time will tell if we have time, and vice versa.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1503-EDT
Subject: Graphics

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: JOE, JON

I've had to add two new pictures in Part One; they are at the end of the GRAPHICS.ZIL file.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1024-EDT
Subject: Map

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: MARC

Thanks for your comments. A couple of questions:

Any ideas for names of the forest, the river, and the ocean? (I'll ask Journeymen.) Do you think it wise or unwise to name any other mountains?

As per your instruction #3, I've made the right Lavos fork wind around the righthand side of Sunset Mt. In instruction #4, you say the high gate should be on the righthand edge of Sunset Mt. Should the gate be on the left side or the right side of the path? Or doesn't it matter?

You suggest some reference to the Dwarvish Kingdom. Any ideas? ("Land of Dwarves"?)

FYI: The eyeball north of Zan was added just for interest; it is the scenic vista. OK to leave it?

The falls is shown on the map, but I didn't label it. We could label it "Falls" or something, but I guess my preference is not to label it (presuming that the art will make it clear).

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1026-EDT
Subject: The Map

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Journeymen at FRED cc: Marc

I'm going to give Carl the rough for the map to be included in the game package. Marc pointed out that "Old Forest" and "Great River" are too generic. Any ideas for other names? Also needed: A name for the ocean.

I need replies TODAY please. Thanks.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1129-EDT
Subject: Dark Shadow

From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: Marc

How do you figure out which essences to mix in the beginning of part III.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1524-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Essences To: MARC

Air + Water = Fog Water + Earth = Mud

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1531-EDT From: Tash Irks Curt <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Essences To: MARC

swamp? mud? waterfall? brick?

Date: 20 Jun 1988 2022-EDT From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Mac Journey] To: MARC

First I've heard about it; a mouse click always unpauses the screen on my Mac. I fixed what may have been the problem.

Adding Mac-style scroll bars and maintaining a history buffer has always been a possibility. I don't think it will happen this time around, though.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 2039-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Bugs… To: PATTI cc: marc

In case you're interested, here's a quick list of the sorts of bugs you can expect to find....

1) Grammar, spelling, etc. Feel free to comment on sentences that read badly or don't seem to make sense.
2) Story inconsistencies or loose ends.
3) Characters that speak but are dead or otherwise not present (this used to be a common problem...)
4) Choices that have been made, but don't disappear after being tried (in general, Examine, Scout, Get Advice, Tell Legend, etc. commands are eliminated after they are performed.
5) The cursor disappearing or misbehaving, or the interface otherwise screwing up.
6) Pictures that appear at the wrong times or places.
7) Dialogue or actions that appear to be out of character or inconsistent with the situation.

I'm sure there are other classes of problems, but I thought I'd list the ones that came first to mind. Have fun!

Date: 21 Jun 1988 0925-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Hello To: MARC

Hi again. My project is now in the Writing stage, in which I avoid tinkering with the user interface and concentrate on plotting and organizing my thoughts.

I think PDL likes your project; he's beginning to act envious.

Date: 21 Jun 1988 0935-EDT From: Kurt Boutin <KURT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Essences To: MARC

Water and wind should be fog. I haven't a clue for the other.

Date: 22 Jun 1988 0832-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Bugs] To: MARC

Because I've been so busy trying to test the game thoroughly that I haven't had a chance to check many bugs. Journey wasn't getting the treatment that I thought it needed. Unfortunately, this meant putting the bug-checking on the back burner. But, having familiarized myself with the game totally, checking bugs should be quicker.

What number bug are we up to?

Date: 22 Jun 1988 0943-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Bugs/Fixes To: Marc

Great! I ended up playing part 2 yesterday until Fred crashed (as I couldn't go any further anyway) and realized that I need to start over (pretty much) since I didn't run across the hermit, despite getting all four stones.

Date: 22 Jun 1988 1309-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Ah… To: MARC

That, I knew. Unfortunately, that rotten hermit has eluded my extensive searchings. In fact, I may kill the guy if I ever find him (which is seeming unlikely). Argh! (Great game. I don't usually get this frustrated. Frustration-level is a great indicator of game quality.)

Date: 23 Jun 1988 0922-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: [JOURNEY version 75 #541 Comment/suggestion] To: MARC

Actually, I rather like the image of him hanging in the net saying, "So, what should we do now? Should you all save me from orcs (who take no prisoners) or do you think you should hide and let them torture me extensively?"

Date: 24 Jun 1988 1427-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Re-reports To: MARC

Indeed; I finished it yesterday afternoon. Now I have the joyous task of sifting through bug reports to make sure things are fixed. Yee-ha. Now, I guess you'll want my reactions to the game, hunh? In fact, I enjoyed it. Actually, I was kind of sorry when it ended.

By the way, when you have a little free time (when you're not re-fixing re-reported bugs) I need to chat with you about the game a little. I was buffaloed (how DO you spell that?!) into writing a JOURNEY story for the Status Line and I need to get some input from you. Please let me know when it would be convenient. (It'll only take 20 minutes-1/2 hour.)

Date: 26 Jun 1988 2020-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Beta To: JON, LIZ, JOE, JOEL

What's the status of the game, regarding beta-testing. My sense is that the game itself is in good shape for the 7/1 date, but I'm concerned about the status of graphics, etc. What is the outlook?

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1522-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: beta/gamma To: taa cc: jon

I got the list of outside testers who own macs- 21. Not a whopping number considering we usually assign 10-15 people per game. Should I even dare ask if it would be possible (and make sense in terms of getting the game enough beta/gamma exposure) to slap an XZIP interpreter (say, IBM), on a couple versions and be able to use those in these outside rounds?

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1628-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Journey graphics To: TAA cc: Marc, Jon

Here is a list of the graphics I have from Donald so far for Journey, and other relevant info. Note that all pictures are 110 pixels wide and 126 pixels high.

JOURNEY A disk

File name	Top left location (x,y)	Bottom right loc (x,y)
AA-Lavos	149, 47	259, 173
AE-Fork	167, 35	277, 161
AG-Bandits	167, 33	277, 159
AH-Forest-ridge	170, 30	280, 156
AI-AJ-Gate-runes	167, 37	277, 163
(Also in the AI-AJ-Gate-runes file is a "stamp" to go over the base picture. The stamp's location is:	15, 85	127, 181
The bottom right of the stamp aligns with the bottom right of the base picture.)		
AK-Nightfang	163, 37	273, 163
AM-Elf-heals-bite	172, 30	282, 156
AN-Tanglewood	170, 41	280, 167
AO-Tanglewood-burns	173, 41	283, 167
AP-AQ-Waterfall	163, 35	273, 161
(Also in this file is a "stamp" at:	32, 30	133, 90
The bottom right of the stamp aligns with the bottom right of the base picture.)		
AR-Elf	169, 36	279, 162
AS-Glade	158, 41	268, 167
AT-Stump	158, 58	268, 184
AV-Warren	173, 53	283, 179
AW-Warren-light	173, 54	283, 180
AX-Falls	170, 45	280, 171
[Note: You may not want to transfer AX-Falls yet, as Donald may try to do a better one.]		
AZ-Mountain	164, 47	274, 173

****

JOURNEY B disk

File name	Top left location (x,y)	Bottom right loc (x,y)
BA-BB-Astrix	164, 39	274, 165
(This has a stamp at:	40, 62	138, 164
Unlike the previous stamps, the bottom LEFT of this stamp aligns with the bottom left of the base.)		
BK-Dwarves	169, 32	279, 158
BN-prison-fv	161, 31	271, 157
BO-stair-bottom	168, 34	278, 160
BQ-stair-junction	166, 45	276, 171
BR-stair-chasm	139, 42	249, 168
BS-stair-chasm	176, 43	286, 169

(It was much easier for me to make the above two files unique. However, they could share a base and have unique stamps if necessary for space considerations.)

BU-stair-gate	161, 25	271, 151
BV-high-gate	166, 42	276, 168
BX-orc-ante	156, 28	266, 154
BY-orc-fight	166, 47	276, 173
BZ-Hurth-dies	151, 43	261, 169
BZa-hermit-hill	173, 42	283, 168
BZb-hermit	166, 44	276, 170
BZf-underpool	164, 39	274, 165
BZg-underpool-tube	155, 38	265, 164
BZh-nymph-pool	153, 33	263, 159
BZi-Nymph-chamber	157, 39	267, 165
BZj-Liura	159, 38	269, 164

****

That's all for now. Let me know if I can make anything easier in the future (shorter file names?) and/or if anything looks wrong (a picture not being 110 pixels wide by 126 high, for instance).

Does Marc know what he needs to do?

Date: 27 Jun 1988 0901-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Beta To: MARC cc: LIZ, JOE, JOEL

We've got nearly all the graphics for Part I from Donald. I think the game can go into beta either with the graphics we have or with no graphics at all.

I discovered a problem with Donald's graphics last Friday, and I'll talk to him this morning about it. The problem is that the graphics are NOT all exactly the same size. They're pretty damn close, but several are a pixel or two too short or too wide or too narrow or too tall. It's a fixable problem.

Date: 27 Jun 1988 0902-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Package] To: MARC

It looked ok. It's unfortunate that Carl doesn't want Donald's work on the cover. We only saw a pencil sketch. The graphics in the game go a long way in complementing the mood of the story. By putting someone else's work

on the cover, it conveys a totally different message about what the story is going to be like. Personally, Marc, I feel it's stupid professional jealousy on the part of Carl's that is preventing Donald from doing the cover. It really has me quite mad; being a peon, though, I usually don't let such opinions loose. After thinking about it over the weekend, my completely biased opinion is that the picture looks true, but the style is that of a trashy gothic romance novel.

I'm really starting to get irked with the marketing people. Although they have a lot of good ideas, they think they can go in and fiddle with things and that their changes are what will make the game sell. They don't realize, or care, what their changes will actually do to the game.

Date: 27 Jun 1988 0924-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Re-reports To: MARC

Actually, I'd love to write the article. I consider myself a writer (obviously by Avocation, not Vocation). I'll give you a call when I get a chance.

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1045-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Demon To: MARC

The text is very nice. It's just this little problem about the game freaking out...

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1254-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Cover To: JON

Have you seen the cover art sketch for Journey; have you an opinion?

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1516-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Cover To: MARC

Yes, I've seen it. Yes, I have an opinion. Any other questions?

Signed, Wise Guy

Okay, okay: I'll talk. Have you seen the pencil rough that I've seen? If not, I hate to bias you, but what the hell...

I like the composition. I like the concept. I like the characters behind the main character in the foreground. I like the countryside. I like sheep. Oops, scratch that.

I think the main character in the foreground looks a little too refined — he doesn't look like a commoner/ villager but like royalty. (I said to Carl, "What's this, Yale men go on a Journey?") The mountain in the distance also didn't look far enough away.

Looking at the artist's other works, I was concerned that his style was too "dainty." ("Refined"?) But I think he has controlled that tendency reasonably well.

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1553-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Cover To: JON

Actually, I've seen nothing of the cover art; perhaps you could send a copy of whatever you've got in house?

I got some mail from Joe today which was pretty negative about the cover; if you like, you might like to hear his comments, but overall he thinks that it doesn't have the same feel as the illustrations that are in the game itself. Whatever.

Please, no George Bush look-alikes on the cover (unless, of course, you think that Journey will ride on his coattails, if any, and will an upset victory over Bard's Tale III in November.

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1021-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Beta To: MARC cc: LIZ

It should be approaching beta soon - 7/1. I'm planning to send Journey and Shogun to outside testers as scheduled because the graphics aren't necessary to the play of the game. Only Zork0 may be affected because the graphics are necessary to several of the puzzles.

Date: 27 Jun 1988 1511-EDT From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: journey To: marc

I played Journey for a couple hours today. I really like it. The story is excellent, and, while at times it's a little too reminiscent of Tolkien, the game quickly drew me in. I hope that it's marketed well, as some players might get turned off by the linearity of the story if they see it as just another IF product. I'll keep playing it when time allows. Like I said though, it's very good — I like the feel of the prose a lot. Once I figure out how to get out of the Dwarvish prison, I'll be back on my way.

Date: 28 Jun 1988 0947-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey pix.… To: MARC

The number of pixels actually contained in the picture is likely to vary from machine to machine. The 110x126 size is taken from a 320x200 screen, so it's about a third of the width and 60% of the height, assuming the proportions are preserved--on a vt100, say 27 characters wide and 14 lines high. On a Mac II, everything is doubled; on a regular mac, the available screen size is 480x300, but pictures want to be twice the size (in each dimension) that they are in color; in that case, one either crops the picture (to 75% of its original dimensions), mechanically resizes it (which doesn't look good), lives with it taking much more of the screen, or has it redrawn.

On the Apple II, by the way, there will be approximately 70 spaces per line; it's a variable-pitch (hand-crafted) font, so actual numbers may vary.

What you have to do is:

First, you should NEVER use constants for frobbing things onto the screen--even on the Mac, there are two separate screen sizes, which cause things to look very different. Given that all your pictures are the same size (except for the 'stamps', of course), you should get the size of one of them at startup (using PICINF), then set up a window of the appropriate size at the appropriate place. When you want to put one of the 'stamps' in something other than the top-left corner of an existing picture, get the size of the stamp and compute the appropriate coordinates for it. It doesn't sound like you need the new concept we've invented, of pictures that don't exist but have size; that's how Steve now does a lot of the more complicated things in Z0. What you probably want to do is define a vt-100 picture file using Dave's PICS program (see ZD:PICS.something). It lets you type in character 'pictures' (a la the zorkmid coin), and compile them into something zip20 will display. Zip20 returns their dimen-

sions in pixels, so it's a reasonable way to debug your code.

PICS also defines a file full of constant definitions, mapping the picture names you supply into small fixes, which is what the zips all want. I'll need that mapping to build the picture file for the micros; if you don't come up with one in the next couple of days, I'm likely to do it for you, since I'll be bringing the pictures down to my Mac today.

Date: 28 Jun 1988 1537-EDT From: Richard Blaine <JDARNOLD at FRED>
Subject: Re: Apple, etc. To: MARC

Well, I be working on it real hard and maybe by the end of the week I'll have a first crack at it. However, that will still be pending final decisions on fontsize, as I'll have to play a little with that. Probably will be a 10 pixel high by 4,8, or 12 (1,2,3 game pixels) wide. But I haven't really looked at it yet.

Date: 28 Jun 1988 1715-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics To: MARC

OK, here goes.

Since your pictures are all pretty much the same size and in the same place, you should just allocate a window to contain them. At startup (or restore), you would position the top left corner of the window, and size it to fit your pictures (pick a sample, PICINF it, and make the window that big).

If your pictures all want to be flush top left (plus or minus a pixel or two), then you could just position the picture window at 1,1 or 2,2 or whatever. If you want them at the equivalent CHARACTER position 2,2, then you could of course position it at FONT_HEIGHT+1,FONT_WIDTH+1. If you want them 1/40 of the screen from the left edge, then you want to have a fake picture, call it PICTURE-TOP-LEFT, which will have no data but will have a size; at startup you can PICINF that picture to get the coordinates for the picture window origin.

There are some pictures that get overlayed on other pictures, and are aligned at the bottom right corner. The correct thing to do there is to PICINF the main picture, then PICINF the "stamp" to determine where the top left corner of the stamp wants to go. This is more reliable than just positioning it relative to the bottom right corner of the window, since the picture may be a bit too small or a bit too big.

Jon reports that your pictures aren't really all the same size, so you'd want to clear the picture window between DISPLAY ops, so there isn't any trash left hanging around.

Is this clearer? I'm loading the journey pictures onto my mac now, and will be building a picture file for it tomorrow.

For testing on Fred, you want to make a .ZPIC file according to the directions in ZD:PICS. The pictures could all be the same, 16 characters wide by 15 characters high (that's about the proportions of the real pictures), with something inside to indicate which picture it actually is. Then use <pdl>pics to build a .PIC file, which ZIP20 will use. [I see you have text describing those pictures already. I'd just stick a border around the text, so everything is the right size, and make that into a .ZPIC file.] [I see further that GRAPHIC pretty much does the right thing already, except that you probably want to position the window once, then always (except for the "stamp" pictures) display at 1,1.]

You can't (cannot, it won't work, don't even think of it) put stuff in the bottom screen at fixed positions. The Mac II screen is 640 pixels wide; the Mac screen is 480; the IBM screen is either 320 or 640, depending; the Apple is 140. So turn those constants into globals.

There are two ways to proceed:

1: Cause a border picture to exist, to replace the inverse video borders you do now. It would mostly be

transparent, of course. Once it exists, you need a bunch of fake pictures to go with it, indicating the size and positioning of each of the holes. At startup/restore (I keep mentioning restore because you could have a completely different screen configuration after the restore), display the border picture and make your windows match the holes in it. You can then figure out how much space you have for commands and stuff. This approach is somewhat tedious initially, but allows the screen layout to be changed without changing any of your code.

2: Just perform arithmetic to figure out how much space you have, and split the screen up accordingly. Lest you worry, each fake picture occupies a single directory entry in the picture file, which is about 14 bytes (depending on the machine).

Date: 28 Jun 1988 0858-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Manual To: MARC

None. Tom Veldran had the time and inclination to work on the manual, so we should be seeing an updated draft from him fairly soon.

Date: 28 Jun 1988 0857-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics list… To: MARC

Donald has started more than the 36 on the list; he is fine-tuning them before he gives them to me. I am, in fact, expecting nearly another 36 later this week. However, the job is definitely taking Donald longer than either he or I expected, and it will be tight for him to get them all done in time for transferring and fine-tuning on other machines.

Date: 29 Jun 1988 0951-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics To: MARC

I think the Mac II would have AT LEAST 80 characters in the current fixed-width font, given that it's 640 pixels wide. I'm not sure how many characters wide the Mac is, although I rather doubt that it's 80 (I'll check with Duncan when he gets in).

Personally, I think you'd be better off computing the number of characters without reference to machine type, and going from there—things are only going to get 'worse' (i.e., less constant). For example, Duncan is making noises about picking a better-looking font for the Mac, and at that point there isn't any particular reason not to let people pick their own font, if it's a reasonable size. Games running on an IBM with MCGA will likely not have 80 characters of screen width either, although one running on EGA or VGA probably would.

Aren't standards wonderful?

Date: 29 Jun 1988 1249-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics To: MARC

SCRH and SCRV are still in characters; HWRD and VWRD are in pixels. The space problem will soon get a little less severe: the YZIP spec has been changed to allow 64K of table, 256K of code, and 256K of strings. It won't be implemented until we get the current crop into beta, but will certainly be around by the time Journey actually ships.

Date: 29 Jun 1988 1250-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Journey pix To: jon

<TAA>JOURNEY.MACX1 is the picture file for Journey.

Date: 29 Jun 1988 0921-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: [JOURNEY version 86 #599 Other] To: MARC

Maybe a pic (from a distance) of the party approaching the castle with P. & U. on other side of the moat? Something to connote re-union, I think.

Date: 29 Jun 1988 1257-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: reply To: marc

I certainly don't want you to hate me (especially for being right). I haven't found any yet, but I'm presently going through carefully looking for stuff like that (examining legends, stories, etc.) I'm keeping track & writing them down as I go, so I guess I'll have a dictionary of sorts when I'm done. Something I thought, however, is that I like Praxix providing the root names for the dwarves & elves (call me an etymology freak). It would be nice to have something for the wizards & nymphs. (If you plan to keep ZAR=Mountains, you could try Wi'a-Zar, Lords of the mountains, or some such. I don't have such a simple one for the nymphs, though. Make up something & say it means keepers of the waters, or something equally generic.

Date: 29 Jun 1988 1524-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: you, yourself & you To: marc

So, I'm writing this article. What inspired you to write a game like Journey? (Aside from royalties.) What do you think about the format (graphic/text combo, pick-a-path design)? What's the message? What about character motivation? Do any of the characters bear a resemblance to relatives you don't get along with? Is there anything else you'd like to say (write)?

Date: 30 Jun 1988 1431-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Package graphic To: jon

My comments are just about the same as yours....

1) Tag is definitely on the crew team at Harvard, and probably got that scar is a hotly contested fencing match. I hate to say this, but he has a striking resemblance to Roberta Williams (see this issue of Questbusters.)
2) Overall, I wish the characters weren't so, well, medievalish.
3) Tag appears to be wearing princely robes; he was a clerk in a grocery store.
4) The mountains, etc. are much too close to the foreground and aren't nearly mysterious enough. In general, the farther toward the background, the creepier and more frightening it should become.
5) I like the way the JOURNEY name wraps around the picture on top; reminds me of an Electronic Arts title (I'm being serious here, by the way.)

6) The peak of the Sunrise Mountain shouldn't look like an easy afternoon stroll; lots of crags, etc, snow near the top, heavy black clouds, etc....

Otherwise, I love it.

Date: 30 Jun 1988 1049-EDT From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help To: MARC

It's currently the same as the standard Mac, 12h x 6w. Be careful, though. I plan to put in a different, proportional font. Hopefully it will be slightly larger, 16h, at least on the II.

Date: 30 Jun 1988 1829-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Fantasy Storytelling To: MARC

I agree that Fantasy Storytelling sounds wimpy. The interactive nature of the game is lost entirely. I'll pass on my opinion to those concerned. (I myself am out of marketing now.)

By the way, Donald is really enjoying illustrating your story. He's looking forward to the next batch of pictures, which will take him to new and different locations.

Date: 30 Jun 1988 1624-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Fantasy Storytelling To: MARC

I agree, the question is... who should I forward this to?

Date: 30 Jun 1988 1820-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Astrix pix To: marc

I changed ASTRIX.ZIL such that G-ASTRIX is displayed by the ENTER functions for ASTRIX-TOWER-1 and ASTRIX-TOWER-2; I commented out the GRAPHIC property for ASTRIX-TOWER-1, since it could never be used (entering always seems to move you somewhere else). This probably isn't the right thing, but it will keep the marketoons happy tomorrow morning.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1319-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: beta To: pdl, marc

Just to remind you guys that beta will be Friday, though I'd certainly be one of your best friends if it could go tomorrow...

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1422-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: beta To: marc

I believe you have to make a program to separately zap the games. You have 13 IBM people and 4 Macs.

Patti will be handling the beta people. I've told her what to expect. She'll cull notes, etc., FYI. If you have a question re: the zap, ask Lebs - he's done it before.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1649-EDT
Subject: New Graphic
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: JOE, JON

I've added another new graphic at the end of the file; it's called PARTY-RESCUES-PRAXIX, and it comes up when the group is reunited at the castle.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1734-EDT
Subject: Re: Days
From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
To: MARC

Removing it would take care of worrying about fixing 22th, etc., though that's not all that big of a deal. Also, I saw once in the text where it said "at the end of the second day," or somesuch, and the day number at the top said 4th day. So you wouldn't have to worry about that either. (I hadn't reported it yet because I wanted to try to track what it was doing and why.) As to whether I care... I think it's the only thing in the game that gives me a strong sense of time unless I'm really paying attention to when we sleep, etc. Otherwise, I just lose track. It's probably good for keeping a sense of just how much of a journey this is (five days vs. fifty). Often, in standard IF, there isn't any time, or you only play for two days max. For contrast with that, so people don't get the sense that the journey is much shorter than it is, you may want to keep it.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1535-EDT
Subject: Next Version
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

Tomorrow's version will not have a CHEAT command at the first prompt (the game is going into beta-test after all...) However, hitting the F1 key (the 1 key on the numeric keypad) will do the same thing.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1724-EDT
Subject: Days
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

JOURNEY, as you know, prints the day number at the top of the screen; does anyone care about this? Can I remove it?

Date: 8 Jul 1988 1526-EDT
Subject: Re: Mac Beta
From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
To: MARC cc: LIZ

It doesn't seem that you understood my mail. By sending JOURNEY to beta yesterday on somewhat wobbly interpreters, we're 1) keeping the game on schedule and 2) getting comments from 17 people more than we have inhouse. If we waited for the interpreters to be in the kind of shape you seem to expect, we'd be waiting a month, and the game wouldn't be getting the exposure from outside testers that it will be getting now. And it would definitely affect the ship date if we needed to wait much longer.

We included in the package a letter detailing the limitations of the interpreter currently: graphics, scripting, and mouse support.

I really don't know what you want me to say or do. JOURNEY's on schedule—nothing else is. The graphics that you're expecting only look beautiful on a MAC II. I have no outside testers who own MAC IIs. Enlighten me. What are you really asking?

Date: 11 Jul 1988 1313-EDT From: TV <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: Marc

As I write the manual and play around with the game a few questions and thoughts have bubbled up. Does the "world" in which Journey takes place have a name? It would be nice if it did.

In your comments about the manual, you seemed to be very adamant in your desire to have the distinction of the player and Tag to become "blurred". However, you now allow the player to rename Tag. I think this is a bad move. Especially since you mention Tag in the background exposition.

Instead of calling it GAME, why don't you call it GAME MANAGER. I know it's somewhat techie but I think it sets it apart better from the rest of the things that appear in this area.

Date: 12 Jul 1988 1756-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey's command area... To: MARC

I assume you mean 'clears a specified area of @i(a) screen [window] to the background color.'

Expanding the ERASE opcode is the most likely enhancement, but I'd be interested to know why you don't want to use the window operations, especially since your screen layout is precisely what the existing window stuff supports best.

What's in a name?

Date: 12 Jul 1988 1811-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Pick your poison.… To: journeymen at FRED cc: veldran at FRED

It turns out that the bad guy in Journey is a man of many names: among the ones I've found are:

Dark One Dark Lord Evil One(s) Evil Great Evil

Do you folks have a preference? I suspect it's about time to make things a little more consistent.

If it matters, I think Evil One leads in references, though I believe the same name was used in Wishbringer.... Why is it that these folks never have names like Ralph, or Bob?

All suggestions, even for my favorite - Bruce Davis - will be appreciated.

- The Great Dark Evil One's Creator

Date: 12 Jul 1988 0922-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Unresolved issues.… To: MARC cc: joel, erhardt

In answer to your questions (dated July 6):

1. There will NOT be variations on the pix. In the seven instances where different characters can be involved, we have instructed the artist to not show the characters recognizably. (You named those seven instances for us on May 26. They are: Nymph scene, under the blanket; Snakebite victim; Blown across chasm; Killed

going over falls; Trapped by orcs in net; and Kied saving Praxix from orcs. If this list needs updating, please let us know.)

2. I presume there will be music, at least on the Mac, if our music man at Activision makes continued progress.
3. We will have full-screen images if we have time and space. You and I have expressed our concern about Donald just getting the mandatory pix done, so I think it's premature to say that full-screen images will definitely be in the final release.
4. Tag IS shown in several places, as a rather tall, handsome, fair-skinned late-teenager. Changing his name to Shirley does not change his sex. He remains male.

Date: 12 Jul 1988 1817-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey's command area... To: MARC

Well, yes, there are 30 command areas, but only 5 command WINDOWs. My theory would be to position the cursor much as you do now (except you'd say SCREEN n rather than including the x position of the current command window in the computation), then do ERASE 1. You could also use CLEAR to clear one of the 5 windows; from looking at the screen, it seems like you frequently do a complete refresh of various of the command windows. The advantage of ERASE/CLEAR is that no further computation is required: once you're at the end of the line you're writing, you can flush the rest of it without figuring out how wide it is; if you're refreshing the whole window, you can just clear the whole thing and write the new contents.

Or am I missing something?

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1809-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Demos To: MARC

I certainly wasn't trying to leave you with the feeling that CLEAR opcode would be changed, certainly not by Friday. I'd suggest that the least horrible option would be to replace all the places where you print spaces to erase text with a WINPOS ? WINSIZE ? CLEAR sequence.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 0130-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Manual To: JON, VELDRAN

My new bio is in <MARC.X>BIO.TXT, if anyone is interested.

One of the names has already been taken:

Date: 13 Jul 1988 0903-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Pick your poison.... To: MARC at FRED cc: journeymen at FRED, veldran at FRED

The Evil One (whose real name was Y'Syska) does indeed appear in Wishbringer. Mine! Mine! Hands off! Slap!

Why not use a name like The Talon or The Cowl? Or, instead of cliche adjectives like Dark or Evil, how about something off-putting like The Pale One or The White Scythe?

Date: 13 Jul 1988 0920-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Pick your poison.... To: MARC

I kinda like Ralph, maybe Ralph Rotten. Bob bad? Horace the Horrible? The Dark Lo (ugh!!) The Dark Lord is pretty nice. Kind of elegant in nature.

Royalty and evil go so well together.

Date: 14 Jul 1988 0952-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Pick your poison.... To: MARC

But if you used Bruce Davis you'd have to move everything from "to the north" to "to the west" and mess with the whole map.

I think Mediagenic is not a very good name. I have to take my Mediagenic and go to bed now. Good night.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 0956-EDT From: TV <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: The name of the beast To: Marc

I vote Dark One. However, I also kind of like the thought of a group of Dark Ones. A sort of Oligarchy of Evil.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1003-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Names To: MARC

The Dark Lord and The Evil One are a bit too derivative, don't you think? How about something "completely different." For example...

The Night King / King of Night	The Old One
The Lord of Cold / The Cold One / The Cold King	The Boney Man
The King of Dreams (this is a ripoff of Lord Valentine's Castle)	The Yellow Skull
The Ferret King (or pick another sneaky-sounding animal...)	
The King in Yellow (ripoff of a Victorian horror story)	etc. etc.

Just don't make it too much like Sauron.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1051-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Pick your poison.... To: MARC

I suppose the magnitude of the name (just how dark and ominous it sounds) should depend on (a.) just how evil the bad guy is; (b.) how long he/she/it has been that way; (c.) the origin and history of the individual in question.

For instance, the history of Sauron in Lord of the Rings (he did have a name), who is referred to as the Dark Lord (if I recall correctly) most of the time, was the longest, darkest, and most evil one I have ever seen.

You might check the thesaurus for other adjectives or phrases such as wicked, morally reprehensible. Moriarty's message suggests to me that the bad guy might have other qualities (and perhaps isn't even evil)...

I remember right now what history of the bad guy was in the story, so many or all of these suggestions may not apply, but perhaps they might stimulate something.

the Madman the Misunderstood One Bruce the Wicked

the So Unbelievably Wickedly Evil SOB that Words Can but Utterly Fail to Describe So I Don't Know Why They Try One (the SUWESOBWCUFDSIDKWTT One…)

Maybe you could have a smaller list of adjectives or something to spell out something, and abbreviate it thereafter the Wicked Ones (maybe there could be more than one)

What is the significance of your favorite, "Bruce" something?

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1751-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Bad Guys To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

For now, the bad guy is the Dread Lord of the North, but simply Dread Lord to his friends. The name is now a GLOBAL, so it can be changed if an outcry is heard.

Preparing to show off their new games:

Date: 13 Jul 1988 2337-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: PR Demo To: JOE, PATTI, CRAIG at FRED

As you may know, there's going to be a PR announcement of our fall games next week and each game will be demoed briefly. If you've got any favorite scenes that you'd suggest showing, I'd be happy to hear about it.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 0921-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: PR Demo To: MARC

If the graphics are in, the tube scene is pretty nice. The menus, etc., are, however, kind of skimpy there. The woode (wood) elf scene is very interesting. Again, the menus (because Tag is alone) are slender, but the pics are great.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1315-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Demo To: Marc

Do I sense some anxiety in your voice?

A lot has been fixed. Lavos' window was too small, the picture background is now black. The menus are being cleared correctly too.

However, When you choose BUY or SELL or anything with multiple sub-choices and select an item other than the top, that item is highlighted, but the top item is not de-highlighted.

The text in the title screen needs to be centered in the screen as well as center justified.

Sometimes the Title screen stops scrolling with the words "All rights reserved" at the bottom of the window.

The picture of Hermit shows him outside his hut. The text says it's inside. I would make it all take place outside rather than just beginning outside since that picture's up so long.

Also there is some text that says that the hut is new. There is also some text that says it's ramshackle, It can't be both. make it ramshackle since the pic is.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1721-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Demos To: JON cc: duncan, taa

No, I can't fix this by Friday, at least I think I can't. Last I talked to Tim, I had the feeling that an opcode in the interpreter would be changed to allow me to "do the right thing." If not, the changes I need to make will take too long to be working by Friday. If so, there should be no great problem.

Another kludgy alternative would be to have the interpreter use the old fixed width font in my command window, though I don't know if that can be handled either…

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1839-EDT From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Demos To: MARC cc: JON, taa

Yes, the interpreter can supply the monofont in the command window.

Date: 14 Jul 1988 2152-EDT From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Fonts To: MARC

The exact size of the 12-point monofont is 7w by 15h, which yields a 68 by 20 character screen. Current command window widths, as calculated by JY, are

Mac: 13 14 12 12 13 (2nd one too big?)
20: 15 13 15 15 15

A suggestion: in "tight" displays, avoid indenting everything in the leftmost command window (in big displays like Mac II, the indentation is good).

Using 12-point Geneva (the new default) in the command windows would tend to decrease string widths, enough that I think most strings would fit. A wrinkle is that, to keep the strings short, you would need to use a technique other than all-Caps to indicate defaults, at least on the Mac. Bolding, say, would not change the width.

JD tells me that the Apple II interpreter is going to a proportional font also, mainly to squeeze more onto that small screen.

Date: 14 Jul 1988 1524-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Re: MacII Pix] To: MARC

First, calm down. I'll get the thing from Jon and bring the files down to Fred, whereupon you'll be able to peruse the names and figure out what IDs they should have.

WRT Joe's report:

1) You want to set the background color in the graphics window to black; CLEAR will then clear it to black, and there'll be a black border around the picture. There's a compilation flag already defined (BLACK-PICTURE-BORDER) to do this; set it to T instead of <> in the game.ZIL file (the only difference between JMAC and JMACB is the setting of this flag).
2) In the initial menu, Change name and Background don't get totally erased (leaving 'me' and 'd', respectively). They aren't even close to the right edge of that window; the problem is that the character width is 7 pixels, but a space is 3. You could either switch to the monospace font or use the WINPOS/WINSIZE/CLEAR theory instead (or put in a special-purpose kludge that takes the 7 and 3 into account).

Date: 14 Jul 1988 1240-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Manual
To: JON

Are you supervising the creation of the manual; is it in a form that can be viewed?

Date: 14 Jul 1988 0935-EDT
From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: [PR Demo]
To: Marc

I didn't know there was any more in the game to be removed. I like Praxix' diversion and the ensuing scenes.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1146-EDT
From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Fonts
To: MARC

Bold looks quite a bit better now with 12-point fonts, I'm glad to report. Adjacent letters don't collide like they used to. There are no true (separate) Geneva or mono italics that I know of. Italics are commonly generated, even in word processors, by just skewing the base font. The interpreter has never supported it since it causes problems with monospacing.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 0056-EDT
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Other changes
To: marc

I changed the <HLIGHT 8> you do in INIT-SCREEN (or wherever...) to a <FONT 4>, which is the mono-spaced font (a new feature, not yet in the spec). This allows HLIGHT BOLD to work instead of PRINT-CAPS with the mono font; in the new theory of fonts on the mac, the bold monospace font looks pretty good.

All the new pictures are in.

I added a new routine, GRAPHIC-STAMP, which takes a picture and a relative position (one of TOP-LEFT, TOP-RIGHT, BOTTOM-RIGHT, BOTTOM-LEFT) and overlays it on the existing graphic. The only current use of this is in ELFSTREAM-1, where the nymph is overlayed on the nymphless waterfall. I'll let you know if it works.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1531-EDT
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: GRAPHIC-STAMP
To: MARC

Yes, but there's one enhancement that's required—you need to remember the existence of the stamp and its location, so it can be reconstituted in case there's a save/restore (I forgot to put that in last night). The call is <GRAPHIC-STAMP picid where>, where 'where' is one of BOTTOM-RIGHT, TOP-LEFT, TOP-RIGHT, or BOTTOM-LEFT. It should happen real soon after the GRAPHIC that's being stamped, because it assumes that PICINF-TBL is still valid.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1622-EDT
From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bugs
To: MARC

Inconsistencies are actually the kind of bug I like to find the most, because they're a lot more interesting to me for some reason than mere typos or ZIP20 bombs. They're also something you can specifically look for which makes

the job more rewarding when you find them.

In Zork Zero, which I had been testing for a while before this, Steve has a lot of puzzles that turn out to have multiple non-intended solutions, which are especially fun to find. Between those and other interesting bugs, I had been driving Steve crazy (not intentionally, but as a by-product of the sorts of bugs I tend to and like to find).

In any case, your impression is right.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1429-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Grey reagent mixed with air To: Marc

I can't figure out what to do with it besides make Praxix' staff glow green. Does it do anything else? What do I need to cast it on?

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1554-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Spells To: MARC

Well, it just seems weird to repeat the text on events like this, and it reveals the characters for the automatons they are (software automatons, anyway). All I can think of, although I don't know if it's worth the trouble, is to have a flag indicating whether or not that particular spell has been cast there already in the present context (i.e., it's ok to let Praxix experiment with the elevation, cast the fireball, and cast the elevation again, since it's a new response), and if it has, have him suddenly recall that he's just cast that spell (with whatever effect it had). I don't know how complicated this is to do...

Date: 16 Jul 1988 1209-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Stamps To: TAA cc: joe, jon

There are two stamps in the current collection, G-FIRE-RAINS and G-TANGLEWOOD-BURNS, for which I don't know the alignment of the stamp. The others I have already installed code for. If you've seen them, perhaps you can let me know.

Date: 16 Jul 1988 1511-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Additional graphics.... To: joe, jon

I spoke with Donald today and he said he had no knowledge of the new graphics that have been added recently. They are at the end of the GRAPHICS.ZIL file, and there are 3-5 of them, as I recall. It would be best to get him the stuff, so it doesn't get lost in the cracks.

Date: 17 Jul 1988 2212-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Unresolved issues.... To: MARC

1) Title screen
2) # pix maximum
3) Theme music
4) Translation of graphics
5) Manual

Date: 17 Jul 1988 2210-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Full-screen pix To: JON

Regarding full-screen pix in Journey, it's at least clear that we'll need something as a title screen.... Is there any corporate mandate about what title screens look like? If not, will you please supervise the creation of one (it should probably fill the top part of the screen (i.e. the same height as the others, but full width))

Date: 18 Jul 1988 1017-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stamps To: MARC

Neither of the two you mentioned looks particularly like a stamp, unless I'm missing something.

The problem with size is that with 50-odd pictures included in the file, the size is over 230K (I'm trying it now with perhaps slightly better compression, but still...) Assuming the remaining 90 pictures take up as much space, we're easily over 500K on the picture file, which starts to be a problem for the Mac and 3 1/2" IBM, and probably has it on 3 normal IBM disks. God knows how many Apple disks it would be, since pictures on the apple can't be as heavily compressed (it takes too long to decompress them). Marketing can see the cost of goods skyrocketing.

Date: 18 Jul 1988 0933-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC

I've gotten a couple of I NED (NEED) HINTS calls.o Other than that, not mush. (I have GOT to do something about this backspace issue!)

Date: 18 Jul 1988 1339-EDT From: TESTER.CRAIG
To: MARC Subject: Warning

I hope they don't kill the bearer of bad news around this place...

There are a lot of bugs, all of the same type, that I have sent so far today. They all involve killing a lot of the party and then looking at plurals where there should be singulars. There seem to be a lot of them, and I'm not sure I'm finished finding them yet.

Some problems with the manual:

Date: 21 Jul 1988 0138-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey Manual To: JON cc: joel, joey

I've read Tom Veldran's first draft of the Journey manual, and I must say that I'm very disappointed. In general, it is poorly written, wordy, often downright confusing (or confused), and frequently in error. The fact that Tom regards Bergon as a Wizard demonstrates either that 1) he hasn't played the game, or 2) well, it's worse than number one anyway...

Now that you're leaving, I don't quite know to whom I should be whining. I hope that there's someone around there who can rework it entirely; if not, I can do so myself.

Please advise about the best course of action (I'm told by Mikie that the final draft is due around the end of the month.)

Date: 21 Jul 1988 0911-EDT
From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual
To: MARC
cc: joel, joey

I don't think Tom's draft is nearly so bad. The factual errors can be easily corrected; the confusing passages or wordiness can be edited. On the positive side, I think his organization of the material is logical. I'll edit my copy of the draft and give it to Tom. I suggest you do the same. I really DON'T think it's necessary for you, or anyone, to rework the manual entirely.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1427-EDT
From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Attitude
To: Marc
cc: jon

I think you're out of line.

You are entitled to not like the draft of the manual. You are entitled to criticize it. And if you want to bitch about it (without providing constructive criticism), you can bitch about it to me. But I think it's BULLSHIT for you to bitch about it to half the company. What are you trying to accomplish? If you're trying to light a fire to get "us" to write a better manual, then I'm sure you can employ better psychological tactics than negative feedback to Liz and Dave and Joel and Joe Ybarra.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1454-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Attitude
To: JON

I am responding to what I see as a general lack of coordination of the project. In the past few weeks, I have been continually assaulted with surprises - graphics are behind schedule, the manual did not appear last week as expected, the cover art seems to defy improvement, the demo disk I got on Tuesday wasn't tested (and didn't work in some cases, causing me to have to rework my presentation,) there are now too many pictures, etc., etc.

My letter to you regarding the manual was a learned response to a generally frustrating situation - sitting here 3000 miles away and watching things appear to slip. I sent the letter to those you mentioned assuming that one of those people would do something about it. Given your current situation, it wasn't clear who that should be. I sent a copy to Dave, by the way, because he had seen the manual already.

I have, in the margin of my manual copy, about 50 comments regarding corrections, writing style, etc. for the manual. I resent the insinuation that I have no constructive comments to make - as you will no doubt recall, I offered to rewrite the piece in its entirety if that would help.

I may have reacted in an overly aggressive manner in this case, and perhaps I should have omitted some people from my letter's mailing list. But I will not back off on my opinion that the manual is terrible from front to back, and that it needs major, not minor, work. The fact that you pass off my comments so cavalierly only increases my apprehension that little will be done.

I know Tom hasn't written manuals before, and I applaud his getting involved, but I don't feel that encouraging him to pursue his writing interests somehow takes precedence over producing the best possible manual for Infocom's products.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1626-EDT
From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bugs
To: MARC

You're welcome. I very much like and appreciate getting your responses, and would like it if you continued to do so.

As for becoming incompetent, I don't know what my conscience would think of that. However, the spurt of 50

bugs on Monday is not something I expect to be repeating anytime soon. I don't know how many I've sent today, but I don't think I sent too terribly many yesterday or the day before... I'd go to my pool and cool off regardless of how much work I had to do, except that I don't have a pool and it is presently raining (this summer Boston weather is bizarre to me, being a California native myself... I'd prefer winter to this, so at least I'd have half a clue as to what to expect). Be sure to stock up on your winter clothes before you entomb yourself.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1007-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stamps To: MARC

Last time I looked at it the only stamp that was installed worked, but that was before you rehacked the code. People tested it and said 'oh, it looks great'; perhaps they didn't know that there were supposed to be stamps in all those places.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1035-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: stamps To: marc, Liz

I was given the impression by Tim and Marc that the only the Elf-by-waterfall scene was going to be implemented in time for the demo, and, the opening-Dwarf-gate scene worked correctly on the last version Craig and I tested. It's possible that Duncan gave Mike D. the most recent, thou untested, version to bring to N.Y.C.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1642-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Graphics update To: Marc

I just uploaded some more graphics onto Fred. They are leftover scene 1 pictures.
They are:

AU-FOREST-TUNNEL	BZb-HERMIT - NOW INDOORS
BL-PRISON-RUNES	BZe-LAKE-POOL
BT-SUNSET-TOWER	PLAIN-RIDGE
BW-ORC-FORK	

Here are some picture/text discrepancies that must be resolved: The picture out of sunset tower not drawn at sunset; change text to indicate late morning. The right stair picture of the open dwarf gate does have night through the hole, so the right stair off the junction must be made long (a day's hike.)
The sticker of raft on falls cannot be used since the raft must include all the people in the party.
A nice feature would have been to have the program automatically stick in the right characters; I've already had to get rid of potentially absent characters (with Donald's ok, of course.)
those scenes are:

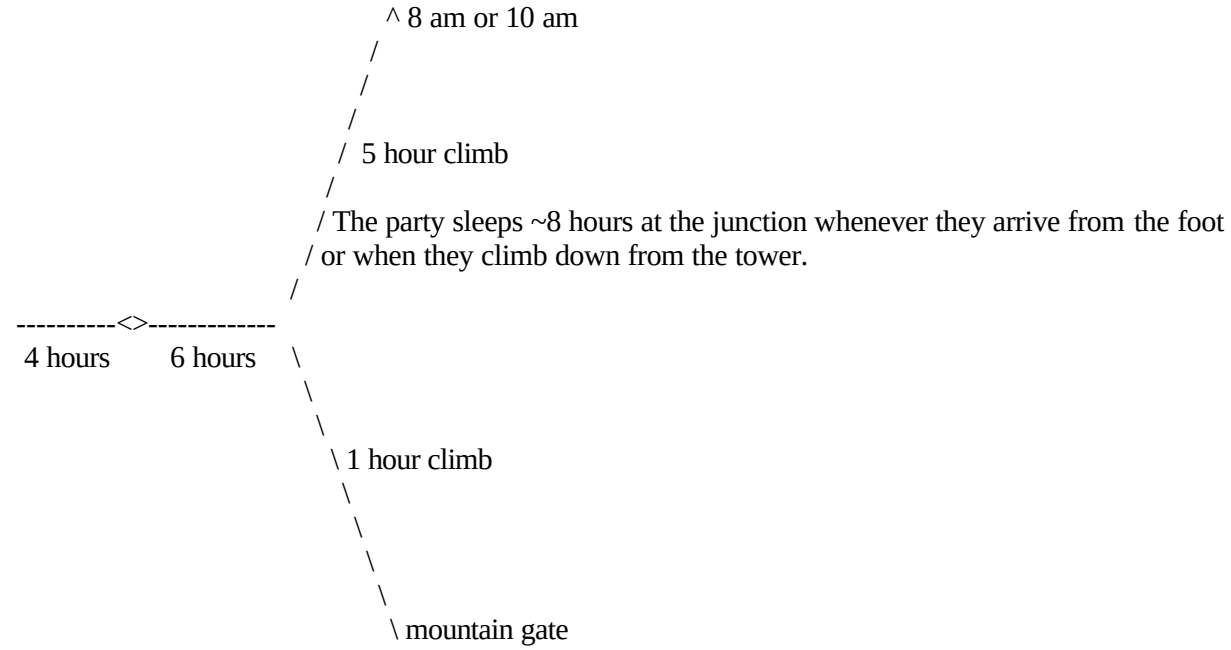
lake-shore
stair junction

I have to figure out what my new responsibilities are - with Jon leaving. Could you tell me what Tim's role is in putting the graphics in the game as well as your own. Do you call the pictures from the picture file?
The scenes I altered will be uploaded along with more part II graphics.

A timing problem is hammered out:

Date: 22 Jul 1988 1202-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Chronology To: marc

There are some timing problems that exist when you climb the stairs to the sunset tower. Donald's art shows the sunset tower at late morning, and the mountain gate at night. Craig and I have resolved this by determining when and where the party naps and how long certain segments should take to climb. Here's a diagram:



the party gets to the junction, they sleep till 3 am (they have no idea what time it is being underground.) a five hour climb takes them to the tower at late morning, as per the picture. A one hour climb takes them to the mountain gate at 4 am where the picture shows night (cool.) When the party climbs back to the junction from the tower, it is ~1 pm. if they sleep at the junction again (it's been a 10 hour hike), they wake up at 9 pm. A one hour hike takes them to the gate at night which is fine.

If they go back down to the junction from the gate they don't nap; it's only been a two hour hike,

More restrictions about how often they can climb up and down the stairs might need to be imposed. Craig an I will fill you in on those.

Date: 23 Jul 1988 1559-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [JOURNEY version 99 #817 Other] To: JOURNEYMEN at FRED

I've changed the geography so as to eliminate the landing at the stairs; for now, it's a single move to the stair junction.

Date: 22 Jul 88 1324-EDT From: TESTER.CRAIG at FRED
Subject: JOURNEY version 99 #817 Other To: JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

PS:<MARC.X>SCRIPT.CRAIG.61; file pointer 9837

You can go up and down the stairs to the halfway or so point (which takes hours) all you want... Also, the description for turning back down the stairs is just a one line one that looks like it was tentative.

A major change is made to the ending:

Date: 23 Jul 1988 1621-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Ending To: joe, patti, craig at FRED cc: marc

I've changed the ending of the game such that the "fog" and "demon" scenes are reversed.
Thus, you first encounter the storm, then the fog, and lastly the demon. The result is that the final move of a successful game is Tag's using magic to defeat the demon and thus arrive unharmed at the castle.
Much more satisfying, don't you think? I don't know why it didn't occur to me earlier!

Date: 24 Jul 1988 0103-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Manual To: JON

If you are still involved with the manual, and want specific comments, let me know.
p.s. Checks arrived for beta and phone bill; only the MacII invoice has yet to be paid.

Date: 24 Jul 1988 0103-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Function keys To: marc, jon, veldran

On machines that support function keys, the following are defined:

F1 - Save	F2 - Restore	F3 - Start Over	F4 - Quit
F5 - Script on/off	F6 - Refresh Screen	F7 - Version	

F3 and F4 require confirmation before they are performed. The function keys cannot be redefined, by the way.
Presumably, this information will be desired in the manual somewhere.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1218-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Manual To: JON

So, is anything happening with the manual these days (i.e. will there be another draft at some point?)

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1011-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Screen widths To: MARC

No new information. The apple II and some ibms will be variable width fonts, and will allow considerably more characters across if you don't go to the monospace font. On mcga machines, since they're only 320 pixels wide, I'd be surprised if a decent monospace font would allow 65 characters, but with the variable width it shouldn't be a problem.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1142-EDT From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Just checking.... To: MARC

Actually, Command-# combinations produce function key codes on all Macs.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1031-EDT
From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Picture
To: Marc

Donald wants know if he can use stamps with the three ships. He'd use stamps of two captains with one ship, the ketch, and then a picture of one captain on the yawl.

Basically the pictures will be portraits of the captains at the helms of their respective boats. This sounds good to me since the look of the captain is so much more important than the boat.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1257-EDT
From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Ending
To: MARC

Ending

Very satisfying, particularly since you get to meet the Dread Lord himself, "up close and personal" (even if he isn't physically there), and be threatened personally by him.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1742-EDT
From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Part III
To: MARC

The more puzzles the better.

But, in terms of actually NEEDING another puzzle... I'll have to get a better feel for how it is now (what with the puzzle I just saw for the first time today).

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1221-EDT
From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Mac
To: JON

I have a lingering fear of being the only one left hitched to the dinosaur and thought you would know what had been ordered for your department. I'll ask Tim myself.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1622-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Comments...
To: JON, VELDRAN

The file <MARC.X>MANUAL.COMMENTS contain my comments on the first draft of the manual.

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1006-EDT
From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Puzzle
To: MARC

Quite right; I haven't seen this demon puzzle. I asked Joe what you might be talking about, and he said that there are TWO demon puzzles, which came as a great surprise to me. I'm going to go and play it now and see what it is (oh boy! a new puzzle!).

Date: 25 Jul 1988 1551-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Manual To: MARC

I'm planning on giving my comments to Tom no later than Wednesday. However, my comments add up to significantly less than a re-write, so you should definitely send your comments to Tom.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1736-EDT From: Grisard of Clause <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Name To: MARC cc: SWG

Well, here's what the Big Dic says:
gris.ard \'grize(r)d\ n -s [F, fr. "gris" gray + "-ard"] : a gray-headed person

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1218-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Tolkien To: MARC

With the four stones, one was given to the Elves, one to Dwarves, etc. With the rings, the same was done... Elves, Dwarves, and I'm not sure who else. Men got seven of them (less powerful than those of the Elves, Dwarves...). I think there were eleven rings, including the One (One ring to rule them all, One ring to find them...) In comparing the rings with the Stones, it's pretty interesting that they're the reverse of each other; Sauron is looking for the One so that he can find and control the rest (the seven to the Men are under his control, with which he seeks the remaining ones). So you have good guys looking for the less powerful stones which tell where the more powerful ones are, while Tolkien has the bad guy looking for the most powerful one in order to find (and control) the less powerful ones to help him take over.

The wise Wizard figure, in manner of speech sometimes make me think of Gandalf, yet at other times (due to the necessity I guess of making the character consistently uneven (since the player controls him and can make him do weird things)) seems petty and absent-minded.

The westflake root reminded me of Aragorn's search (or did he have it with him?) for some sort of potent plant to heal Frodo with when he was cut by the evil blade of a Dark Rider. But as you said, healing plants are not uncommon (even in reality).

The demon on the winged beast reminded me strongly of the Nazgul, the Black Riders on winged horses or something.

Since basically all I've read of fantasy is Tolkien stuff, I don't know how common different elements are in other works.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1730-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bugs, etc. To: MARC cc: LIZ

You are right. There is the potential that the ship date will not be in September. It is all wrapped up in the graphics right now.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1014-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Donald To: MARC

That's something I have to find out. I think that Jon wanted to get them to this stage rather than have Donald turn out one finished product at a time as well. This gives us more to work with.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1022-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Part III To: MARC

Sure. A toughy! A four spell sequence.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1029-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: p 3 To: marc

(One motion more) Now that the tomb of the unknown puzzle has been revealed, (the other demon puzzle) I think it rounds out well. It's especila (especially) nice to end on a move by Tag. Unfortunately, we'll have to wait & see how play feels to people who've not playd (insert e) before.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1033-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hmm... To: MARC

I like the game, though it seems short and some similarities with Tolkien make me uneasy. But then, since it has the bit-mapped graphics, it really puts a cramp on the size anyway. I wonder if there's any compression that's superior enough to the one being used that wouldn't take some of the micros a decade to decompress. I'm used to graphic adventure graphics that have a list of how to draw the screens, like Mac's PICT format.

But I like finding the bugs a lot. I've been programming for a long time, and like to see problems long before I code them. I also like to nitpick and look for problems in reality (people's plans, etc.), and have done it for a long time. It's particularly satisfying to predict where bugs might be found and then find them there (like the rope one I sent yesterday).

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1643-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bugs, etc. To: MARC cc: LIZ

I doubt gamma will be in a week or two, because the game in terms of it in its entirety isn't ready. The questionable element is graphics. Right now I believe people are working on the number of disks in the package.

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1844-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bugs, etc. To: MARC cc: LIZ

It's true to an extent. Zork0 looks to be the closest to on time because both the game and interp are pretty much ok. Re: Journey as it stands, it's unclear right now how many disks will be required for some machines.

Date: 27 Jul 1988 1618-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: marc cc: joey, joe, joel

I don't know whether you've come to any conclusions about #'s of pix for the various versions yet, but...

1) It occurs to me that we might crop each picture by, say, 10% to save space without losing too much picture.
2) I have already looked at the graphics file and found about 25 pix that could be eliminated without any particular harm to the game (it would be nicer with them in, of course...)

3) There are some pix that could become stamps, saving space.

4) There are add'l pix that could be removed, though that would impact the game somewhat.

My guess is that using #1-3, I could save about 30% of the current space. The sooner I get some info on the requirements for the various machines, the sooner I can make the changes on my end that will speed up conversion to the other machines.

Whenever you have something, please send it along; right now, I'm not doing much of anything, and figure I might as well start making changes once I get the info.

Thanks.

Date: 27 Jul 1988 1338-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 99 #783 Other To: MARC

The person you leave down there, as I recall, has disappeared once you return to try to get him again. Maybe whatever it is that causes him to fail to respond on your return could happen earlier, say right after he tosses up the key. I don't know what you had in mind (if anything) to happen to him. Could there be some sort of a beast to attack him? Whatever happens, it needs to happen right away in order to disallow having to account for the rescue attempt that would involve Praxix going down and getting him.

Besides a beast, you might have a rock fall on him, or a tremor open up the earth and swallow him, or have him go exploring a little more after he throws the key, and subsequently fall into a pit...

Date: 28 Jul 1988 1129-EDT From: TV <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: manual To: marc

Do you think the "musings" need to be mentioned in the manual. Jon and I think that they are self-explanatory. Stella thinks they should be expla ined.

Date: 29 Jul 1988 1544-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Manual To: JON

Do you know whatever became of the manual for Journey?

Date: 29 Jul 1988 2015-EDT From: TV <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: MANUAL To: MARC

I am waiting for marketing to give me their input. Stella is in Chicago and he wont be back until Monday. I have made most of the changes you discussed in your comments. However, some of your disagreements were with things that marketing had suggested (i.e., prelude and "you" are Tag)

Date: 30 Jul 1988 1259-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: OOPS To: MARC

I don't know how much space the pictures will take up on other machines, because I haven't seen any conversions yet. 533K would be a problem on ibm 3 1/2" disks, since they're only 720K. There clearly is not room for

it on the mac disk along with a black and white picture file; it's marginal at best on the GS, which would only have 1 picture file. It's impossible to say anything meaningful about the apple II and other ibms, since we don't have any conversions yet.

Date: 30 Jul 1988 1312-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Re: OOPS] To: MARC

533K is a problem because we don't want to have two 720K disks in the package (along with multiple 5 1/4" disks...)—the cost of goods skyrockets. 533K is the current projection for the size of the picture file alone; add an interpreter and game file, and you're out of room a long time ago. There is talk of having two SKUs for the IBM — one with MCGA graphics on 3.5", and EGA graphics on 5.25"; the other with CGA graphics on 5.25" and Tandy on 3.5, but that has to be sold to Activision and so on, and still doesn't solve the size problem on the MCGA disk. (Each package would probably have 2 5.25s and 1 3.5.)

There definitely will be two versions of the mac graphics; we would like to ship them both on the same disk, but may have to do something like make the color version available through support. Again, the problem is the cost to us.

Date: 30 Jul 1988 1446-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Pix To: MARC

Ok, let me get this straight:

1) Mac - there will be two version of the graphics and it is undecided whether there will be simply the B/W graphics (with color as an option through support) or have both. In the former case, the game size should be nearly ok, right? 533+220+? Isn't much more than 800.
2) PC - the idea is to have both 3.5 and 5.25" disks in the same package. Each 3.5 holds 720K and each 5.25 holds 360K. If there is just one version of the graphics for each SKU, then the max. total size would be 720, unless we went to >1 3.5 and >2 5.25. In the two SKU scheme, then, we're now at 533+220+(80?), which is 835K, or 115K over. The implication, it would seem to me, is to reduce the graphics file size to about 420K bytes or so, which is a 21% reduction. If the pictures aren't shrunk (i.e. cropped,) that would mean going down to 112 pictures or so (i.e. flushing about 30 of them.) If they are shrunk 10%, we could get away with about 125 pictures (losing about 18 pix.)

Am I on the right track with this figuring?

Date: 30 Jul 1988 1449-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Re: OOPS] To: MARC

One thing to bear in mind with 'small' disks is that the max total size may be less than the sum of the disks included in the package, if either code or picture data has to be duplicated to reduce disk-swapping. On the IBM, this would depend on whether we want to screw people on one-floppy machines with no hard drive; on the apple II, it's inevitable.

Aside from that, I think you're on the right track.

Date: 30 Jul 1988 1509-EDT
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: gs
To: MARC

As far as I know, the only unresolved thing of interest is the number of IBM SKUs; I think it's entirely unlikely that we'll put 2 3.5" disks in any package. I can't make any estimates of art size until I have conversions for each machine, which is one of things I'm working on now.

Date: 31 Jul 1988 1906-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Graphics size, etc.
To: TAA

I've decided to reduce the number of graphics from 142 to 128 as the max. on all machines (i.e. the "highest end", even if no such machine exists...) With no further gains in compression on your end, I propose the following three levels of graphics.

"A" - 128 pix, full size	486K	(my best guess, extrapolating...)
"B" - 128 pix, 102x118	421K	(lose 8 pixels each way)
"C" - 110 pix, 102x118	367K	(fewer pictures; degrades game somewhat)

>From our discussions, I would think that Mac and MacII could work in the "B" scheme without any trouble. It also sounded like the PC versions might be OK with this (421+220+? might be pretty close to 720.)

I don't like reducing the number of pix further, actually, but I think I could get the number down to 110 with some pain and degradation to the game. It seems like the 367 number is pretty reasonable as a worst case, but then again....

Let me know what you think of the plan in general; of course, we could change the amount of truncation, remove a picture or two from either of the levels, etc...

Date: 31 Jul 1988 2027-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Part III
To: JOE, CRAIG at FRED, PATTI, JOEY cc: liz

I'm going to be adding another scene and puzzle to the third part sometime over the next couple of days. This should help fill out the game. I'll give a holler when it's ready for testing.

Date: 31 Jul 1988 1856-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Game changes
To: JOE, CRAIG at FRED, MARC

To reduce the number of graphics, I've made some changes.

1) The midway points up from the canyon to the mountains/lake have been removed.
2) A step has been removed between Tag's arrival at the underwater world and his going to the drowning victim's side (all you could do was proceed anyway...)

Also, Joe, I've removed the following pictures:

G-MOUNTAIN-PATH (not installed)
G-FOREST-TUNNEL (I've made it the same as G-WARREN - was picture #60)
G-NYMPH-POOL (picture #37)
G-FOREST-FORK (Replaced with the more generic G-FOREST; was #66)
G-LOWER-STAIR (Replaced with G-D-STAIR-BOTTOM; was #79)
G-EAVESDROPPING (not installed)
G-INNKEEPER-HITS-ESHER (not installed)

G-INN-FIRE (Replaced with G-ZAN-FIRE; not installed)
G-SHERIFF-AND-TAG (not installed)
G-DEMON-KILLED (Just using G-EVIL-ONE in this scene; not installed)
G-CAIRN (not installed)

For the "replaced with" or "same as's" you'd best check the pictures to make sure they aren't inconsistent. Also, I'd like the following from Donald.

1) A merger of G-ZAN-1 and G-ZAN-2 (like in Lavos, in which one picture suffices for both locations.) The new one will be G-ZAN.
2) Can Donald merge the two "bite healing" pix in any way?

More later; thanks.

Date: 31 Jul 1988 2040-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: PATTI cc: MARC

Well, I wouldn't say the reviews were that good....
Overall, I think the comments were favorable, with a couple of consistent criticisms.

1) The ending/Part III - With the new ending, the puzzle the people never saw, and the one to be added this week, I think this will be resolved.
2) Not enough challenge - This is partly due to online hints (a few people seemed to complain that there wasn't enough challenge, but had clearly used the hints.) Not much to be done here, unless we take out the "solutions" to the puzzles and substitute broad hints. Of course, then we'll have the problem of people getting stuck. No way to win with online hints....

And of course, everyone has his own axe to grind...

* The person who used trial-and-error to solve puzzles probably didn't bother to figure them out. That's ok, except for his assumption that they weren't logical problems.
* The guy that complained that the story was too similar to Lord of the Rings. This contrasts nicely with the couple of people who loved the story because it reminded them of their favorite fantasy stories!
* The guy who complained that the game was too linear. Oh, well; he's mostly saying he doesn't like the interface. Also, he probably didn't try too many things besides rushing to the ending.

Overall, though, I thought it the reports were quite nice. Everyone seemed to like the writing and the puzzles (even if some thought them too easy) and that's just great.
Thanks for sending the stuff; send more when you get them.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 2004-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics size, etc. To: MARC

If you're just planning to randomly crop 8 pixels from all your pictures for scheme "B", you should do it now to see which ones will need touching up--Joy just spent a few days cropping Shogun pix, and there are only 30 of those. It's only a problem with pictures that have an important feature near the edge.
As I probably said in some previous message, the size of Apple pix is undetermined yet, but I suspect the small number of pixels will more than compensate for the lack of Huffman coding.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 1935-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Incremental.... To: MARC

The problem is that you're referring to the value of a GLOBAL, which doesn't really exist while ZILCH is running, even if it's been initialized. Various Bad Things happen as a result, leaving an atom sitting around on no oblist, and that gets printed out in the abstract. It's probably not good policy to refer to the initial value of a global in zilch, so I'd recommend that you find the cases that do this (start up XZILCH, ctrl-G, <OFF "ERROR">, and wait for the errors) and fix them; the best way is to have a CONSTANT that's the initial value of the global, and if you want to refer to something at top level, refer to that.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 1627-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Games, etc. To: MARC

I think that if Chris Reeve and Jon Palace hadn't left, and the original IBM guy had stayed (we lost about six weeks between his leaving and Scott's starting), there would have been a good chance of meeting the basic plan (all three games on IBM, Apple II, and Mac). Joe Y. is basically going to try to revise their expectations downward AND hit them up for more money. Should be an exciting performance.

On the other hand, the games Christopher is producing aren't in much better shape, and we don't have much effect on their schedules.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 1615-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Games, etc. To: MARC

The major problem, it seems to be, is the graphics. The second major problem is the interpreters. The third major problem is the threatened lawsuit.

The graphics problem is worsened by

(a) the recent management turnover — no VP Development for months and Jon being essentially gone for weeks even though he was officially here;

(b) the amount of time Joel and Joe Y. have had to spend away from the office recently (over 50%);

(c) Joel doesn't want to spend what is apparently the market rate for artists;

(d) most artists don't want to work full-time;

(e) graphics transfer is time-consuming and fiddly;

(f) Tim is more and more annoyed at the amount of time he's spending on it;

(g) Journey in particular has too-large graphics files;

(h) too many people are working on it and no one is really supervising them effectively.

The interpreters problem is just that we have a major upheaval in what they are supposed to be able to do, and that upheaval is very nearly overtaxing both the Systems Group and the machines they are trying to get these crocks running on (particularly the Apple II). The IBM is a problem because of the multiplicity of different graphics cards that must be supported. The Apple is a problem in almost every respect. The Mac is basically okay except for the difficulty of porting graphics.

The lawsuit is a problem for Shogun because it has essentially destroyed my energy in doing anything but fixing reported bugs. How much of a problem it is for you or Tim or Stu I leave up to you.

On the bright side, it doesn't appear that there is any software coming out of the west coast this fall, except for a couple of imports from the UK, so maybe we'll all lose money and Bruce will be out on his ear come next year.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 0941-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Game changes To: MARC

Wow! It's too bad that Donald just showed me all the part III pix late friday. He's on vacation all this week, but has given me the license to hack his art.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 1614-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 8 #839 Comment/suggestion To: MARC cc: TESTER.ADAM

I'd put some in because it's in the tradition of Infocom. Non-copy protected games are fun - they're easy to install on a hard disk. That's why the packaging is key for the games... but I don't need to tell you this... You're a FOUNDER. No, all kidding aside... any ol' Joe off the street could copy the game and not think twice about it. Zork Zero is perfect... the documentation (map of Rockville Estates, Scrap of Parchment telling you your quest, Biographies) is perfect protection. You need it all, it's fun to read, and it's copy protection.

I'm just a lowly tester, and my vote isn't very meaningful, but I really think that you should put in some protection.

Date: 2 Aug 1988 1654-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Journey grafx To: marc, joe

I changed GRAPHICS.ZIL to include the new pictures; I did not do anything to cause stamps to be displayed correctly. The picture iii-a-astrix-2-stones (# 107, associated sticker #108) has no correspondence that I could find in the graphics.zil file, so is not included in the current picture file. Stamps in the new batch are:

112 (upper left) G-DEMON-KILLS-SOMEONE?
115 (lower right) G-GRAY-STONE?
129 (upper right) G-SHERIFF?
139 (upper left) G-WIZARDS?

Pictures numbered 37, 60, 66, 79, 107, 108 (astrix-2-stones), 118 (eavesdropping), 120 (innkeeper-hits-escher), 127 (inn-fire), and 134 (demon-killed) have been commented out of the picture file.

Date: 2 Aug 1988 1824-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
To: joe cc: marc

There's a new journey picture file. Current size is 465224.

Date: 3 Aug 1988 1942-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: PC To: MARC

No problem on PS/2s and friends. The picture file for low-end stuff should be much shorter than the usual 16-color 320x200 ones, so we may come out ok there too.

Date: 3 Aug 1988 1406-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 9 #856 Other To: MARC

It WAS referring to INTRO graphics and SOCK-KNOCKING. I've since been informed of the reasoning. Of course, I've been on the edge of my seat since June 20, socks aflutter, and I can't help but voice my disappointment.

Date: 3 Aug 1988 1412-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 9 #856 Other To: MARC

I didn't say that the reasoning escaped me; just my impatience. It is a fun solution to the space problem and, of course, on many systems, sock-knockers just are not possible.

Date: 3 Aug 1988 1938-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey Manual To: JOEY

The manual, even in its 2nd revision, is unacceptable. Something must be done.

Date: 3 Aug 1988 2245-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New Puzzle To: JOE, CRAIG at FRED, PATTI cc: marc, liz

A new puzzle has been installed in Part Three (you can't miss it.) It's not too difficult, exactly, but I like the scene and its implications, especially for the sequel.

It's probably buggy, so I'd appreciate reports today so I can get it into shape for sending to reviewers on Friday.

Joe: I haven't made a Mac version of this yet; I wanted to wait until it was played for a little bit on the 20 first.

Date: 4 Aug 1988 1131-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bugs To: MARC

Then you will be able to get a hold of more of the black reagent in the sequel, since it may have disappeared in this game (from trying to use it in the absence of Umber)?

Date: 4 Aug 1988 0929-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: JOURNEY version 9 #883 Comment/suggestion To: MARC

Well, that's my point. I don't think it's that kind of game. Who could believe in a fruity carpenter? (Well, this IS fantasy...)

Date: 4 Aug 1988 0958-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: new puzzle To: marc

I don't think adding a new puzzle at this point (right before we're trying to send release copies) is a good idea. I'd suggest that you keep a copy of the previous version.

Date: 4 Aug 1988 1103-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Bugs To: Marc

A few of the bugs from Joe this morning are actually from me. I didn't realize I was in his account when I started. I like the puzzle. I wish there was the space to have the black reagent to wonderful things outside of Umber's presence. (Make the demon cry, weaken the South Seas' crew; freeze the mud puddles instead of using the cloak of darkness...)

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1011-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Cropping To: MARC

My conclusion on the 8-pixel crop (4 pixels from each of the four sides) was that it would take too much from the pictures that made them look nice in the first place. Many had just a few pixels of sky over mountains, or fingers, or some other nice aspect which I personally think if subtracted form the artwork would detract from the overall quality of the graphics. It looked like about half of the graphics wouldn't suffer much, but the rest I think it would have hurt. I'm not sure if that would have squeezed a relevant number of bytes or not, anyway.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1724-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics To: MARC

Actually, given that all of the pictures for all but the Mac II, IIgs, Amiga (and ST?) versions (whichever of those actually get released) have to be translated anyway, and the clipping is sometimes an intrinsic part of that translation, I think that except for the aforementioned machines (for which space is not a problem), it seems irrelevant whether or not such clipping would harm the original artwork. Further, the memory taken by the pictures will be smaller either because of lower color resolution, screen resolution, or both... I'm not sure thinking about the clipping makes sense unless the conversions have been finished or they haven't and they convert them to smaller frames than originally intended, in which case you'd have to talk to the artists to see if they were already having enough trouble getting decent detail (say, for double-hires on the IIe).

Date: 5 Aug 1988 2356-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Cropping To: CRAIG at FRED, JOE

What was the result of your looking into the 8-pixel crop of pix?

Date: 8 Aug 1988 0907-EDT From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Cropping To: Marc

50% looked bad.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 0944-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: [JOURNEY version 11 #911 Comment/suggestion] To: MARC

Yeah. It was brought up by a beta tester (as are most of my current bugs) but I felt the point was pretty well taken. This sounds much better.

Which reminds me: a couple of testers brought up the idea of an UNDO or CANCEL for those occasions when you may hit the key one extra time trying to get through things. I don't know. Mull it over, please.

Marc re-wrote the manual, and others aren't happy about it:

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1002-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Manual To: TOM cc: LIZ

Tom, what's the story about the manual? I can't believe this mail from Marc - "I have been asked to rewrite the manual…" what garbage.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1101-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Journey Manual To: marc cc: taa, veldran, joel, joey

I can't believe your complete lack of manners regarding this whole manual business. Since Tom began working on it, all you've had is complaints and these complaints you've sent to everyone else - most of whom don't give a fat rat's ass, but not to the person who's working every day on the manual--Tom. How unprofessional. Why didn't you just volunteer to write in it the first place? Why make us listen to your whining for these past months? Why waste Tom's time? The final straw in breaking my patience with you was the mail you sent this morning about reading the new manual in your directory and sending comments. YOU NEGLECTED TO INCLUDE THE ONE PERSON WHO REALLY DOES GIVE A FAT RAT'S ASS ABOUT THE MANUAL AND WAS SITTING AT HIS DESK WORKING ON IT WHILE WE WERE READING YOUR MAIL - TOM!

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1108-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Ends of game To: Marc

I played through the end of Part III on the Mac II the other day, and when you lose because of not bringing enough of your party back to Astrix, the last picture you get (which is left on screen) is that of a very dejected looking Astrix. I thought that this was a very effective picture for relating the doom to come... If an ending picture for Astrix jumping off his tower could be done well enough to relate the same feelings, or perhaps that ending could be changed to suit the drawing of another moving view, I think it would add a lot to the game; you would feel you had actually lost something more than just the text can do.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1243-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual To: LIZ cc: joey, joel, taa

Indeed, my first response to seeing Tom's draft was to volunteer to do it myself (I've got the message, if you're interested.) Jon said it wouldn't be necessary.

Liz, I must say that it's you who are the pain in the ass. I have hardly ever whined or complained about anything, certainly not about testing. I challenge you to elicit any such comment from ONE of your testers. In fact, YOU are the only tester who hasn't even played Journey more than a handful of times, so I really don't know how you would know anything about it.

I believe, by the way, that my past two games met (or nearly so) all of the testing milestones without problem. You have also complimented me (recently, I must say) on getting beta versions of Journey readied early, and on having relatively bug free games.

I will repeat now what I've said twice before - I think the manual is badly written. I don't apologize for the opinion, and it is entirely professional. In a situation in which Jon is leaving and mostly ignoring Journey, I think it's entirely appropriate for me to address my concerns to the managers involved in the game. Surely, they wouldn't take such comments personally or throw fits because of negative comments about their friends? Wouldn't that be unprofessional?

When, last Thursday, I was at Activision, I mentioned the manual again to Mike Dornbrook, Joe Ybarra, and Rob Sears. I said that I wasn't happy with the progress on it, and again volunteered to rework it. Their response, in unison, was "Do it!" (and quickly.) That is what I've done.

It's all too clear to me that you would be just as happy with a bad manual, as long as it's written by Tom. This is utter nonsense, and it's entirely unfair to me, personally, and to the game that I've been working on for about a year. I'm not going to sit back and accept shoddy work just to please you (or Jon, for that matter.)

And why is it that you don't defend the manual itself? Have you read it?

I am sorry to upset Tom, but it is my understanding that managers inform people of decisions of this sort. I am not Tom's manager, nor do I know who it is. If the thing wasn't handled right, why not blame Mikie or Joe Ybarra, or even Joel?

If you think you're frustrated about it, imagine how I feel seeing a manual I honestly believe is terrible - and nobody does anything about it! The same thing has happened, by the way, with the cover art for the game (it, too, is changing...)

Overall, I find your reaction entirely and disappointingly predictable. Since when is product quality not important?

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1253-EDT From: Curtis T. Shark <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Manual To: MARC

Thank you for your promptness and such. I will get comments to you asap. I am in charge of it and had been giving comment to Tom on it, but was neglect in not getting in touch with you. I'm still trying to work out the who YOU are concept but will follow your lead. And by the way.. one other small point...I really like the windows/doorways illusion. Talk to you soon.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1300-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual To: MARC cc: LIZ

Marc, get bent. I'm not so pro-Tom that I'm willing to accept shoddy work. I find nothing wrong with the manual as is, nor do any of the testers, or for that matter anyone else who's read it. I think you've mishandled the whole matter by complaining around Tom. And I can't believe that you don't know that Tim is Tom's manager. It was only at prodding from Jon that you finally directed criticism to Tom.

I'm positive I could pick more than one tester out of the group who would say that you can be a pain, so don't bet any money in that direction.

It's funny you say that you predicted my reaction. I've always been firm about sending everything out as clean as it could be. I think you should just take your licking and realize that things could've been handled much smoother.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1309-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual To: MARC

I'm not going to comment on the relative merits of your version of the manual vs. Tom's, since I've read

neither and haven't played the game. I think that Tom is right in feeling that you have treated him badly, regardless of how good or bad his draft is. The first I heard of this was a piece of mail Liz forwarded to me; you had sent it to all the testers, Dave, and God knows who else, but not to Tom. Of the group of people who got the message, in short, only Liz had the slightest chance of being Tom's manager (in fact, I am); I haven't the foggiest notion of why you sent the mail to the rest of them, unless you wanted to ensure that Tom achieve the maximum level of annoyance.

Fine, so this weekend you decided you absolutely had to rewrite the manual. Once again, everyone but Tom heard about it first. Marc, this is BULLSHIT. I can see your wanting to write the manual, regardless of the quality of Tom's, just to have the same style; I can even see your deciding that Tom's draft is hopeless. I can't see your treating Tom like a nonentity, which is what this amounts to.

Are you planning to write the machine-specific parts of the manual? If so, who are you going to get the information from? Me? I don't have time. The micro hackers? They don't have time, and you have to talk to a bunch of them. Tom? Why the fuck should he want to help you? Do you want Tom to write it? Why the fuck should he want to help you? Didn't your mother teach you any manners?

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1327-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: TAA

You know, Tim, this thing is a little out of hand.

1) I didn't "decide to write the manual." - Mike, Rob, and JoeY ordered me to do it, after I volunteered (yet again.)

2) I never wanted to write the manual; never. I was asked early on whether I wanted to do it or not - I replied firmly in the negative. I've only volunteered out of sheer frustration. I didn't want to waste my weekend with it; on the other hand, it's PAST its deadline.

3) I didn't know who Tom worked for, and, even if I did, it isn't clear to me that I shouldn't speak to his manager first. The fact is that I assumed Jon was in charge, since that's what I had been told. Jon barely responded to my inquiries about the manual, and then Tom's draft appeared. Since Jon had by then quit, I sent mail to all of the managers (plus Dave, who had delivered it to me and had presumably read the draft.) in the hopes that someone would tell me what to do. In fact, all I got back was "Don't worry about it" and the like. The 2nd draft, which I patiently waited for (over three weeks!) seemed no better, and the deadline was fast receding. I volunteered to spend my weekend at it because I feared the product would be delayed in shipping if it were delayed any longer.

4) I honestly didn't know what you were Tom's manager until this morning, probably because I now think of him as "the guy who's writing the manual." In my mind, that would be a marketing or project management function, so I figured that he reported to someone else, at least in regards to the manual.

I know this may sound crazy, but I don't think anyone cares in the slightest for my frustrations in dealing with this after spending a year working on the game. It took ten weeks after asking about the manual to see the first thing - I knew the deadline was approaching, and nobody seemed to care! Really, what was I supposed to do? The problem, I think, is that nobody wanted to upset Tom (not Jon, not Stuart, not anybody.) The result is that I look like the bad guy, but it just isn't so. There's been a failure of project management, and that just leads to lousy communications, wrong assumptions, and the like.

I'm sorry if Tom is upset; I'm sorry if you are upset; I'm sorry about the way this has turned out. But I don't think I'm wrong about the manual, and I don't honestly know how, given the messy state the management of the project is in (nobody's fault in particular,) things could have gone better.

Why isn't everyone mad at Joel, or Jon, or Mikie? Isn't someone supposed to have had this process under control? From 3000 miles away, I'm the worst person to have to take charge of this, and yet the responsibility (and now, it appears, the blame) seems to have devolved to me. That's the bullshit, and I believe that Tom and I are both victims of it.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1330-EDT From: Curtis T. Shark <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Manual To: MARC

Much has to do with Jon's absence. I took it over unofficially some time ago (Zork Zero, first, then all of them) but only last week (2 weeks ago ?) officially. Once again I apologize for the lack of communication from this end.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1336-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual To: TAA cc: marc

By the way, I am not expecting to write the machine-specific parts of the manual. Clearly, I don't have the information to do so. I don't know who usually does this, although from your message, I would assume that it has been Tom's responsibility.

I'll agree that there's no reason that Tom should want to help me, especially with you and Liz joining in the vituperations against me. I wish someone would point out that the blame for this mess does not rest entirely with me, but rather with the management of the project.

I assume that Tom would do it because it's his job, the same lousy reason I rewrote the manual this weekend, and the same one that has me pulling my hair out at the dozens of bugs that appear on my screen every morning. The same reason we're all under so much strain these days....

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1341-EDT From: Curtis T. Shark <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Manual To: MARC

Let us now resolve to go forth and show all the world the great and lofty sentiments that can be expressed only in a well-written manual.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1343-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Testing, etc. To: liz cc: marc

I think you will find that I've taken virtually every suggestion from your testers, and that no Imp would have done more. I dislike the suggestion that I am arbitrarily difficult to work with, and I would advise your asking Joe, Kurt, Craig, and Patti whether, on the whole, I have been pleasant or not to deal with.

I suspect you will not, because the answer will not be to your liking.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1349-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Friday To: PATTI, CRAIG at FRED cc: marc

I should apologize for my catatonia on Friday. I was trying to make a version of the game for Joe to send out to reviewers and got nothing but FEEPing and messages of new problems to deal with (it's like being in school and trying to study while a party is going on within your room...)

You will no doubt be pleased to learn that all of those bugs have been "fixed."

p.s. You understand that "fixed" differs from 'fixed' in that "fixed" bugs often aren't.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1352-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual To: MARC

Marc, let's get a few things straight. I don't care who's right about the manual (Liz seems to think Tom's version is fine, and I don't think that's because she wants it to ship with a lousy one, but de gustibus and all that...); I don't care whether you wanted to write the manual or not (although I think you're being ingenuous when you say you were "ordered" to after volunteering); I don't care whether the management of the project was non-existent or not.

The fact of the matter is that you told everyone but Tom that you didn't like his manual (and don't give me this crap about just complaining to management—Joe Prosser is NOT management). That's extremely rude, and Tom has every reason to be upset. You wouldn't have pulled that with me, Dave, Mikie, Meretzky, Liz, Jon, etc.; why not treat Tom like a collaborator rather than the hired help?

Yes, it's part of Tom's job to write the machine-specific parts of the manual. It has always been a problem around here that a particular game is viewed as the property of the person writing it; it therefore behooves that person to at least be civil to the people he depends on to do the rest of the project, so they'll want to do a good job. We can wish all we want that personal feelings not get in the way of doing the job, but paradise has not yet been achieved.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1412-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Manual To: TAA cc: marc

Just one last point. I did complain to Tom, twice, in separate three page letters commenting on his drafts; I have copies of them if you care to see. The comments were direct and specific, not just some offhand negative statement, as Liz would have people believe.

Actually, another point. I was told that Joe Prosser was managing the testing of Journey; since testing's reaction to manuals is important (to verify facts, at the least,) I felt that he should be informed. In fact, he has STILL never seen any of Tom's drafts (apparently, nobody cares about his feelings either.)

I feel obliged to say that, over the past two games, I have acted far less as the games' "owner" than the other imps. I have not always like the packages, back cover copy, etc., but I haven't thrown fits (like Steve and Prof usually do.) In general, I've been content to let others do as they will. But, Tim, the manual was terrible, not just fair (read the first draft, please!) and I felt the need to react strongly since the deadline was up (I could see people saying, as Liz does: oh, it's ok, let's just ship it.) That would have been very upsetting, and I did what I could to get it done better.

When deadlines are tight, when tensions are high, people often appear to have acted badly because they did not have the time or information necessary to do better. Again, I apologize for getting people upset. If there were a way to have rewritten the manual without this having taken place, that surely would have been preferable. Except in hindsight, and even then poorly, do I see how some of tis aggravation could have been avoided.

Perhaps, since the manual would most likely have been taken away from him anyway (by Mikie or you, eventually,) it's better that Tom see me as the villain, and everyone else as his allies.

-marc

p.s. You should feel free to ask them yourselves, but I offered to rewrite the manual - I did not insist. I do not exaggerate when I say that they said "Do it" in unison. They, as I, understood that the manual needs to be done pronto, and that there wasn't time for more back-and-forth.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1416-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Manual

As I've said to Liz and Tim this morning, I feel that we are both victims of poor project management. It has been very difficult for me to get information about the manuals (I've been asking for 10 weeks now,) and the

deadline has come and gone. I have many honest problems with your version of the manual, and you've seen them in my comments. After again volunteering, Mike, Joe Ybarra, and Rob Sears, asked me to rewrite it, feeling that time had run out.

I'm sorry to have upset you, and I honestly believe that this whole episode could have been avoided if the project had been managed properly (e.g. with long enough lead times, better communications, etc.)

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1422-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Testing, etc. To: MARC cc: LIZ

Marc, would you just cut the bs. I'm not saying that you're consistently a demon to work with, but that you can be a pain. I don't need to ask what the others think because I know. This is completely out of proportion - "You're a pain in the ass", "No, you are". All the imps are difficult on difficult levels. I'm not singling you out. My original intent was to let you know that I thought you'd handled the manual stuff badly. And possibly in the future, you'd be more direct with the people who are involved. That's it. The end result is that the manual is being written to your satisfaction. That's fine. OK? OK.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 1452-EDT From: Curtis T. Shark <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Manual To: marc

I like the manual overall. I think it flows very well and is quite well done in both concept and execution. I have made some small changes in <kirsch>manual. txt and noted them with a "$".

Most notably:

I think the Note for keyboard users is clearer separated into two much as Tom had laid it out.

Is Scripting correct when it says that it becomes Script Off when you select "controls" or when you select "script on"?

All the others are fairly minor points.

please get back to me at your earliest convenience so we can get his thing into Pagemaker.

Date: 8 Aug 1988 2300-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: JOEY

We should talk about where things stand now with the project. Also, have you decided upon a week when I should visit. Regarding this, Mike Dornbrook told me that some focus groups were planned on Journey later this month; clearly, if this is true, I should plan on being around during that time period. Give a call, or send mail, or something.

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0933-EDT From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: [JOURNEY version 17 #994 Spelling/punctuation] To: MARC

If sexism were the issue, I would complain about the fact that (aside from the Wood Elf, who hardly counts) there are no females in this game! How do they keep going? This, of course, is not to say that we should try to cater to the female audience (even though they do constitute more than half the population and spend 70% of American consumer dollars).

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0947-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: schedules To: joey

I've worked a schedule for games shipping this fall. (Have I already sent you this mail?) Anyway, the schedule DOES NOT have anyone testing BattleTech or Arthur. You and I need to determine priorities and realities. Zork0, Journey and Quarterstaff are the definite shippers, right? Where does Shogun really fit in, and what of the impossible dream dates set for BattleTech? In the second place, we should be testing Arthur, but I don't know where to put that on my schedule either.

Date: 9 Aug 1988 1213-EDT From: Curtis T. Shark <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Absence To: MARC

Before you go, I pondered last night on the manual and think we need a blurb explaining what a role-play chronicle is, especially seeing how well the category name fits in with your preface. I'll happily take a stab (ie write it) but I open the opportunity to you if you so desire. please let me know.

Date: 10 Aug 1988 1017-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Gamma To: MARC cc: LIZ

I do have a gamma planned. My intention is to wait until the interpreter is closer to what the final version will be. We're mostly caught up rechecking bugs - there were a lot. I'll keep you posted on the gamma status.

Date: 10 Aug 1988 1432-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bug Status To: MARC cc: LIZ

The book's being worked on by Craig at the moment. Patti's catching up on beta reports. It seems to be going well - there's only a few don'wannas (where Imp doesn't want to fix them) - and that's about the norm for any game. We'll have to get a list together and have some trade-offs (remember for Border Zone) we did this, where there were things we really wanted fixed, and some you didn't think were worth the effort...

Date: 10 Aug 1988 1448-EDT From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Journey] To: MARC

I thought of this when I was in the Tavern when Esher was talking to the customers (scouting). There was nothing for me to do but buy drinks or leave. I didn't want to leave Esher there and I didn't want to waste my money on drinks. But I had to choose one or the other. This is the only place I wanted to wait, so maybe there could be another kill-time option, like Chat With Bartender or something ...

Date: 10 Aug 1988 1512-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Bug Status To: MARC cc: LIZ

It doesn't seem like there are that many. This always reminds me of a house closing - we bargain a little, you bargain a little. So, I'll let you know what kind of stuff's on the list.

Date: 17 Aug 1988 1216-EDT From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

It's pretty good. At 9600 baud, the "scrolling" is much better. Right now Praxix is in the ruined castle. This is as far as I've gotten, since I've been trying to map the game, sort of like a flow-chart. It's very hard to do this while playing — a real mapping challenge. I still haven't seen the graphics. It's rather tedious to play through parts I'm familiar with already, so I've written down the necessary moves. Now I can enter large parts of the game into the buffer and the machine play itself for a few minutes. Is a brief-text mode out of the question? (That would cut the 3-page Elf Banquet scene to "[Elf Banquet. You get green amulet.]")

Date: 6 Sep 1988 1343-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Schedule To: MARC cc: LIZ

The Journey schedule got delayed (as did the others - don't panic). Most of its delay seems attributed to the graphics (quantity). Anyway the schedule has it shipping in mid-January.

Did you get a chance to talk to Spike?

Date: 6 Sep 1988 1804-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: [Hi] To: joey

I just got this note from Marc. It would be nice to have a check for him while he is with us. Our deadline is noon Wed. Let me know if there is anything I need to do.

Date: 6 Sep 1988 1609-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Hi To: MIKEK

Hi, sorry I got so upset last Friday about the dates. I continue to hope, of course, that we can push them up somewhat. Will you speak to whomever about the final payment issue? Thanks.

Date: 7 Sep 1988 1803-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: Macintosh Graphics To: MARC cc: MikeK

We've just deployed the Infocom Graphics Rapid Deployment Force to intercept and conquer all remaining B&W graphics for Journey. The Infocom RDF, by the way, is a stable of REALLY QUICK contract artists that we have here who are able to just crank out high quality B&W graphics for us. Donald will pass along all of the great tricks that he has learned and he alone will have the final editorial approval over the finished graphics. If this team knocks down the Journey graphics as they have Zork Zero, then we can get this all done in less than three weeks. I'm taking care of all of the mundane tasks like paying the artists and so forth, so that they and Donald can concentrate on doing what they do best.

When are you arriving? Drop me a line or leave a message here at Infocom or at Mediagenic on voicemail (415-329-0800 x236). I'm not going home until Saturday evening about 5:30, so I will see you when you arrive. I might even be available Monday and Tuesday by phone, but don't count on it since I'll be moving out of my house.

Date: 21 Sep 1988 1813-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Pix, etc. To: MARC

MikeK is the right person. I haven't seen any new ones for some time; there is a fairly solid theory for generating EGA versions for the pc; somewhat less solid for CGA/TGA, but a theory nevertheless.

Date: 22 Sep 1988 1051-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC cc: MIKEK

I just got here. Journey is underway and the schedule is holding. Donald is being Editor-In-Chief, since he created the graphics in the first place. I'm impressed so far. Donald has done a great job in passing along good techniques to the artists.

Keep your fingers crossed, Mark. I think we have a good chance of coming in a little early.

Date: 27 Sep 1988 1540-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: Graphics and Checks To: marc cc: mikek

Sorry for taking so long to get back to you. The graphics are about 25% along to completion and they look great. We will start doing conversions to the Apple ASAP by shifting some personnel around. The target date for completion is 10/13 which everyone is working hard to make. We could do it faster if we wanted to be sloppy, but it's worth doing a good job on this.

Looks like we forgot to send the check out to you. I don't know how that happened and I apologize for the delay. I'm not sure if we owe you for the Beta and Gamma test milestone or for the initial shipment milestone. Whichever doesn't matter. Just let me know which one.

Date: 4 Oct 1988 1700-EDT From: Lord Wat <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC

As a matter of fact I did take a look at it this past weekend. I didn't go very far into it though. I went stopped as I was about to leave my dwarf guide and exit through the underground door. I can't remember the name of it. (I had to turn back from the Sun Tower.) I like the feel of the game so far. I think I was playing an old version of it because some pictures were missing. I played the game on the Mac Plus and it looked pretty good, so I really want to play it on the Mac II now. (Oh, I played version 1598.68) I'll look at it again when time allows. Zork Zero is sucking all my time up right now. Talk to you later.

Date: 10 Oct 1988 1611-EDT From: Scott Fray <GANDALF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

Things are going well. There are just one or two items that have to be dealt with before it is polished. I'll send you a copy in a day or so if you have a PS2 that handles MCGA. The other modes are on their way.

Date: 25 Oct 1988 1152-EDT
From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: JMAC
To: MARC

Zork0 just shipped; sorry for the delay getting back to you. I rechecked JMAC for the menu bugs I reported before.

- On-screen menus still get hung up by Mac menus (pick on-screen Game, then Mac Save...).

- The lowcore Menu bit is still not getting set. JMAC.ZIL appears to include the correct ZIP-OPTION. I reported this to Tim.

Re removing the confirmation from Restart and Quit, some things to consider:

- Clumsy/tired/inexperienced mouse users can sometimes aim for one item in a pull-down menu but pick another by mistake. Fwomp!
- Cmd-Q, the standard Mac shortcut for Quit, could be pressed by mistake instead of Cmd-1 (our "F1"), Cmd-S (Save), a Macromaker soft key, etc.

Date: 25 Oct 1988 1035-EDT
From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Demo
To: SWG

I ended up putting a README file on the demo disk, with a quick list of system requirements and options.

If we do another demo with timeouts, I'd suggest adding a Compuserve-style query before aborting someone who gets past a certain point: "Are you still there? [beep]."

Date: 3 Nov 1988 1012-EST
From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: Marc

I'm sorry I haven't been keeping in touch lately.

In case you don't know yet, all the testers were asked to give an evaluation of Journey including a list of things that they would like to see added to it. So I guess you'll have your hands full soon.

In my opinion, there are a lot of bad attitudes in testing. People that enjoy criticizing the games but don't offer any solutions are working here now and it's really kind of depressing. This combined with lack of direction means that Watkins and I have had to do a lot of extra work.

I will most likely be here full time after this semester is over by the way.

I would appreciate it if copies of this did not get forwarded to anyone.

Date: 4 Nov 1988 1311-EST
From: Mickey Hatcher=HERO <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey
To: MARC

How'd you get the impression that I didn't like it? Joe? You're correct. I think the basic idea is there and the architecture is really exciting, but I thought the game could go a lot farther in terms of character, magic and puzzle development. Anyway, I guess you'll get the full picture later. Talk to you later.

Date: 4 Nov 1988 1321-EST
Subject: Re: etc…

From: Mickey Hatcher=HERO <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
To: MARC

I finished it. It took about 2 or 3 hours.

Date: 4 Nov 1988 1505-EST
Subject: Re: etc...

From: Mickey Hatcher=HERO <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
To: MARC

It's true. I just clicked on proceed a lot of times.

Date: 10 Nov 1988 1318-EST
Subject: Journey, etc.

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: PDL cc: marc

Well, I always considered it an advantage to be 3,000 miles away from Infocom, but I suppose I was wrong. After nine months of hacking away at Journey and four months of doing nothing (i.e. no bugs and people saying "Don't add anything, it's too near ship date.",) I now hear that Journey is a game that none of the inside testers like. News to me, considering the positive mail I've gotten from them.

No doubt, this isn't news to you. I just wondered if you have any insight into what's going on. What's so strange is that the beta people's reaction was far more positive (as was the reaction of the two focus groups.) Now, Joe says "Make it more interactive," with no specifics. He might as well say "Make it better." I've asked him for some more details (was there anything they liked, maybe an example, etc...) so I'm hoping I'll learn some more.

Sorry to dump any of this on you. I thought you might have an Impish reaction or feelings about the whole situation. Thanks.

Date: 10 Nov 1988 1356-EST
Subject: Re: Journey, etc.

From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
To: MARC

I don't think you can read anything into the four-month gap in reports on Journey. During that time no one was playing it, for the simple reason that it was considered more important to get Zork Zero out the door first. There was very little playing of Shogun going on either. There just weren't enough testers. Silence didn't mean they thought it was done, just that they weren't playing it.

Remember also that testing has almost completely turned over since the beginning of the project; only Watkins is still here from before, and part of Prosser. Patti and the rest came on in the middle.

I know there was at one time a competition in testing to see how early in the game you could win by holding down the Return key and looking away from the screen. The fact that that was even possible makes the game sound less interactive.

Also remember that in the interim we've gone from being very positive about "non-interactive" games, such as Infocomix, to being very negative, since Infocomix have basically bombed. If Journey can be described as an "all-text Infocomic," as I've heard it uncharitably described, that presses a lot of the wrong buttons.

I think "more interactive" probably means more choices, more side paths, more things to do that are either wrong or just fun side issues.

Since I haven't played it, I can't say whether these theories are right, wrong, or somewhere in between. I know everyone I've heard talk about the situation thinks the key is getting you excited about working on it some more. I don't think you are being unfairly victimized, you are just getting the attention you should have had months ago. Shogun has been taking a lot of shit lately, too, and is improving (I think).

To be honest, things were just drifting around here from approximately the time Jon left to when Liz was fired. I liked (and still like) both of them, but they were sufficiently burned out at the end to be almost useless. Neither

you nor I was getting the kind of feedback about our games that we really needed, and so both games kind of languished. Now they aren't anymore. Time to get to work.

Date: 10 Nov 1988 1411-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey, etc. To: PDL cc: marc

Thanks for the comments. I don't believe I'm being treated unfairly; rather, I'm just disappointed about having wasted months during which I could have been helping myself (and Infocom) by making needed changes.

By the way, you can't do shit in Journey by hitting the return key (well, maybe you can get one stone.) From the second part on, you couldn't get five moves done without being stopped dead if that were ones' approach.

I think what happens is that since you can START playing that way, apparently (but falsely) without penalty, the impression is that it doesn't matter what you do. Since impressions are what count, this is clearly a problem. (As an aside, I've heard people claim to have finished the first part, when, in fact, they have missed a number of important things.) I suppose that much of the interaction near the beginning is too "subtle", and too "smooth".

I'm just now reworking the entire first part to make it 1) harder, 2) more interesting, and 3) feel bigger. I'm also planning some other significant additions. The problem, of course, is how to beef up the game without requiring lots more pictures!

Oh, well. As you say, back to work!

Date: 10 Nov 1988 1559-EST From: Why cant we go back <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: Re: [Re: etc...] To: MARC

Well, you are correct in saying there is no way to default through the game. The point was that I was able to do a lot of trial and error problem solving to get through the game. It was relatively quick. Like I said, it took about 2 or 3 hours. (The first 3 stones took 20 minutes, and that was with reading the legends and stories. On successive passes through the game I never read these things.)

I hope that the information that I've given to Joe and Mike will be of some help to you. I don't know what else to tell you right now. If you would like to contact me during the day, feel free.

Talk to you later,
Steve

Date: 9 Dec 1988 1135-EST From: Patti Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Help! To: marc

I've re-read the Webba-map scene 20 times now. I'll be damned if I see a clue as to how to proceed up that mountain. Point me, please.

Date: 9 Dec 1988 1248-EST From: Patti Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Help! To: MARC

The musing says "Maybe you missed something about Webba's getting the map…"

I thought I could wash Webba's rune off the map, so I tried casting Rain, but was simply refreshed. The text talks about the rune flickering. I was on the right track, wrong horse.

Now, Question #2: Shouldn't I, upon reaching the Old Forest, be able to encounter the Elves? I go straight to the Mtn. scene presently. Did I miss something?

Date: 13 Dec 1988 1424-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: Marc cc: Joe, Mikek, Da

Hi Marc. I'm playing Journey today and have included some thoughts, opinions, suggestions, bugs and questions below.

I like having Esher get nailed when the bandits ambush, it raises the stakes. However, I'm still a big fan of strategic combat. You can win this battle just by experimentation with the choices though. Being one of the first big decision-making occurrences in the game, I don't think it's a good idea to make it seem so contrived. It trivializes the rest of the story.

I suggest having it be strategic, with the definite though small possibility that everyone die. Esher could still get nailed, but if you don't fight smart, you lose Bergon as well. You're fucked at this point anyway. It isn't very participatory as it is now.

I like the immediate usage of Minar a lot! Especially the fact that if he doesn't scout, you still get nailed when you go right.

Perhaps Praxix could cast elevation at Tag, who happens to have bought a bow and arrows at Webba's, and can now take potshots at the bandits.

There is no text about Esher's dying. He only gets felled by a single blow and that's it.

Bug: You don't always get the text about laying him to rest. The only time I got it was when Praxix tried to cast a spell in battle.

It might be a good idea to display the picture before the corresponding text appears so it can be looked at while the text is read.

I can understand how wizards and magic can be topics for legends at the point in time in which they occur since Praxix is a wizard of sorts, But somehow, Dwarves are a topic as well. Is there perhaps some text explaining that this is dwarf country that isn't getting displayed? You don't dream about them like you do the elves. If it's supposed to be a hint that this it dwarf country, it's too big. According to the legend, Dwarves are so rarely seen that nobody really believes that they exist anymore. Yet you bump into them within five minutes. Again this seems contrived to me. Why not give that option after you go through the gate. It's contents could be necessary to parley with the dwarves correctly.

I like having not having the fire essence. Were I to never have played this game before, I would surely be curious about the dwarves cave.

I think that the text that occurs when the party approaches the Old Forest is corny. You get to the Old Forest after two days and two nights of easy travel and comfortable sleep, and you marvel at this forest as if no one had seen it for 200 years. Maybe If it took longer and was harder I could believe that.

"Strange and dark it was, thick with tall pines firs and redwoods." What's so strange about tall trees in a forest? Eerie perhaps, but not strange.

I suggest that you describe Tag's dream every time he sleeps. Not just when you want to relay necessary info to the player. Perhaps providing background info on some character. this way what you're doing won't be so obvious.

BUG: Having just left Garlimon.

"And then, examining the contents of each packet," he continued "the four basic essences are here: air, earth, and water…." This is only three, and you can still cast glow.

I like being able to use up all the fire essence a whole lot, but wished there had been some message earlier on in the story when I had used a more plentiful essence that the process was consumptive. Like when I elevate myself for no reason.

How come the cave with the pool underneath which lies Minar is lit? You travel down a narrow path to get there, one would expect it to be dark. Shouldn't you have to use up one of your precious fire charges here? It's fairly obvious that herein lies Minar, it might add a little weight to the better-not-go-in-there side of the decision.

BUG: restore doesn't restore pictures.

BUG: When you examine the blue amulet, the text says that Li'ura already gave it to you, which may be false.

Wow! the new nymph scene is great.

It would be neat if you could enhance the danger involved it poking around there. I'm glad that there are some less the altruistic characters in this part of the story as well.

Is it supposed to be that I can't bring back Minar if I have the amulet?

You should be able to drop the rope at a fork after you cross the river. I think that casting the glow spell on the map is an interesting puzzle in that you don't really know whether or not you've missed something.

Overall, I really like the improvements a lot.

Date: 14 Dec 1988 0053-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New Journey To: joe, patti, da

New version of Part One (release 11, I believe...) is now available, fixing all known bugs and adding a small, new wrinkle to the lake/nymph puzzles (courtesy of Joe's suggestion...)

Date: 14 Dec 1988 1328-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Sending bugs & versions To: DA

Yesterday, Joe sent me regular MM mail with bugs, comments inside. That is an ok idea. Express Mail would work ok for relatively minor bugs, but not for crashes, game-stoppers, and the like. Perhaps some combo is best.

Date: 18 Dec 1988 1408-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Hi To: da

Greetings! I've just finished installing a new, VERY difficult puzzle for the 2nd part of the game. Very ZORKish, in fact. Hopefully, I'll have the 2nd part renovation ready by later in the week. Are you going away for the holidays?

Date: 20 Dec 1988 0249-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da

I'm hoping to have a new version of Part II shipped down to you later this afternoon. Hopefully, you can get some good testing done on it this week and next. Please have somebody play it this week, though, so I can be sure it's "playable" (let's not waste people's time testing a really flaky version...)

Ho Ho Ho.

Date: 20 Dec 1988 1459-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New version... To: da cc: mikek, joe, patti

The newest version, Rel. 19, is now on the 20 for your viewing pleasure. It contains Part One and Part Two in renovated form. If you select 'Background' at the opening menu, it will go into a "cheat" menu allowing you to start in Part Two. I don't recommend people use it, especially those that haven't played before (i.e. it should be used only for bug checking, etc.)

Call if any problems, etc.

Date: 21 Dec 1988 1348-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Thoughts II To: JOE cc: marc, da

First, I've made the initial fight more difficult (Minar must sneak off to flank the bandits.) Have you played the latest version?

Regarding traveling descriptions: One of Joe Y's negative comments was that the game was too verbose and descriptive! I certainly don't mind adding more, but I don't want to take shit for it.

You're probably right about spells during combat, so I'll give it some more thought. Thanks for the comments.

Date: 21 Dec 1988 0909-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: [Replies...] To: DA

HERE ARE MARC'S REPLIES TO MY COMMENTS THAT YOU READ EARLIER LAST WEEK.

Date: 14 Dec 1988 1347-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Replies… To: Joe

Status of your comments and suggestions.... All "fixed" and "changed" items are in version 11 unless otherwise noted.

1) Beef up initial combat - I'm thinking about it.
2) No text on Esher dying - What sort of text do you want? When? Please reply....
3) Text about Esher being laid to rest only appearing sometimes - Fixed
4) Put up pictures before text - I've done this where possible. (ver 12)
5) Dwarf legend inappropriate early in game - Fixed (only appears once you've found gate.)
6) Corny Old Forest description - Rewritten
7) Dreams every night - I don't know about working this in....
8) Four basic essences (missing one in description) - Fixed
9) Hint that essences start to run low - Fixed (ver 12)
10) Cave (near lake) shouldn't be lit - Now it is dark, and you must use Glow.
11) Can't bring Minar back if you have amulet?? - I don't get this. It works for me.
12) Restore doesn't restore pictures - Fixed
13) Examine blue amulet gives wrong description - Fixed

Keep 'em coming....

Date: 21 Dec 1988 1301-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Journey Thoughts II To: Marc cc: Da, Mikek, Joe

Hi again.

according to Webster, to be felled can either mean to be killed, or to be cut, beat or knocked down. You were ambiguous. In v19, the context implies that Esher bites the dust.

I will for all eternity believe that strategic combat sequences are a good thing to have.

I wish that the trip could take longer than a few weeks. The game is structured and written so well, it's a

shame that it seems more like a short outing than a Journey. I realize that there exist space limitations, but wouldn't the structure permit a few extra paragraphs, interspersed just to give the impression that some of the travel takes longer?

The fact that it seems to take Praxix longer to cast in battle than in less urgent situations is really frustrating. I can understand that since the actions are occurring at such a rapid pace, you need to slow down the descriptive clock, if you know what I mean. But it just doesn't seem like it should take that long to cast a simple elevation at one of the bandits. Tremor and wind would still prove to be too dangerous to your allies to be cast in battle.

Date: 21 Dec 1988 2023-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: JMAC (Release 20) To: da

The new version has been downloaded to the 20. It should fix the fire/cave bug in which Minar never returns after a successful encounter with the bandits (thus making SCOUT impossible and making the finding of the fire essence likewise impossible.)

Date: 22 Dec 1988 1557-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da

I'll have another version for you tomorrow with bugs fixed, etc. If there are new versions next week, is there anyone I can ask to download them (i.e. who should I deal with?)

Yours screwily, Marc

Date: 22 Dec 1988 1212-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Today's Journey. To: Marc cc: Da, joe, Mikek

Bug: Restore doesn't restore pictures.

When Praxix looks in his pouch, he might see a moderate amount of earth, a moderate amount of water, and a moderate amount of air. Although this helps set the mood, too many wise-asses will miss that and say "I see, it's half filled with mud." Maybe at the first look in pouch, it might describe the pouch more.

In the bandit battle, the text describes Bergon as being the strongest and busy fighting the bandits. There is, however, nothing mentioned about what Minar is doing at this point in time. This is the clue that directs the player to have Minar flank rather than Bergon. If one chooses to have Bergon flank though, there is no consequence. I think there should be.

Bug: in the sheer Bravado scene, when Praxix casts many of his spells (other than tremor,) the responses are broken. most often, the result is

"First," or "Then,"
[Yes that's it.]

I think Hurth should have to scout to find the the "narrow slit of a passage" that you can enter in Part II. That decision is favored too heavily on the side of "enter slit" as it is. Another less painful method of de-emphasizing that might be to not describe it as a narrow slit of a passage but rather as just a narrow slit.

These pertain to v-19.

Date: 23 Dec 1988 0025-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe, patti

Release 24 has been downloaded. Have fun.

Date: 23 Dec 1988 1440-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Federal Distress To: da

I haven't received the package you sent two days ago - maybe you should check on its whereabouts.

Date: 23 Dec 1988 1332-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: Marc cc: Da, Joe, Mikek

Although the amount of detailing you've included adds much to the story, a small neat easy puzzle might be a apple tree with the fruit out of reach, using the tremor or elevation spell would get it.

The Parley option should disappear after the first blow is struck in any battle.

The response to retreat makes Bergon look like such an idiot. Can't the bandits have us backed into a corner or something or at least have Bergon know whether or not he's winning the battle? Although it is funny.

Bug: "Just then, a previously unseen attacker...Not a before he would have been hit, a sword ripped through his body....

extra space ^

I can't understand why Esher would miss the pouch of magic when he examines Garlimon's party. I suppose that fate is arbitrary. Is it Praxix's magical expertise that let's him find the magic pouch so Esher just misses it? I could believe that if the pouch had some invisibility essence on it. The arbitrariness is fine with me, but without an explanation it's seems planned by the writer and is frustrating to the reader.

bug: When Praxix casts flare in the caves instead of glow, the picture should appear only until the beginning of the next move before the window goes black again. This only happens when casting the flare reveals "shadowy human shapes in the distance.…" Although the dwarves have their own fire at this point, the text doesn't reflect this.

Date: 25 Dec 1988 2026-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Bugs To: da cc: joe

I got the FedEx late Friday. All bugs that were decipherable are fixed (ha, ha) in the new version which I'm downloading even as I type. Thanks

Date: 25 Dec 1988 2051-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Rel. 27 To: joe cc: da

Release 27 is on Fred; should have all reported bugs fixed (except a few that I couldn't translate.) Have fun!
-marc

Date: 30 Dec 1988 1733-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe, patti

Journey Release #40 is on Fred now - many bugs fixed; also the third part is accessible (though it will be changed at some point...)

Date: 30 Dec 1988 1623-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey pix To: da cc: eliz, joe, mikek, taa

There are a number of problems with the EXISTING pictures in Journey (there are a bunch of pictures missing, including some which were created last summer, but that's another story...)

These include:

G-PRISON (#53), G-LAKE-SHORE (#56), G-UNDERPOOL-TUBE (#36), G-DARK-CAVERN (#52), G-TROVE-STONE (#101) --> All of these seem to be offset from their proper location on the screen.

G-GOLD-STREAM (#51) --> Seems to be garbaged entirely.

G-MINE-HOLE (#87) and G-MINE-FIND (#88) --> Unreadable, probably garbaged.

I don't know who's minding the store on this, so I'm sending this note to a bunch of people. I'd appreciate learning who's in charge of graphical stuff at this point. Thanks.

Date: 2 Jan 1989 1009-EST From: ie Zany Ghost Label <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey pix To: MARC

Hi, Marc, and Happy New Year to you.

I'm in charge of managing the graphic artists, assigning their work and making sure it gets done well and on schedule (I've only been doing this since November and so claim no responsibility for prior glitches).

When the work is done, I hand it over to Tim and Tom V.

Therefore, the part of your message that concerns me the most is the missing Journey pictures. I'd appreciate having a list of these. If no one else knows where they are, I can get a copy of the original art from Donald.

Date: 3 Jan 1989 0809-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey pix To: MARC

Hi Marc. A lot of those pictures are in the computer, but got missed because of typo's. For instance, Donald's picture of Astrix (he named it something like AA-Astirx,) got entered as AA-Astrix. Since AA-astrix doesn't exist, nothing was put up.

Eliz is in charge of the artists, and Tom Veldran is in charge of the transfers.

I don't know why no one has gotten any info from me, probably time.

Date: 4 Jan 1989 2100-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe, patti, mikek

New version (#51, I think) is ready. The fight with the orcs in OPart One was changed.

Date: 5 Jan 1989 1402-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: here are more Journey comments/bugs To: Da, Mikek, Marc

They only concern Part I. need a CRLF after save/restore response

What happened to Garlimon's sword? Does Bergon take it with him? Does It have some magic power?

In the pool cave: the response to Esher's scout and the group command proceed are the same. Either get rid of both options when one is chosen, or use two different responses. It looks kinda funny when both are chosen consecutively.

In the nymph cavern, after you greet the nymph, if you examine Minar you get: "At first, Minar appeared unnaturally still...it was a simple matter of removing his bonds.…" This is the first time you find out that he's bound,

You have the responses to examine MINAR switched. The EXAMINE MINAR response that you get when you hide is the one that you should get when you stand.

Nymph cavern:
If Stand (as opposed to hide,) then take the wide path, then return, Minar has come to, and Tag can only go back to the cave saying:
"There was nothing more to do here.…"
[What about the narrow path though? I haven't even taken it yet.]

When you take the narrow path, you come to a room that is just like the room off the treasury. Could these room descriptions vary a little it's too confusing and repetitive.

Should it matter if you stand or hide? If it doesn't, then why is Minar there? If it does matter, then the nymphs are using Minar as bait. Then if you stand, you should get captured. This doesn't have to happen immediately, just when you try to leave.

Just as in real life, the player should have to make judgment calls. That's one of the things I like about this game.

Bottom of the pool:
I decided to take the blue amulet and i put it in my pack for safekeeping.
[But I left my pack with Praxix.]

What happens to that marvelous lantern I found? I should be able to drop it anywhere while I'm down there. Either that or change the response. It makes Tag look like a wimp.

If I drop the Amulet before I remove the lid, I can't drop it once I remove the lid.

"I checked our provisions at that point and found, in addition to the basic necessities of food and shelter, a map, a rope." [s.b. and rope.]

At the fork, something should be said, in the advice column (if you'll pardon the expression,) of the fact that there's only an hour before sunset. I wouldn't head into bandit territory if I knew I only had an hour of light.

Praxix' dwarf legends should disappear from the options list when you're with Hurth. It's awkward.

In the Prison area, I dropped the map and went left (or right,) when I got back to the map, Praxix automatically fired a fireball.

The essence ration is too tight. I love the added dimension, but the player must be more judicious about using his spells than the level you emphasize. Adam suggested putting essence at other locations in the game. In part two, there is not much of the four essences to be found. I suppose an alternate solution might be to tell he player that he must be very careful about his use of essence by Praxix.

Is there any way to have a mouse click that isn't on an option just send a CR?

I really like the improvements in the game.

If you pick up the map after you drop it in the dwarf cave, you get the Webba's store response.

When Praxix casts elevate on Bergon he rises to the ledge and drops the rope. How did he get the rope?

You know Marc, You're probably getting really sick of my opinion. Oh well.

after the party climbs up the rope in the prison, Hurth suggests that they go right. If they go left, they chicken out and go right. I think they should all die. There is nowhere in the game where they all die! There are enough places where you lose a single member for going against advice. Here the orcs could eat the whole bunch.

When you cast flare in the prison, you automatically cast two flares, even if you have only enough fire for one.
[Personally, I think you should put a description of the ledge in the text, and let the player cast flare the second time.]
In combat with the orcs, Hurth's flank is broken.
[Not literally, of course.]

Date: 5 Jan 1989 2100-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New version To: da cc: joe, patti

Release 54 is available on Fred - many bugs fixed, etc....

Date: 5 Jan 1989 1641-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: part II journey comments To: marc cc: da, mikek

In the beginning of part II, when you go north and into the cave, Praxix automatically lights his staff. In case you didn't know.

Matt suggested that a puzzle might have both a magical and a non-magical solution which is a neat idea.

at the gate, after you speak, there is a '_' where there should be a '|' in the column before the speak option.

You might want to limit the input to speak to letters. Just like in the name your own character situation. As it is now, you can enter all the characters on the keyboard, as well as clicking the mouse (that puts little boxes in.)

It's fair that you can't cast glow on the runes since that's a likely solution. Although that's a good reason to be able to cast glow on them.

It's too bad that there isn't enough space to add examine runes back in the menu. Everyone will have to look at those runes at least twice.
This puzzle is hard....
I had to get help to solve this puzzle.
I think the puzzle is hard, and without more data, it is too hard.

Suggestion of added data:
When Hurth examines the runes, have him notice and mention that there is a gap between the sixth and seventh rune. With this knowledge and Praxix' translation, the reader will have; please only say gate open to enter storage-room. but Praxix doesn't translate the gap.

you have described the runes in the picture as having the eightmost rune oversized. Do you perhaps mean the last two runes are oversized?

Those orcs must be heavy. You can hear the thump of their footsteps even over the roar of the almost deafening sound of water.

Date: 6 Jan 1989 1714-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Journey comments To: Marc cc: Da, Mikek, Joe

Here are today's comments from Matt and myself. Good morning.

I was able to re-read the runes in 54.

Sorry about the confusion in the hour before sunset comment as well as in the comment about Praxix' staff being lit before they enter the cave.

"Remember, though that I'm not certain of the runes 'hevant' and 'drai'. They might well be levant or even eivant in the case of 'hevant', and 'adrei' in the case of 'drai'"
[Needs a period at the end ———————————— ^.

"We cannot face so many of these monsters...It is all to clear that the orcs now control this level.…"
[s.b. all too clear...

I like the new pouch desc!
At the dead end battle:

When you cast tremor then choose combat: Bergon gets knock on to the ground, the choice to get advice appears (?) although he can't do that. he isn't wounded, but Tag still has to drag him to Praxix' spell. Finally, at the bottom of the flume, he is [wounded]. is he bleeding and bruised already or due to the flume? tag shouldn't have to drag him this time.

If you combat, then cast tremor, then combat; Bergon gets hit by the axe, combat again; Bergon gets knocked unconscious and is [wounded], tag drags him over and he ends up at the bottom of the flume bruised and bloody. This is ok.

If you combat, combat, cast tremor, combat and combat: both Esher and bergon are wounded. Praxix never needs to cast tremor.

if you click on bergon's [wounded] you get a CR, but it also costs you a move! Do this three times after you read about Esher's injuries. and you get a jigs up.

Praxix can now examine Esher and Bergon (as well as Orcs,). He can only examine either Bergon or Esher though, for no reason.

A possible alternate non-magic solution to a magic puzzle, suggested by Matt: At the moment, you have to send Praxix down to get the key, since only he can get out using elevation. As an alternate solution, how about if you send Hurth down, he can climb out because of his agility and climbing experience (or whatever). Any character in the pit would have the option CLIMB, but only Hurth would be able to do it successfully.

Joe: I agree with Matt. Praxix does practically everything in the game already. Let someone else share the spot-light.

(This is Matt) Actually, Praxix would probably be the last person I would have jump ten feet into a dark hole. After all, he's a frail old man.

Leaving Esher in the skull hole:
"As we prepared to leave, Esher screamed....In all likelihood Esher was dead.And so we retreated.…"
need a space before And.

(Matt): Esher doesn't use his abilities as a healer very often. Maybe one thing you could do is have him pick some of the fungus and moss which Praxix notices on the wall under the stump and do something with them. How about, if ESHER examines the wall, he notices healing herbs and Tag picks them (if PRAXIX examines the wall, he doesn't notice them). These herbs could then be used as an alternate solution to healing Bergon after the flume ride. If you want to make the reagent solution a necessity, have someone else get injured in the game. Maybe someone gets injured by the tangle trees.

(Matt): A very buggy situation: I did not meet Minar at all, then immediately chose the left path at the first fork. This happened:

1 - "... watched in horror as Esher was felled …"

2 - chose combat option; once again "... watched in horror as Esher was felled"

3 - "... Bergon and Minar <he's not with me!> were making some deadly hits…"

4 - THEN man appeared, bow in hand, introduced himself as Minar.

Same game — With only Bergon, Praxix and Tag, went to the lake.

"Seeing how weakened Bergon had become, dare nrimxqQlgg is gka pulled him from the lake and dove in to catch our lunch himself…"

I didn't realize *dare nrimxqQlgg is gka* had joined my party.

If you get to the Old Forest by avoiding the dwarf area and nymph area, you are screwed. You only have the option "Proceed." Perhaps you could add the option "Back" ?

I'm at the point where there is an ornate path and a crude path, underground in part 2. I lost Esher at the orcs, Hurth in the Old mine, and left the injured Bergon behind, so it's just Praxix and Tag. However, the picture contains three adventurers.

(I'll fix that. Joe)

The option "reread runes" doesn't disappear once Praxix rereads them.

(I don't think it should. joe)

When Praxix decides to do a diversion, it is possible for him to have NO options if he wastes all his essences. He can't even "return", since they send him back to do the diversion again. The only option on the screen is "Game." — you have to restore or start over.

Date: 6 Jan 1989 1008-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Did I forget? To: Marc

Did I forget to send you this file yesterday?

Dream sequence 1:

"...And then, the wind changed, and a gentle breeze blew, and we were carried off that precipice, but were not afraid, and glided and soared into the ocean of air."

[This is an incomplete sentence.]

AS it is, you only get one fire charge from Garlimon's party. This is insufficient to get the dwarf stone since you must fire two flares to find the ledge. [This may not be a bug.]

After I drop the map and then proceed:

"Just then I noticed that the map...was sitting on the ground by my feet...

Praxix shook his head slowly. 'As I suspected - we are in a prison after all. And it would appear that the only way to go is up!'"

[Is this paragraph supposed to be there? Why doesn't Praxix believe Hurth? Hurth, a Dwarf, says it's a prison. Why is the hidden overhead ledge puzzle given away? Is this to make the flares unnecessary to find the ledge? I went in to the prison without any fire essence and the game didn't automatically cast flare, but it did accidentally print out this string.]

The game should clear the text of the text window when you restore. So you don't have text from the previous scene when you begin elsewhere.

If the magic essence logistics can be balanced, this game will be more great. Praxix doesn't know when he's used up a particular essence until he has cast it. I guess from the description of the pouch, he just reaches into the bag and removes whatever he needs without looking.

Weird bug:
If you save the game while you're in the UNLIT dwarf cave, and then restore back to it, you get a picture of the open cave door.

If you take the right fork to the Orcs, go back, then go left, the text and picture tell you that you can only fight, but the menu only lets you proceed.

Wow. that new orc scene is neat!

BUG: I'm up at the fork leading to the orcs, choosing inventory
"I checked our provisions at that point....of food and shelter, a rope, a map, and .
[extraneous 'and .' here.]
Same location as above: when I scout, I use the option to scout, I lose the option to go left.

You can try and enter the prison after the Orcs whomp you as many times as you want.

I like the solution to the orc-fight.
FIXED BUG: After Praxix casts mud, Bergon has the option to flank. this is Broken though and results in a CRLF.

The picture of Agrith holding the dead Hurth isn't put up until after the two screens are scrolled through. The picture complements the text there well though.

When you get back from the prison to the stairs;
"It was a short walk back to the stairs, and we prepared to make the long ascent."
[The player has the option to proceed or go up. This may lead some of the players to the conclusion that they should go up.]

Date: 8 Jan 1989 1518-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Essences... To: da at FRED cc: joe at FRED, adam at FRED

Please forward this (on paper, I suppose) to Adam, if you would.

I've examined the issue of amounts of essences, etc., and have, in the process, discovered a number of bugs which may have made matters more difficult. I have also changed somewhat the amounts and places in which the essences can be found.

Adam, you were quite right about Part II being unfinishable, and this problem has been fixed.
According to my play-throughs of Parts I and II, the optimal ending situation would be:

Part One: Air: 3, Fire: 4, Earth: 4, Water: 2, Reagent: 5
Part Two: Air: 2, Fire: 4, Earth: 5, Water: 3, Reagent: 3

Clearly, this makes some assumptions about the use of magic in situations in which multiple solutions are possible. I'd appreciate hearing from you as to whether your playthrough come up with the same sorts of numbers.

Date: 8 Jan 1989 1441-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Bugs, etc. To: da cc: joe

Dave,

I received your package on Saturday, and I've now fixed ALL of the decipherable bugs (there are some that don't have enough info, etc.) On Monday, I am going to send back all of the bug sheets with my comments (you should get them within a few days.)

In particular, please let the testers know that you should NEVER have to cross the river or get Astrix' tirade about the stones more than once in a game (this was a MAJOR bug that I discovered over the weekend.)

Overall, there were lots of great, embarrassing bugs and the testers should be commended. However, there were MANY bugs that said "There isn't enough fire essence" or "Tag should not have the option of picking up the mechanism" or "An R was left on the screen from a previous command", without any indication of "At what point?" or "Which mechanism?" or "Which command was too long?" which were the questions that immediately came to mind. More info, as you know, is the key to finding bugs quickly.

Also, you should let the testers know that Part Three hasn't been "revised" entirely, and it's not nearly in as consistent a shape as the first two parts are. This should be resolved later this week.

Please download and play whatever version is the latest on Fred (it's probably above 60 somewhere.) since LOTS and LOTS of bugs have been fixed (including, as I have said) some serious ones.

Date: 9 Jan 1989 1553-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Guess. To: Marc cc: Da, Mikek

Here's more. I like the "salt" spell.

Show the picture of the talking tree when you first go to Praxix' story, not after the initial text.

It is becoming much more apparent in the text that the orcs' presence is a manifestation of the greater evil that is abounding. That is great because it helps me to remember the initial reason for my quest. To me it also solidifies the story, placing everything in context.

Examine mechanism,down;

it took pnly a few steps for praxix to realize that the path leading inside the mill mechanism was dark and potentially dangerous. Rather than resk injury, he returned....

[the next obvious move is to cast glow on staff.cast glow on staff;

"Presumably out of practice, or perhaps out of boredom, Praxix removed his pouch …."

[But he's obviously doing it so that he can go below, there's no need to try and justify this.

having falled through stairs, inventory;

"Praxix took stock of his possessions finding onlyhis magical…."

need a space ^

"Thinking that some wind would remove the thick layers of dust...beside the opening to the chamber below: it is too worn to be read."

S.b? it was too worn to be read.

As of now, the set dial menus automatically hilight the top item in the menu (literally.) This is confusing though and should happen when the dials are unset, else the last chosen setting should be highlighted.

bug: turn dial to top; "slowly,Praxix twisted the dial on the left…."

{other moves if any}

turn dial to top; "slowly,Praxix twisted the dial on the left…."

[but the dial was already pointing in that direction.]

Even after you cast the wind spell, you still rest Praxix elbow on "an inch or so of accumulated dust" at the

third pit.

If you have both dials set to bottom, the response to praxix' "movement" is kind of strange. Especially if the pickaxe was on the floor.

(Matt): Some thoughts on the dial/pit problem, which I just solved (sort of). I got the pickaxe and mined the rock. But now the problem is to get out without using up all my essences doing elevation in reverse. My idea was to teleport the pickaxe from pit to pit, until I could see it in the shaft of sunlight at the bottom of the third pit. Then I would know how to teleport into the pit that had the exit. This didn't work, because I tried every setting and never saw the pickaxe. This seems like a viable solution to escape, but it didn't work -- why? One possibility is that you would have to cast flare into the pit every time in order to make out the pick axe -- I think this would be unfair because it takes up too many essences. By the way, a bug -- when you DO cast flare into the third pit, it says it is dark and deep with no exits; however, there is an exit in that pit (the shaft of sunlight). Another thing -- you should have the option of dropping the pickaxe or another item into the pits, in order to experiment with teleporting around (as well as to find out how deep the pits are, suggests Joe). Another possibility -- have Praxix drop his staff (or something else he has cast "glow" on) and drop it into the pit; then he should definitely be able to tell when the item has been teleported in and out of the third pit. (Joe: but now you can't make your way back to the control room. It's still neat though.)

You can't drop the pickaxe into the first pit. It's "Imprudent". This is probably what mislead Matt and I.

when you 'port into the third pit with the axe on the floor near you, when you pick it up, you get the same response as when you got it the first time.

Is there any way that you can go from the third pit to the first and second without going back to the control room. (i.e. Back)

If I teleport the axe into the third pit, and then teleport myself into it, I get no description of it's presence, but I can pick it up.

The battle was goin g well; bergon, Esher, and Minarwere making some deadly...
need a space ^

Sometimes Restore doesn't update the status line. I can't determine why tho.

I still don't think Praxix should automatically cast flare when you pick up the map (or rope) in the prison.

Date: 10 Jan 1989 2236-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New version To: da, joe cc: patti

There's a new version on Fred (Release 68, I believe) that has all reported bugs fixed (especially those in the Mill.)

In addition, there's a new wrinkle in the chasm crossing that might be tried out.

In Part Three, which isn't fully ready (but can be played,) there's some additional work to be done in finding the "best" boat to book passage on.

Have fun.

Date: 10 Jan 1989 1348-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: marc cc: Da, Mikek

Good day.

At the Orc cave (above the prison,) With the option to fight or cast.

Choose CAST MUD:
"Praxix then got the screwy notion of casting some sort of spell, but we pointed out.…"

"Praxix now turned his thoughts to his magical powders, since his last spell had used up all his water. 'let us hope…'"
[I didn't cast the spell yet I lost the essence.
In battle with the orcs, bergon's flank results in only a CRLF.

After Praxix casts Mud, he can cast another spell. Although he is [busy] doing this, the battle ends and there is no result of this effort in the text.

When you cross the chasm with the wind/elevate combo, you throw the rope across the chasm to whomever was sent there. In order to cross the chasm, I envision them tying one end of the rope down at each side of the chasm, and then going hand over hand. This way they can get back. However, when you check your inventory at the tower, you have the rope. You don't need the wind/elevate combo to get back, therefore, the rope must remain at the chasm.
WAIT!! You do use the magic to get back across the chasm. I can't check my pouch here, has this usage been taken into consideration essence inventory? Personally, I would leave the rope there.

This leads me to a really silly puzzle that might be easily implemented. Give Tag the option of picking up the rope whenever they cross the chasm. If he does, they have to use the wind/elevate combo again to get back, thus costing more essence. If he doesn't, then they can just cross back over using the rope. After they get back with the telescope, he may still pick up the rope.

When you scout the cave that leads to the pool, Minar claims that you don't have enough light to explore, yet when I went to cast Glow on my staff,
"the light emanating from praxix' staff seemed fine to us…"
[I came after getting the brown amulet, maybe the spell wore off the staff by this time and you forgot to handle this case?
[Also, isn't there a picture for this room? you get the cave entrance pic.

nymph cave:
Before you take the wide path, you can follow the narrow path as many times as you want.
I still think that there should be greater ramifications if you stand or hide.

Date: 11 Jan 1989 0956-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: New version To: MARC

I have sent out a list of pictures in last night's FedEx. It is an attempt to cross-reference your <GDEF G-picturename with Donald's picture file names.
Donald's file names were retrieved from <taa.journey-pics> so these pics are in fred. There are a few <GDEFS that are not matched throughout the list as well as two of Donald's filenames that could not be matched at the end. Most of the unmatched GDEFS are stickers, but pics like G_BEHIND_MOUNTAINS are hard to pin down. If you could help me match these I can figure out what to do. Also, any graphics bugs can now be referenced by Donald's names. I'll see if I can get some time on the mac II.

Date: 11 Jan 1989 1039-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: PIC-NAMES To: MARC

Here is a copy of the list you'll be getting tomorrow.

Marc's names	Donald's names
<GDEF G-LAVOS	AA-LAVOS..3
<GDEF G-WEBBA	AB-WEBBA..2
<GDEF G-MAP	AC-MAP..2 TO BE REPLACED
<GDEF G-TAVERN	AD-TAVERN..2
<GDEF G-FORK	AE-FORK..3
<GDEF G-BEHIND-MOUNTAINS	
<GDEF G-CANYON	AF-CANYON..2 NOT IN NEW ZIL FILE
;<GDEF G-MOUNTAIN-PATH	(scratched)
<GDEF G-BANDITS	AG-BANDITS..3
<GDEF G-FOREST-RIDGE	AH-FOREST-RIDGE..3
<GDEF G-GATE-RUNES	AI-AJ-GATE-RUNES..3
<GDEF G-GATE-OPENS	(Sticker?)
<GDEF G-NIGHTFANG	AK-NIGHTFANG..3
<GDEF G-PRAXIX-HEALS-BITE	AL-PRAXIX-HEALS-BITE..2
<GDEF G-ELF-HEALS-BITE	AM-ELF-HEALS-BITE..3
<GDEF G-TANGLEWOOD	AN-TANGLEWOOD..3
<GDEF G-TANGLEWOOD-BURNS	AO-TANGLEWOOD-BURNS..3
<GDEF G-WATERFALL	AP-AQ-WATERFALL..3
<GDEF G-WATERFALL-NO-ELF	(sticker)
<GDEF G-ELF	AR-ELF..3
<GDEF G-GLADE	AS-GLADE..2 [exists AS-GLADE^V..1.1
<GDEF G-STUMP	AT-STUMP..3
;<GDEF G-FOREST-TUNNEL	AU-FOREST-TUNNEL..2
<GDEF G-WARREN	AV-WARREN..3
<GDEF G-WARREN-LIGHT	AW-WARREN-LIGHT..3
<GDEF G-FALLS	AX-FALLS..3
<GDEF G-RIVER	
<GDEF G-MOUNTAIN	AZ-MOUNTAIN..3
<GDEF G-ASTRIX	BA-BB-ASTRIX..3
<GDEF G-FOUR-STONES	(sticker? see Astrix)
<GDEF G-ELF-HOME	BC-ELF-HOME..1
<GDEF G-FOREST-FIRE	BD-FOREST-FIRE..2
<GDEF G-FIRE-RAINS	BE-FIRE-RAINS..2
<GDEF G-HIGH-PLAIN	BF-HIGH-PLAIN-2..2
<GDEF G-GOLD-STREAM	BG-GOLD-STREAM..1 BG-GOLD-STREAM^V..1
<GDEF G-BLACK	BLACK..1
<GDEF G-DARK-CAVERN	BI-DARK-CAVERN..1
<GDEF G-DWARVES-FV	(?)
<GDEF G-DWARVES	BK-DWARVES..3
<GDEF G-PRISON-RUNES	BL-PRISON-RUNES..2
<GDEF G-PRISON	BM-PRISON..2
<GDEF G-PRISON-FV	BN-PRISON-FV..3
<GDEF G-D-STAIR-BOTTOM	BO-STAIR-BOTTOM..4
<GDEF G-OVER-FALLS	BP-OVER-FALLS..1
<GDEF G-STAIR-JUNCTION	BQ-STAIR-JUNCTION..3
<GDEF G-STAIR-CHASM	BR-BS-STAIR-CHASM..4
<GDEF G-CROSS-STAIR-CHASM	BR-STAIR-CHASM..1 & BS-STAIR-CHASM..1
<GDEF G-SUNSET-TOWER	BT-SUNSET-TOWER..2
<GDEF G-STAIR-GATE	BU-STAIR-GATE..3
<GDEF G-HIGH-GATE	BV-HIGH-GATE..3
<GDEF G-ORC-FORK	BW-ORK-FORK..2
<GDEF G-ORC-ANTE	BX-ORC-ANTE..3

```
<GDEF G-ORC-FIGHT                       BY-ORC-FIGHT..3
<GDEF G-HURTH-DIES                      BZ-HURTH-DIES..3
<GDEF G-PLAIN-RIDGE                     PLAIN-RIDGE..2
<GDEF G-HERMIT-HILL                     BZA-HERMIT-HILL..3
<GDEF G-HERMIT                          BZB-HERMIT..5
<GDEF G-LAKE-SHORE                      BZC-LAKE-SHORE..2
<GDEF G-LAKE-SHORE-CAVE                 BZD-LAKE-SHORE-CAVE..2
<GDEF G-LAKE-POOL                       BZE-LAKE-POOL..2
<GDEF G-UNDERPOOL                       BZF-UNDERPOOL..3
<GDEF G-UNDERPOOL-TUBE                  BZG-UNDERPOOL-TUBE..3
;<GDEF G-NYMPH-POOL                     BZH-NYMPH-POOL..3
<GDEF G-NYMPH-CHAMBER                   BZI-NYMPH-CHAMBER..2 & BZI-NYMPHCHAMBER..1
<GDEF G-LIURA                           BZJ-LIURA..1
;<GDEF G-FOREST-FORK                    II-A-FORESTFORK..1
<GDEF G-HURTH-SHADOW                    II-B-HURTH-SHADOW..1
<GDEF G-MID-STAIR                       II-C-MID-STAIR..1
<GDEF G-ORC-VIEW                        II-D-ORC-VIEW..1
<GDEF G-PRAXIX-DIVERSION                II-E-PRAXIXDIVERSION2..1
<GDEF G-CHARGING-ORCS                   II-F-CHARGING-ORCS..1
<GDEF G-CHARGING-ORCS-FROM-ABOVE        II-G-CHARG-ORCS-ABOVE..1
<GDEF G-NARROW-SLIT                     II-H-NARROW-SLIT..1
<GDEF G-DEAD-END                        II-I-DEAD-END..1
<GDEF G-DEAD-END-ORC                    II-J-DEAD-END-ORCS..1
<GDEF G-FLUME                           II-K-FLUME..1
<GDEF G-FLUME-POOL                      II-L-FLUME-POOL..1
<GDEF G-ALONG-FLUME                     II-M-ALONG-FLUME..1
;<GDEF G-LOWER-STAIR                    II-N-LOWERSTAIRS..1
<GDEF G-MINE-JUNCTION                   II-O-P-MINE-JUNCTION..1
<GDEF G-MINE-JUNCTION-2
<GDEF G-OLD-MINE                        II-Q-OLD-MINE..1
<GDEF G-MINER-PASSAGE                   II-R-MINER-PASSAGE..1
<GDEF G-ACTIVE-MINE                     II-S-T-ACTIVEMINE-R..1
<GDEF G-MINER                                 (stamp)
<GDEF G-GATE-JUNCTION                   II-U-GATE-JUNCTION..1
<GDEF G-MINE-HOLE                       }
                                        } II-V-W-MINE-HOLE-FIND..1
<GDEF G-MINE-FIND                       }
<GDEF G-MASSIVE-DOOR                      II-X-MASSIVE-DOOR..1
<GDEF G-VAULT                           } II-Y-Z-VAULT-COFFIN..1
<GDEF G-COFFIN                          }
<CONSTANT G-COFFIN-WHERE
<GDEF G-CEDRITH                         II-ZA-CEDIRTH..1
<GDEF G-TALKING-TREE                    II-ZB-TALKINGTREE..1
<GDEF G-FOREST                          II-ZC-FOREST..1
<GDEF G-MILL                            II-ZD-MILL..1
<GDEF G-MOAT                            II-ZE-MOAT..1
<GDEF G-COURTYARD                       II-ZF-COURTYARD..1
<GDEF G-UMBER                           II-ZG-UMBER..1
<GDEF G-DUNGEON                         II-ZH-DUNGEON..1
<GDEF G-TROVE                           }
<GDEF G-TROVE-STONE                     } II-ZI-JTROVE^V&STONE..1
<CONSTANT G-TROVE-STONE-WHERE
<GDEF G-ORC-TRAP                        II-ZK-ORK-TRAP..1
```

```
<GDEF GF G-OUTSIDE-ORC-CAMP      II-ZL-ORK-CAMP..1
<GDEF G-ORC-TENT                 II-ZM-ORC-TENT..1
<GDEF G-ZAN-DEMON                III-B-ZAN-DEMON..1
<GDEF G-FOG-CLEARS               III-C-FOG-CLEARS..1
<GDEF G-DEMON
<GDEF G-DEMON-KILLS-SOMEONE      III-D-E-DEMON-KILLS..1
<GDEF G-ZAN                      III-F-ZAN-1..1
                                 III-G-ZAN-2..1
<GDEF G-CURIO-SHOP               III-H-I-CURIO-SHOP..1
<GDEF G-GRAY-STONE
<GDEF G-ZAN-TAVERN               III-J-ZAN-TAVERN..1
<GDEF G-OTHER-TABLE              III-K-OTHER-TABLE..1
;<GDEF G-EAVESDROPPING           III-L-EAVESDROPPING..1
<GDEF G-INNKEEPER                III-M-INNKEEPER..1
;<GDEF G-INNKEEPER-HITS-ESHER     III-N-INKEEPER-HITS-ESCHER
<GDEF G-WHARF                    III-O-WHARF-2..1
<GDEF G-ELFENTIDE                III-P-ELFENTIDE..1
<GDEF G-ZEPHYR                   III-Q-ZEPHYR..1
<GDEF G-SOUTH-SEAS               III-R-SOUTH-SEAS..1
<GDEF G-ZAN-FIRE                 III-S-FIRE..1
<GDEF G-ASSASSINS                III-T-ASSASSINS..1
;<GDEF G-INN-FIRE                III-U-INN-FIRE..1
<GDEF G-JAIL                     }
                                 } III-V-W-JAIL-SHERIFF..1
<GDEF G-SHERIFF                  }
;<GDEF G-SHERIFF-AND-TAG
<GDEF G-SHERIFF-OPENS-CELL       III-Y-SHERIFF-XOPEN-CELL..
<GDEF G-BOAT                     III-Z-BOAT..1
<GDEF G-TREACHERY                III-ZA-TREACHERY..1
<GDEF G-MAST-FALLS               III-ZB-MAST-FALLS..1
;<GDEF G-DEMON-KILLED            III-ZC-DEMON-KILLED..1
<GDEF G-EVIL-ONE                 III-ZD-EVIL-ONE..1
<GDEF G-BOAT-FOG                 III-ZE-BOAT-FOG..1
<GDEF G-ABOVE-FOG                III-ZF-ABOVE-FOG..1
<GDEF G-ALMOST                   III-ZG-H-ALMOST-WIZ..1
<GDEF G-WIZARDS
<GDEF G-MINAR                    MINAR..1
<GDEF G-LAKE-SHORE-3             LAKE-SHORE-3..1
<GDEF G-PARTY-RESCUES-PRAXIX     PARTY-RESCUES-PRAXIX..1
;<GDEF G-CAIRN
<GDEF G-ZAN-CAVE                 ZAN-CAVE..1
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-PIT
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-GRATE
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-PIT-NO-TORCH
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-JCN
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-TREASURY
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-TREASURY-NO-STONE
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-PIT-BOTTOM
<GDEF G-UNDERLAND-PIT-BOTTOM-STONE
<GDEF G-XFER-JCN
<GDEF G-XFER-MASTER
<GDEF G-XFER-CONTROLS
<GDEF G-RUNE-TOP
“Dial pointing to top rune.”>
```

<GDEF G-RUNE-UR
"Dial pointing to upper right rune.">
<GDEF G-RUNE-LR
"Dial pointing to lower right rune.">
<GDEF G-RUNE-UL
"Dia l pointing to upper left rune.">
<GDEF G-RUNE-LL
"Dial pointing to lower left rune.">
<GDEF G-RUNE-BOT
"Dial pointing to bottom rune.">
<GDEF G-XFER-ANTE
<GDEF G-XFER-ANTE-LIGHT
<GDEF G-STRANGE-GATE

(unmatched pictures)
ASTRIX-LEAPS-OFF-TOWER..1
III-A-ASTRIX-2-STONES..1

Date: 12 Jan 1989 1220-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: joe, da

New version is now downloaded; let me know how it is. Bye.

Date: 12 Jan 1989 0937-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: missing pix To: Marc

What do you know about:

G-RIVER	G-PRISON
G-DWARVES-FV	G-PRISON-FV The difference between these two?
G-WIZARDS	G-MINE-JUNCTION
	G-MINE-JUNCTION-2 The difference between these two?

Date: 12 Jan 1989 0949-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: journey To: Marc cc: Da, Mikek

When the party gets to the prison they have the option of examining runes. However, there is only one rune on the door picture though.

When you are fighting the orcs and you try to cast spell before you have someone flank, you are not permitted to do it yet it costs you essence.

If I cast elevation at the chasm, then get advice, the elevatee floats back down. I may cast again, but when I choose elevation, nothing happens. This also happens when you try to cast elevate again instead of wind.

The elf sticker isn't at the falls.

when you return rather than stand at the elf, a picture of the snake is flashed, then the praxix heals pic. delete the snake pic.

The sticker of the body diving in the lake is missing.

Date: 12 Jan 1989 0132-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe

I got your stack of new bug reports today, and I'm happy to report that all of the bugs have been fixed (at least, I hope so.) There are, however, about a half-dozen suggestions from the new reports that I'll work to implement over the next few days.

The new release is #71, and it's available on your favorite mainframe.

Your obedient servant, General Blank (Ret.)

Date: 13 Jan 1989 0129-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe

Release #75 is on Fred now; it should be playable (unlike the last few.) So, are you ever going to play the damned thing?

Love, Marc

Date: 15 Jan 1989 2258-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New Version To: da cc: marc, joe

There is a new version of Journey on Fred (what a surprise!) - it's the new, improved Release 90!

A number of points...

1) All reported bugs have been fixed - I'm going to FedEx the stack of bug sheets back to you with comments. Please note that the ones with stars next to them need to be reviewed (some are graphics problems to be referred to Elizabeth, some are reports that are unclear, etc...)
2) There is a new puzzle in part two involving Hurth which requires doing something new in Part One, in the area underneath the stump in the forest.
3) There is a new solution to the pit nearby the mines in Part Two which does not rely on magic.
4) The stand/hide choice in the Nymphs' area is now more meaningful; also, regardless of which you choose, the nymphs will come to get you eventually.
5) There is a new ending which provides a much more satisfying conclusion to the story.

You might like to make sure Adam, Shawn, and Steve know about these things as well. Bye.

Date: 15 Jan 1989 2354-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Oops… To: da cc: joe

Release 91...

Date: 17 Jan 1989 2219-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe

New version now on Fred...

1) Some bugs fixed.
2) Starting a game on the mac by double-clicking a SAVE file should work.
3) Examining the pouch works at all times.
4) Obnoxious bug at the "hole" where you find the key in Part Two is fixed.

Also, I've eliminated much of the flickering command nonsense (i.e. the game seems to rewrite the party commands numerous times.) It should work more cleanly now.

Date: 18 Jan 1989 2128-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe

A new release is on Fred. Among the features...

1) The obnoxious restore bug is fixed in all observable cases.
2) The problem with too many spells at the end of Part Three is fixed.
3) Some new hints are installed.
4) Strangeness with "buy"ing the spyglass in the tower is fixed.
5) Misc. other bugs fixed.

Have fun (please distribute this to the other testers.)

Date: 19 Jan 1989 2153-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da

New version; most important, you can really really now examine your pouch on every turn. Also, a few bug fixes.

Date: 20 Jan 1989 1002-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey Pix To: MARC

We're having the artists make any of those kinds of corrections right now. I'm checking over the bad coords as well as getting those of the new pictures. We'll also be re-processing the bad palette pix as a first attempt to fix those.

Then, the same thing for the BW's.

Date: 22 Jan 1989 1627-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Pic files To: veldran cc: marc

I uploaded the CPic and Pic files from my directory. The black-and-white file seems to be working somewhat reasonably, though it's hard to tell on my MacII, since the screen size is wrong for a normal Mac, etc... The testers will no doubt run through the game on Monday and find glitches, if any.

The color file, though, seems completely messed up in some manner. The only picture that comes up is the LAVOS picture; no others appear at all (actually, I think one other came up a little screwy.) I tried my compilation with the old CPic file and it worked, so I don't think it's the game.

If you could, please get the newest release from Fred (the old ones don't reference the new pictures), take a look, and let me know what you think.

By the way, there are still four pictures in GRAPHICS.ZIL that don't have picture numbers assigned (G-MINAR, G-PARTY-RESCUES-PRAXIX, G-LAKE-SHORE-3, and G-ZAN-CAVE.) Do you know about these?

Thanks for your help. Speak to you on Monday.

Date: 22 Jan 1989 1907-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da

There's a new version on Fred which fixes all of the bugs that I received last Friday.

The new version references the new graphics installed by whomever, although the color version I uploaded over the weekend didn't work at all.

Dave, I think a high priority needs to be placed on the graphics - which ones have errors (wrong people in picture, etc.), which ones are badly aligned, which have the wrong palette, which stamps are in the wrong places, etc.

Someone should be responsible for keeping track of all these and the progress of fixing them (most of which is done on your end.) My concern is that this will end up being the critical path item for shipping the Mac and Amiga versions on time.

Please let me know how we're going to get this organized.

Thanks.

Date: 23 Jan 1989 1347-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

Yes. I came to the same conclusion about Journey graphics, but for a different reason. I couldn't seem to get a straight answer out of Tom or Tim or Eliz. And I figure they are concerned with all the graphics for all the games so we needed our "own man" on the inside. So last week I told Joe to handle all the graphics problems with Journey. He got together with an artist last week and fixed the color pictures. The B&W are coming soon. But a picture file has not been created yet with the corrected pictures.

Also-FYI The picture files are now, with the additional pictures (without corrections as of yet): B&W 495K, Color 504K.

Date: 24 Jan 1989 0033-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Graphics To: veldran cc: marc

If you don't know, the graphic G-XFER-CONTROLS shows a control panel that is overlain in two places with one of six "stamps" (a pointer indicating six different directions.)

My problem is that I have no way of knowing how to align the pointers relative to the background picture.

What I need are two "pseudo-pictures" that indicate those locations. If this makes no sense to you, please ask Tim or Joe who should be able to help. Thanks.

Date: 24 Jan 1989 0928-EST From: VELDRAN at FRED
Subject: JPIX To: Marc

I did not send them because they seem to have a number of problems that I would like to try and fix first.

Date: 24 Jan 1989 1039-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: reused pics To: marc

Please let me know if you plan to use any more pictures elsewhere than where they were initially intended. The less often we have to go back and delete extraneous characters, the better. Of those three pics (minar, party rescues-praxix, and lake shore 3,) I will be providing Mr. Veldran with the coords today. Their numbers will be

161, 162, 163. Tom will also re-process the pic file in an attempt to get rid of the garbage we saw in the latest attempt.

Date: 24 Jan 1989 1614-EST From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: Mac Journey To: MARC

Which printer do you have; is it networked or not; do various other applications like MS Word print to it correctly?

Running on my MacII, Journey scripting goes correctly both to our networked Laserwriter NT and Imagewriter LQ. One glitch I noticed is that, in "show commands" mode, each command is scripted with a ')' and a space in front of it.

Date: 27 Jan 1989 0046-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe

A new release is on Fred. It includes fixes for all of the bugs that you sent yesterday (I'll send the sheets back later today...)

Have fun.

Date: 28 Jan 1989 1547-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey on the Apple II To: taa cc: marc

Tim, et al.

I have been thinking about the Apple II version of Journey, and have come up with a scheme which will use only two double-sided disks and which will NOT require the use of two drives.

I assume only that the graphics file can be compressed to about 220K, which is more than half of the size of the Mac file (once some non-essential pix are removed.)

Side I: Interpreter (<40K), Preload (~50K), Part Ia (~20K) + Pix (~25K)
Side II: Part Ib (~70K) + Pix (~70K)
Side III: Part II (~75K) + Pix (~65K)
Side IV: Part III (~55K) + Pix (~60K)

As an aside, Part Ia will include the town of Lavos plus the areas on either side of the initial fork and the associated fight (i.e. places that cannot be reentered once passed.)

Upon close inspection of the files, it is apparent that the split will be straightforward, especially as movement is one-way from part to part. No major rewrites or shrinking of the game will be necessary - only the iterations of getting the segmentation right (not too much work, given the way the game is laid out.)

Any comments would be appreciated; if you wouldn't mind, could you please get copies of this message to Joe Y and Mikie?

Thanks.

Date: 30 Jan 1989 1047-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey on the Apple II To: MARC

The only problem I see with this is that the first three disks are already full, if not more than full (the actual

limit is 278 pages/disk, or 139K); this doesn't leave a lot of margin for error. There may also be some interpreter changes required, of course.

Date: 31 Jan 1989 1131-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Graphics... To: MARC

Mac color pic file: 218,000 Mac b & w pic file: 239,000 Apple pic file: 447,000

Well, that's obviously wrong. Tom gave me the figure by adding the sizes of the graphics files for each disk side (or "surface" in TAA lingo). However, that includes duplication, since there are graphics in Segment 0, and Segment 0 must live on every surface. So, my guess is there's no easy way to answer your question — it will probably depend on how Journey divides up. You probably won't have as many (if any) graphics in your Segment 0; my Segment 0 includes the borders,

Date: 31 Jan 1989 1131-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Old Journey bugs To: marc

Wood and I are trying to track down all the old Journey bugs before fred goes down. How do I GET them from zmm?

The pic files are coming along. The artist is making further changes to the bw and color files. That swath has been cleared up as well as the gold stream mess. However there are 5 makepic bugs. any word on doing that on your end? I'll be in school tuesday and thursday afternoons this semester. Tomorrow I will do the stamp invisipics. I will provide you (T.V.) with a set of coords that you will match up the top left corner of stamps with. These coords will be taken from the origin at the top left corner of the background picture. Please comment before tomorrow morning since I will start at around 8:15 a.m. my time.

Date: 31 Jan 1989 1708-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Picture files To: VELDRAN, pdl, swg, da

Effective immediately, if not two weeks ago, the official home for picture files (particularly DPAINT files) is /home/development/pictures on spike. If your picture files aren't there, you are asking for trouble. You are also asking for slow, painful, horrible death by Sawzall, because we'll end up shipping something with the wrong pictures, or losing changes, or something equally expensive.

The network: use it or lose it.

Date: 31 Jan 1989 1855-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: reminder... To: da

Please send pix files, new interpreter, bugs ASAP (if you haven't already.) Thanks.

Date: 1 Feb 1989 1403-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Segmentation, etc. To: MARC

An Apple II picture file is slightly less than half the size of a color Mac picture file, BEFORE COMPRESSION. However, it's not possible to do as much compression on the Apple II, because the processor can't do the decompression.

Segmentation:
<DEFINE-SEGMENT starting-segment?:<OR ATOM FALSE> SEGMENT:ATOM "TUPLE" ADJACENT-SEGMENTS>

You need at least one DEFINE-SEGMENT statement, for the segment that contains GO (or its equivalent). It's a good idea, however, to have enough of them to allow everybody to know what the logical structure of the game is, so the segments can be placed on the disks: when the split program puts a segment on a disk, it next tries to put any segments that are adjacent to it on the same disk; the only way it knows is through
DEFINE-SEGMENT.
<BEGIN-SEGMENT segment-name:<OR ATOM FIX STRING>>
...
<END-SEGMENT>

BEGIN-SEGMENT marks the beginning of code that should be in a given segment. If the code needs to be in more than one segment, you can have multiple BEGIN-SEGMENTs with no intervening END-SEGMENT. END-SEGMENT closes all open BEGIN-SEGMENTs.
There are two distinguished segments: the startup segment, see above, and segment 0. Segment 0 contains code that is always needed: user interface stuff, picture display stuff, etc.
There's an implicit END-SEGMENT at the end of each source file. Pure tables are defaultly in segment 0, regardless of surrounding BEGIN/END-SEGMENT statements, but that can be changed. Strings are put into segments, just like code.

Date: 1 Feb 1989 1804-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Segmentation, etc. To: MARC

A full-screen color picture is 320x200x4, for a total of 32K, since we aren't using 256 colors. An apple II picture is 140x192x4, for a total of 13440. Some compression is applied to the apple, and the same compression plus Huffman coding is applied to the others. The only way your question can be answered is by constructing a picture file for the apple, since otherwise there's no starting point for the comparison.

Date: 2 Feb 1989 1309-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Segmentation, etc. To: MARC

The effectiveness of the compression technique we're using depends on the nature of the pictures being compressed. Since we're making business decisions based on these sizes, I'd rather have something that is correct rather than a guess that I know is NOT correct.

To pick two examples at random: the Zork0 apple pictures are about 60% of the size of the Zork0 color pictures; the Shogun apple pictures are about 115% of the size of the Shogun color pictures. Which would you like to assume?

Date: 5 Feb 1989 0239-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Graphics bugs, etc. To: da cc: eliz, joe, veldran, marc

The file <MARC>GRAPHICS.BUGS contains a summary of all of the graphics bugs I have found in a recent run-through of the game. In addition, it specifies about a dozen pictures that are to be removed from future builds of the Cpic and Pic files.

Please take a look at it; somebody please make sure that Jim also gets a copy. I hope we can get an almost final build of the pictures by the end of the week, since there's not much time left until code release.

Date: 5 Feb 1989 0243-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Bugs, etc… To: da cc: joe, patti

By Monday AM, there'll be a new version of Journey with all locatable bugs fixed. I am particularly concerned about a bug reported by Steve regarding colors of powders in the solution to the "final" puzzle of the game. I've played through from beginning to end five times this weekend and it always works for me. Could you please make it a priority to have this checked out?

BTW, as a cheat, the Check Disk command (under Commands) now prints the essences associated with each of the powders. This should make it easier to see what's going on (please let the testers know about this!)

Date: 8 Feb 1989 1201-EST From: Patti Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Journey Bug To: marc

On one of the last sheets, you didn't quite get what I was talking about, so...

After much debate/discussion/cud-chewing, Tester United came to the conclusion that we would like you to add two more nudges for the essence mixing puzzle. If you could add the resulting residues (to be reported in the text) for the FOG spell and for the final elevation spell, then players who picked up late on the fact that the residues meant something, they wouldn't need to restart to get these important clues.

Date: 8 Feb 1989 1208-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [Journey Bug] To: patti cc: da, joe, tester.steve

But doesn't that defeat most of the puzzle? Why not make the spyglass available, or extra reagent, in the third part in case you took a long time to pick up on the fact that they are important? Isn't the information just like a "treasure" that you find along the way? Shouldn't people have to FIND that information, once they figure out that color, etc. is important?

Date: 9 Feb 1989 2040-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Graphics To: joe cc: da

If it's at all possible, I could use a build of new graphics for a weekend of playing and debugging. Please send one along (hold for pickup costs no more than regular FedEx and I can pick it up on Saturday.)

Date: 11 Feb 1989 1708-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe, patti

I got the BW disk today, and I've run through the game a few times using it. There's a new version of <MARC>GRAPHICS.BUGS which contains a list of current BW problems (there are still quite a few!) Please make sure that Jim Sullivan gets a printout of the file.

Also, please remind testers to send a copy of their graphic bug forms to Jim - there's little I can do with them from here... I'd like a copy, of course....

All reported bugs are "fixed" and a new version of the game should be there on Fred for you. I'll FedEx the bug sheets back to you on Monday.

Date: 13 Feb 1989 2300-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe, patti, eliz, marc

New version of Journey has arrived on Fred. Besides bugs being fixed, this version implements UNDO, as selected from the EDIT menu bar on the Mac.

Date: 15 Feb 1989 1010-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Journey manual To: marc

The final copy for the Journey Manual is in <DA>JourneyManual and Journey-alternate-preface. We need your comments ASAP. Call me!

Date: 20 Feb 1989 1439-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da cc: joe, veldran

New release on Fred with all reported bugs fixed. Also, a few changes:

1) Background cheat no longer works.

2) One step removed in diving into the pool near the lake.

Also, please make sure that <MARC>GRAPHICS.BUGS gets disseminated; it has all the bugs I've found in both graphics files (not so many, thankfully!)

Date: 22 Feb 1989 1024-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Hi. To: Marc

The new picture file is fucked. I wasn't here to check it out before it got sent. It's really weird, but not all of the changes I make appear in the subsequent pic file.

PIc # 106 is an invisible pictures for the trove stone stamp. It is merely the coords (32,17). This is the coordinate of the point where the top left corner of the stamp should go relative to the top left corner of the background pic. If you need more, let me know. Why aren't we downloading pic files onto fred for you?

Date: 22 Feb 1989 1539-EST
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Pix, etc.
To: taa cc: duncan, pdl, da, marc

A number of testers have complained about the fact that stamps look crufty sometimes, coming up as they do at a finite rate. This is particularly a problem when you have a picture of a scene which is really the picture of another scene with a stamp overlayed - it's very obvious that a kludge is going on.

Would it be possible (at some point) to "turn off" the graphic screen, DISPLAY the picture and stamp, and then "turn on" the screen? Could this be done with the current DIROUT that turns off the screen?

Yours in fantasyland, marc

Date: 22 Feb 1989 1540-EST
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Pix, etc.
To: MARC

This will not happen before Journey ships.

Date: 22 Feb 1989 1506-EST
From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: big Mac
To: Duncan cc: DA, TAA

In the current Mac interpreter, does the size of the screen determine whether pic.data or cpic.data is used? (I want to update the "read me" file for the Zork Zero demo.)

Date: 22 Feb 1989 2250-EST
From: Duncan Blanchard <DUNCAN at FRED>
Subject: Re: big Mac
To: SWG cc: DA, TAA

No, it's currently determined by the depth of the screen when the interpreter is launched, as set by the user. If 16 colors or greater it uses CPic, otherwise Pic.

Date: 23 Feb 1989 1031-EST
From: ie Zany Ghost Label <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Journey
To: Marc

I just wanted to let you know that I've enjoyed playing Journey the last few weeks. The puzzles were logical and satisfying to solve (challenging but not obscure). I like having the undo command so I can experiment with things I know (or suspect) are wrong just to see what happens or take the risk of trying something dangerous without losing too much.

I'd like to see the musings be more like real hints. There were a couple of times when I had to ask testers for help because the musings were too vague to give me any real direction. I was lucky to have the testers here; someone at home might be very frustrated. I think if you're going to offer hints at all, they should provide what the player needs to solve the puzzle, even if you have to leave behind the storytelling quality of the musings in the process.

I'm planning to spend more time on Journey over the next day or two. I'd like to see this little band I've been leading around succeed in their quest. And I've still got a few puzzles I'm determined to solve...

Date: 24 Feb 1989 1127-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
To: Marc

Hi Marc. Watkins says hi.

These are the pics commented out from graphics.bugs	These are the pics commented out but not in graphics.bugs	These are the pics commented out by mistake.(now fixed)
27,29,31,54,55,57,65 71,75,76,112,125,130 137,146,165	37,60,66,79,107, 127,118,134	4,40

Please confirm. I should be in for a while this weekend makepicfing by the way. Eliz and I don't think you should get rid of orc-fight - it's too dramatic. Also, the dying Hurth pic comes up too late. There is also the problem with stamps and the time delay before they are put up when you enter a room. Is there any way of putting the stamp on the picture before you display it? It probably uses too much memory. This will have to be resolved though.

37 nymph-pool	66 forest-for	107 ?	127 inn-fire
60 forest tunnel	79 lower-stairs	118 eavesdropping	134 demon-killed

106 has been un-commented.

Date: 24 Feb 1989 1313-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: i missed some To: marc

I didn't include some that I thought were definitely commented out:

35 nymph pool	120 innkeeper hits esher	130 sheriff open cell

Date: 25 Feb 1989 1808-EST From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey To: MARC

latest sizes:
color 476 on disk 487 bytes used bw 471 on disk 471 bytes used.
I should have the new stamps monday.

Date: 25 Feb 1989 0159-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Journey To: da, joe

A new release is ready on Fred; references to the three boat pictures have been removed.
Also, I'd like to change G-UNDERLAND-JCN to be a real picture, rather than a stamp. The way it works now, it looks like a bug. Thanks.

p.s. Call after 1:00PM Saturday if you like...

Date: 26 Feb 1989 2105-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: New Journey To: joe, da

A new release is on Fred, for use with new picture files. Lots o'bugs fixed.

Date: Tue, 4 Apr 89 06:38:27 GMT From: marc (Marc Blank)
Subject: Journey To: taa, jon Cc: tv

There's a new version of Journey on spike which includes the .seg file. Have fun with it.

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 89 12:07:16 EDT From: jon (Jon Palace)
To: marc Subject: good news

I played Journey on an Apple IIc yesterday. It looked great! It was speedy (unlike all our other Apple II games), legible, everything worked (almost) ... in all, I'm very impressed.

(I don't know the game as well as the testers, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time with it. However, I noticed that the game crashed immediately after the Background ONLY IF the mouse is used -- obviously an interpreter bug. The character's names are chopped off in the menu for no apparent reason: One sees "Bergo-->" and "Praxi-->", but it looks like the tail of the arrow could be shorter to have the whole name. Oddly, one gets a different picture at the copyright screen depending on whether a M)ouse is selected or N)either.)

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 89 16:49:36 GMT From: marc (Marc Blank)
To: jon Subject: Journey

Great news. I'll fix up the problem with Bergo-->.

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 89 05:56:18 GMT From: marc (Marc Blank)
To: jon, tv, da Subject: Journey

There's a new JOURNEY.ZIP and JOURNEY.SEG available for splitting. Let me know if there's any problem. Thanks.

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 89 02:44:53 GMT From: marc (Marc Blank)
To: jon, tv Subject: Journey

I've downloaded a new version of Journey that fixes two of the problems that Hollywood mentioned today regarding screen layout on the Apple.

Could somebody make up a new version (and tell Hollywood I've done this?) Also, is there some reason that Hollywood doesn't have an account on spike? Or is his login name not DA?

Thanks.

Journey
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Journeyvision
Journeymen (given to the game testers)

Infocomics:

Gamma Force in "Pit of a Thousand Screams"

by Steve Meretzky, catalog #SG1

Lane Mastodon vs. The Blubbermen, by Amy Briggs

by Steve Meretzky, catalog #SL1

ZorkQuest: Assault on Egreth Castle, by Elizabeth Langosy

by Steve Meretzky, catalog #SZ1

ZorkQuest: The Crystal of Doom, by Elizabeth Langosy

by Steve Meretzky, catalog #SZ2

First draft of the InfoComics questionnaire:

SCREENER **GROUP ONE** **INFOCOM FANATICS**

NAME_____ PHONE_____
AGE_____ (13-18, ELSE TERMINATE) SEX_____ (MALE, ELSE TERMINATE)

COMPUTER SYSTEM OWNED_____ (IBM/MS-DOS, ELSE TERMINATE)
HOW MANY INFOCOM GAMES OWNED_____
HOW MANY COMPUTER GAMES OWNED_____
HOW MUCH TIME SPENT PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES_____PER WEEK

FAVES:_____
_____
_____
_____

OTHER HOBBIES/LEISURE ACTIVITIES

PLAYING SPORTS	Y	N		STAMPS/COINS	Y	N
WATCHING SPORTS	Y	N		BASEBALL CARDS	Y	N
MOVIES	Y	N		PUZZLES	Y	N
TV	Y	N		PHOTOGRAPHY	Y	N
SCIENCE	Y	N		ART	Y	N
READING	Y	N		MUSIC	Y	N
COMIC BOOKS	Y	N	33% ONLY			

WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY WE WILL BE CONDUCTING. WE NEED YOU TO COME TO OUR OFFICE TO TRY OUT A NEW TYPE OF PRODUCT THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING PRODUCING. YOU WILL TRY THE SOFTWARE FOR ABOUT 15 MINUTES, ANSWER A BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE, AND TALK TO A STAFF MEMBER ABOUT YOUR REACTIONS TO THE PRODUCT, AS WELL AS YOUR COMPUTER EXPERIENCES IN GENERAL. THE WHOLE THING SHOULD TAKE ABOUT AN HOUR. WE WILL BE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU A CASH GIFT OF $XX(10-25) FOR TAKING PART.

YES NO

APPOINTMENT: DAY _____ DATE_____ TIME_____
CONFIRMED_____

SCREENER GROUP TWO INFOCOM HATERS

NAME_____ PHONE_____
AGE_____ (13-18, ELSE TERMINATE) SEX_____ (MALE, ELSE TERMINATE)

COMPUTER SYSTEM OWNED_____ (IBM/MS-DOS, ELSE TERMINATE)
HOW MANY COMPUTER GAMES OWNED_____
HOW MANY ARE: ARCADE GAMES _____ SIMULATORS _____
STRATEGY/WAR GAMES _____ SPORTS GAMES _____
GRAPHICS BASED ADVENTURES _____ TEXT BASED ADVENTURES _____

RANK YOUR FAVORITE THREE TYPES OF GAMES 1_____ (TERMINATE IF 1 OR
2_____ 2 IS TEXT BASED
3_____ ADVENTURES)
HOW MUCH TIME SPENT PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES_____PER WEEK

WE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY WE WILL BE CONDUCTING. WE WILL NEED YOU TO COME TO OUR OFFICE TO TRY OUT A NEW TYPE OF PRODUCT THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING PRODUCING. YOU WILL TRY THE SOFTWARE FOR ABOUT 15 MINUTES AND TALK TO A STAFF MEMBER ABOUT YOUR REACTIONS AND YOUR EXPERIENCES IN GENERAL. THE WHOLE THING WILL TAKE NO MORE THAN AN HOUR OR SO. BECAUSE WE VALUE YOUR TIME AND YOUR OPINIONS, WE WILL GLADLY GIVE YOU A CASH GIFT OF $XX FOR TAKING PART.

YES NO

APPOINTMENT: DAY_____DATE_____TIME_____
CONFIRMED_____

SCREENER GROUP THREE COMIC BOOK READERS

NAME_____ PHONE_____
AGE_____ (13-18, ELSE TERMINATE) SEX_____ (MALE, ELSE TERMINATE)

COMPUTER SYSTEM OWNED_____ (IBM/MS-DOS. ELSE TERMINATE)
HOW MANY COMPUTER GAMES DO YOU OWN_____
HOW MANY ARE: ARCADE GAMES _____ SIMULATORS _____
STRATEGY/WAR GAMES _____ SPORTS GAMES _____
GRAPHICS BASED ADVENTURES _____ TEXT BASED ADVENTURES _____
NAME YOUR THREE FAVORITE TYPES OF GAMES 1_____ (33% MAX MENTION
2_____ TEXT BASED
3_____ ADVENTURES)
HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND READING COMICS_____PER WEEK
HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU SPEND MONTHLY ON COMICS_____
DO YOU COLLECT COMICS_____

WE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO TAKE PART IN A SPECIAL RESEARCH STUDY WE WILL BE CONDUCTING, USING A NEW KIND OF ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO COME TO OUR OFFICE AND TRY OUT THIS NEW PRODUCT, THEN TELL US WHAT YOU THINK. THE WHOLE THING SHOULD TAKE NO MORE THAN AN HOUR AND WE WILL GLADLY GIVE YOU A CASH GIFT OF $XX FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR OPINIONS.

YES NO

APPOINTMENT: DAY_____DATE_____TIME_____
CONFIRMED_____

Second InfoComics questionnaire:

Please fill out this questionnaire as completely and honestly as you can, even if you've already answered some of the questions.

Name:_____ Age:_____
Address: _____
_____ Phone:_____

Computer make and model:_____
Are you the primary user of the computer? yes___ no___
If no, who is (are) the primary user(s)?_____
What is the primary application of your computer?_____

How familiar are you with the following companies?
(1-Intimate: I own a lot of their software and use it a lot.
2-Very familiar: I own some of their software.
3-Familiar: I've heard alot about them, but don't own any.
4-Somewhat familiar: I know some about them, but not a lot.
5-Not too familiar: I've heard the name, but little else.
6-Never heard of them: I've never heard of them.)

Broderbund	1 2 3 4 5 6	Mindscape	1 2 3 4 5 6
Activision	1 2 3 4 5 6	Epyx	1 2 3 4 5 6
Accolade	1 2 3 4 5 6	Sublogic	1 2 3 4 5 6
New World Computing	1 2 3 4 5 6	Sierra On Line	1 2 3 4 5 6
Microsoft	1 2 3 4 5 6	Dark Star	1 2 3 4 5 6
Infocom	1 2 3 4 5 6	Microprose	1 2 3 4 5 6
Firebird	1 2 3 4 5 6	Thunder Mountain	1 2 3 4 5 6
Electronic Arts	1 2 3 4 5 6	SI	1 2 3 4 5 6

Please rank your three favorite of these companies:
1_____ 2_____ 3_____

Approximately how much time do you spend playing computer games weekly?_____
How many different computer games have you played in the last year on your system?_____
List your three favorite games: 1_____
2_____ 3_____
What is the price range of computer games you've bought?_____
How many have you bought in the last year?_____
Do you often play computer games with friends? yes____ no_____
If so, do your friends ever have pirated software? yes____ no____

Other hobbies/interests/leisure time activities

Please circle any of the following that you do or enjoy regularly, spending some significant amount of time/money/ energy doing.

playing sports	watching sports	reading books	science fiction	science	movies	TV
comic books	stamps/coin collecting	baseball cards	photography	art	music	hacking

What others?_____

Personal
Father's occupation_____ Mother's occupation_____
Your occupation (or year in school)_____

Results of their market research:

As the target market for Infocomix was assumed to be teenage males, most of the research focused on that age group. Originally, three groups were sought: Infocom lovers, Infocom haters, and comic book readers. As the recruiting progressed, it became two groups: comic book readers and computer gamers; the latter's opinions of Infocom were determined later.

Subjects were recruited through various means. Comic book readers were sought through posters placed in and around The Million Year Picnic, Newbury Comics, and Superhero Universe I (all in Harvard Square), and New England Comics (Union Square, Allston). Computer gamers were sought through posters at Harvard Summer School, outside testers, and friends of friends.

General notes about comics and comic book stores:

All the comic book stores I visited had a much older clientele than I expected. From what I could see, the median age was about 20. The Manager of New England Comics was very proud of that, because he wanted to cater to an older and more mature audience. The Million Year Picnic had not only new and old comics, but also t-shirts, books, and other memorabilia, plus original prints on sale for over a thousand dollars, and Japanese die-cast Transformer-type robots for up to a hundred dollars. Newbury Comics is really Newbury Mod Boutique, selling primarily CD's and albums, punk and heavy metal wear, posters, t-shirts, and, of course, comic books. Superhero Universe was more of a traditional comic book store, but even it sold back issues of other magazines with the old and new comics. I expected to see the youngest crowd here, but unfortunately, they weren't terribly busy during any of my visits.

Customers in all of these stores (comic book customers only in Newbury Comics) were very serious buyers. Few were just browsing. Most knew exactly what they wanted for both new issues and back issues. I saw sales of over $100 twice. I saw many customers in all three stores in Harvard Square, checking all the back issue bins.

As one respondent mentioned during an interview, comics have grown up. Though the most popular are still series like X-Men and Spiderman, the industry and the comics has changed significantly. The big two comic book publishers are still Marvel (Fantastic Four, Spiderman, X-Men) and DC (Superman, Batman), but independents abound. Eclipse, First, and Comico are members of the highest tier of smaller publishers. Superheroes are still predominant, but other themes include Rambo or other Vietnam veterans or G.I. Joe types, Ninjas and Samurai, adult-themes, sexy women in various situations (usually barely clad on the cover), children's tv characters, D & D type characters, and on and on. Black and Whites have become popular as an art-form, and also because they are cheaper to make than color.

Even Superman and Batman have grown up. Though Superman has been around for fifty years now, a new series began about a year ago, casting him as not all-powerful, unlike his original superpower-laden self. Batman is now "The Dark Knight," looked on and hated by Gotham City as a vigilante, more like Spiderman. Comics show much more of a superhero's personal life, not just crime/evil fighting action. For example, Spiderman just got married to Mary Jane.

Finally, comics have taken traditional methods of differentiation of product to sell lots (LOTS) more. Spiderman has three series of his own: The Amazing Spiderman; Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spiderman; and Web of Spiderman. On top of these are crossover appearances in other titles, Marvel Team-ups, Marvel two-in-ones, Marvel Tales, special mini-series, giant-sized annuals, and on and on and on. In addition to this are Graphic Novels, about six issues bound together and sold as one.

The Interview

If respondents did not know that Infocom was sponsoring the research, all efforts were made to prevent them from finding out. They knew very little about the project from the recruiting. They were told that a software company had a new product line that it was developing and needed some feedback from consumers. Of course those brought in through Infocom knew who we were.

Once they were brought upstairs, they were asked to fill out a short questionnaire, which could give us concrete information about their computer software tastes, their knowledge of our products and the industry, their spending habits, their comics book tastes, and a little about their socio-economic situation. If they were comic book readers, they were, after filling out the form, asked to explain what makes a good comic book.

Next was a short introduction. Since when packaged and marketed, the product would scream out "Computerized Comic Book," the introduction was likewise so presented. Basically: "What we have here is a computerized,

animated comic book. But it also adds a new feature, being able to change perspectives or point of view. Thus you can follow two different characters through the same sequence of events and find out how each of them sees it. When you see the top corner of the page turned down, you can either do nothing to continue with the character you are following or if you hit enter, you can switch to another character or point of view."

At this point the screen was turned on and the respondent was told to press the space bar and begin. The first weekend, they saw Pit (version dated July 6). For those that didn't know we were Infocom, the first title screen was skipped. The second weekend we used Lane (version 0.03), which had no title screen.

They were allowed to play(?) for between fifteen and twenty-five minutes. If before a reasonable time had passed they'd hit a dead-end and didn't reverse on their own, we told them (how) to reverse to the point where they'd made an important decision and take the other path. If they had played a very linear game(?) and did not have a chance to see the different perspectives they were brought back to and shown the other path. In Pit, they generally ended up in the water-beast village (making every jump possible) and were brought back to see Escobar check on the prisoners. In Lane, the best example was Ivory being carried off and Lane seeing it.

When they'd played long enough and had seen some parallel action, the screen was shut off and the interview began. The first week's were tape recorded with permission. As we became more used to the types of answers and the best way to gather the necessary information, the questioning flow changed to became the following (more or less):

- Overall impressions?
- What in particular did you like?
- What in particular did you dislike?
- What did you think of the ability to change perspectives?
- I'd like to compare specific features of this product to other computer games you've played. What did you think of it? How does it compare? Is that important/preferable?
  —graphics —plot/storyline —characters (development)
  —speed —flow of the story —others
- Overall, how happy would you say you are with this product?
- If you were developing this product, what would you add or to this product to make it better? What would you take away from it?
- How long would you expect this story to last to go from start to finish? How about total playing time, that is to go through all the sub-plots and different character perspectives.
- Is that a good length? Would you want it to be that length? longer? shorter?
- At those (preferred) lengths, how much would you expect to pay for this product? ("If this disk were complete and finished and I gave it to you now, how much would you take out of your pocket to give me for it?") Would you be happy paying that much?
- What would you pay for it if it provided 4-5 hours of total playing time?
- Suppose it would retail at ...? ...? at $9.95?
- Now I'd like to compare some features of this product with comic books, keeping in mind that it would give 4-5 hours of total playing time and cost $9.95.
  —plot/storyline —characters (development) —flow of the story —others
- Once again, overall how happy would you say you are with this product?
- Have you used any other comic book software? Accolade Comics? Questprobe?

<if they knew it was Infocom>

- What do you think of this product coming from Infocom?
- Do you think this product is worthy of carrying the Infocom name?

The Respondents

The respondents and their thumbnail sketches are presented as such: name; age; how they were recruited; heavy or light game player—based on how much time they said they spent playing computer games weekly and their overall knowledge of software companies and products—1 means very light player, 5 means experienced and knowledgeable player; Infocom index—based on their knowledge of Infocom and its games and their perceptions of it—0 means Infocom ignorant, 1 means Infocom hater, 5 means Infocom fanatic; yes comics or no comics.

Brian; 17; responded to computer gamers flyer; 3; 1; no comics

Peter; 15; as respondent to Paula's Poll; 4; 4; no comics

Brendan; 14; Paula's Poll; 4; 5; no comics

Jose; 20; in comic book store; 3; 3; yes comics

Ricardo; 21; in comic book store; 2; 3; yes comics

John; 15; friend of friend; 4; 4; no comics

Eric; 15; friend of friend; 1; 2; no comics

Justin; 17; outside tester; 5; 5; yes comics

Robert & Joseph; both 32; friends of friends; 1; 0; no comics

Dan; 40; friend of friend; 2; 3; no comics

David; 14; in comic book store; 5; 4; yes comics

Paul; 15; in comic book store; 5; 3; yes comics

Jack; 61; friend of friend; 1; 0; no comics

Matt; 15; in comic book store; 4; 3; yes comics

Chris & Paul; both 16; in comic book store; Paul 3; 0; yes comics Chris 5; 2; yes comics

***These respondents tested PIT

BRIAN

It lacks interaction... like a children's program... good idea to have changing point of view... good plot, adventure... needs more than just left-right choice... graphics not great... thicken the story with more words... add user control to speed it up..
graphics are functional
space opera story...might be interesting as a computer story
characters starting to be developed
flows well...mind sequence neat
below average (happiness) speed, broken stories
add...user control speed
takeaway
expect length—an hour or so/3, 3.5 hours
want length—longer + faster 10 hrs, couple sections, save feature
expect pay—25-30 not buy
reasonable cost—10-20
9.95—would buy...then consider average or a little above
overall...interesting, wouldn't get a second one
Infocom...trying to get away with what's not up to usual standards. Not worthy of Infocom unless more interaction is added

PETER

interesting concept...no excitement...got boring...no sound...not enough action...story pretty good
liked—stop and go back...graphics pretty good...
disliked—took a lot of time for nothing to happen
more color to graphics
characters had depth...not one dimensional
happy—better with sound, less game time for things to happen
add—more sound, more color, arcade sequences
takeaway

expect length—2.5/25-30 hrs
want time—3-4/40 hrs...save feature
expect pay 40.00-55.00, 60.00
would buy if moved faster
happy buying @ 20-30
10.00, 4-5 hrs—would buy 10 of 'em
better than comic book, choosing characters
Infocom—graphics in your mind...need new advertising...Infocom and graphics...I'd buy it because they've never done graphics...should be pretty good...not worthy of Infocom. user speed control would improve it

BRENDAN
like views of different characters...panning, zooming...good story
dislike—didn't really interact
graphics—real enough...more character than scenery
plot—good start
characters—good development...more individualism
flow—good...keeps moving
concept—its new and different
happy—I'd buy it if in my price range
add—play one of the characters...get to play everyone...like normal Infocom game but get to play any character, make decisions
expect length—45 min/3 hrs
want length—1.5/6 hrs with save feature
expect pay—20.00-35.00
would buy first to try it...second would depend on first one
happy buying it at 20.00
10.00, 4-5 hrs—definitely buy it
its original...good...different
would pay more if could change personalities
more like a book than a comic, which is in a series

JOSE
good comic book—good characterization...interesting characters, developed within storyline, act realistically... storyline...art
not difficult to get into...once changed perspective, starting getting interesting...good insight on characters... variety...not as frustrating as typical Infocom game
concept—nothing can be compared to it...more forgiving than adventure...not creating storyline, but exploring within, don't have to actively do it...more like movie or book or comic book
graphics—animation really good...maybe more color...not too
important...characterization is good...realistic not in control of fates
plot—didn't get enough to tell, got interesting when changed perspectives
flow—fine...mixture of comic and movie, jumping from scene to scene
speed—too slow, maybe way to control it
happy—I like it I'd buy it
add—user control to jump frames...more color, but that's superficial
expect length—few hours/15 hours
want length—3-4 hrs/shouldn't be able to finish without jumping...save feature...don't mind if its long as long as its good and user friendly
expect pay—25.00-30.00, 15.00 for sequels
4-5 hrs total playing time—25.00-30.00
10.00, 4-5 hrs—yea definitely...see 10.00 and Infocom I'd be tempted to buy it no matter what it was
story—fine, graphic novel now about 12.00...plus get to explore different perspective

characters—not enough info
flow—very similar to comics, even jumps, showing them on the screen then jumping to them...even if you didn't tell me it was a comic I would have pointed that out
happy—at 10.00 I think its a great buy
Infocom—even with graphics it wouldn't surprise me for Infocom to come out with something like this... everything kind of reads like a novel so its a natural progression to a program that reads like a comic book...seems that they're trying to stress reading...attractive to younger people scared by text adventures
worthy—yes

RICARDO
good comic book—the writing the art...get away from cliche...original story...good dialogue...good character development...the same things that make a good movie
I like the fact that you can switch point of views, I think that's a big plus...
like—motion...not really a cartoon, because motion is limits
dislike—slow, sometimes finished reading a frame and go on...pace, seems that most frame stayed on screen same amount of time, but action was quicker in some places and story would have flowed better
graphics—not bad for an IBM PC...not sure how expressive they were...not much shading...good for a computer but not for traditional
art...better than a lot of games, but its icing on the cake not all important...as new art form, its more important though
plot—fun, I was looking forward to seeing more
character—mind sequence...pretty good...as computer game its not terribly important, but in telling a story it certainly is.
flow—a little confusing when jumping is the other side of the coin, it interrupts the natural flow of the story...a little awkward...more natural in other computer games because here you control where you go...as story that was written, its a compromise in flow being able to switch point of view
vs. comic books—
graphics—interesting combination of static art and animation
plot—more or less typical, average comic book
character—development better than in average comic book...something that's nice but wouldn't replace comic books with it
flow—somewhat jagged and awkward because of jumping...compromise, somewhat unnatural...in a way its good that you can do it
happy—could be better...not as happy since I know what could be...but it's new and has a lot of possibilities
add—pacing better, going to next frame when you're ready to...or give control to creative team as to how long you should see something...good creative team should be considered for art and writing
expect length—30 min/1.5 hrs
want length—20-30 min/45 min-1 hr if save feature then couple hours
would pay—weigh cost of comic and cost of program...4.00-8.00, a little more than I'd pay to go see a movie that would last a few hours
happy—yea, but not as often, maybe once every few weeks or once a month
4-5 hrs, 10.00—probably, but wouldn't buy second without knowing good story or good art or good writing... expect it to be a little better

JOHN
not bad...change of characters a little confusing, don't know what happened to character you left...don't know why a new character is doing something...animation, graphics fairly good...plot didn't develop...reverse worked fine, nice that you could see frames as you reversed so you could tell where you were
characters—if followed through, could get a good idea
flow—a few lapses when change characters
graphics—about equal to adventures, but a distinct lack of color
dislike—dialogue was sparse, like a comic book...no emotion

takeaway—some unnecessary graphics to make room for more dialogue
expect length—30-45 min/6-7 hrs
want length—30 min/6-7 hrs
expect pay—30.00-35.00
happy—yes
4-5 hrs happy pay—20.00-25.00
10.00—pretty good deal
Infocom—different from what I'd expect, graphics, subject (coming from comic book)...might show change in view of company and change ideas of what Infocom is, as more varied distributor
worthy—for 10 bucks, yea

ERIC

a comic could do just the same thing, there's no reason to do it with a computer
like—graphic, story fairly good
dislike—delay was too much, story was too slow
concept—paper comic book is just as good
graphics—good...weren't incredibly detailed, but that would slow you down
plot—good...not much action...not much interaction either
character—some seemed too good in their ways...better developed than anything I've seem
flow—done nicely...wasn't long winded, held attention
happy—not very, wouldn't want to spend time at computer just reading
add—play a character, make choices, interaction...sound
expect length—2-3 hrs/10-12 hrs
want length—same
expect pay—$20-$30...wouldn't buy, comic books are cheaper...would buy at shareware prices
10.00, 4-5 hrs—after 4-5 hours would become something that just sits on a shelf
vs. comic books—more expensive...doesn't take 4 hours to read comic book, actually like getting 5 or 6 comic books...story much like comic book, good guys, bad guys...this can present pictures better than comic books...comics tend to be more descriptive in action...characters aren't introduced the same way, telling what characters have done, not what they're doing
Infocom—what difference would it make who it came out from
worthy—I don't know that much about Infocom, but I imagine they'd put out any game they developed

JUSTIN

good comic book—good writing, vocabulary, expression told with more intelligence than Superfriends on Saturday morning TV...good characters, realism, depth, real emotion...art...flowing and exciting and well done...humor
an interesting idea...kind of like a TV show or movie, shots were like some sci-fi movie
like—3-D type graphics well done, some images more interesting, some places predictable...story was interesting...not much like a game
dislike—speed, some of movement was too slow, faster would have held attention more
concept—interesting idea but not so great because you can get the same enjoyment from watching one tv, movie from only one point of view...maybe if you could see the same scene from two points of view
graphics—just as good if not better than other games...didn't matter all that much...cinematography made up for lack of detail, though
story—good...good to get to action, intro too long
happy—very
add—more depth to characters, too much stock characters
expect length—2 hrs/8 hrs
want length—2 hrs/10-11 hrs
expect pay—10.00
4-5 hrs, 10.00 happy—yes

equal to a comic book, not to my favorites, but to the average comic book, better than some...good story...good characters...humor...flowing and exciting art, panning, zooming more than you can get from comic...good interesting art, movement on screen...good writing almost there...
Infocom—overall quality of past games would be enticing...not very surprising graphics, Fooblitzky was totally different from anything else, as is this
worthy—no but it could be...improve story by fleshing out characters more

***The following respondents tested LANE

ROBERT & JOSEPH
both were very bored very quickly
their questionnaire shows that they played computer games infrequently (less than an hour a week) and only arcade games on an atari at that.

DAN
I'd like to spend an evening with this...I prefer it to joystick and push button games...there's no mapping, no keeping track of things
likes—more of a maze or a puzzle, the way you have to find out things...its nice not being plunged into immediate interaction...you get a good feel for how to solve it
dislikes—slow, maybe having different speeds available...the graphics aren't great
plot—not enough viewing to tell...typical superhero or antichrist adventure...very basic for computer games, maybe it'll get more involved characters...I'd like more branching to know more about characters...and some fake ends, some red herrings flow—good, like a movie with the panning and zooming
happy—like I've said twice, I'd like to take it home
add—more branches...user speed control...maybe sound?
expect length—2-3 hrs/24 hrs...could play all night because I wouldn't get frustrated with it..save feature
want length—same
expect pay—$25...its unique
4-5 hrs—$15-$20
10.00, 4-5 hrs—very pleased
vs. comic book—like a computerized version of an early, basic comic book...simplistic plot

DAVID
good comic book—interesting plot, good action and non-action...character development, they must be believable...quality art...realistic scenes of characters personal life...variety of plots within series… original ideas for plot lines...interesting letters column
it was good...no interaction like in interactive fiction...like a choose your own adventure book, but I like interaction...nice being able to jump characters, new concept, nice feature...good story line...subtle jokes
dislike—only having one ending, after one play through you know what its all about...needs better graphics... speed goes too slowly frame to frame...some dull comments and dialogue...I'd like the possibility of interacting as one of the characters
plot—fantasy, its different, I enjoyed it
characters—set characters, used to changeable characters, interacting...no development without interaction
happy—I enjoyed it...its unique
add—interaction, say things, do things...solving the story different way getting different endings
expect length—1.5hrs/5-10 hrs
want length—3 hrs/5-10 hrs
expect pay—25.00-35.00
happy
4-5 hrs—25-30 bucks
$9.95, 4-5 hrs—probably

vs. comic books—story is interesting and believable to a point, I'm not sure how it might do as a comic...flow was jumpy and cutoff, but enjoyable
Infocom—different, its not interactive, I see it geared to a younger audience
worthy—barely...known for interaction, this says you're moving in a different direction

PAUL

good comic book—characters are believable, they have lives and the good guy can't always win...plot is interesting, support characters have real lives, good villains...continuity, not one issue stories… real world not fantasy, believability...good art...good writing, dialogue
Its great, the idea and the way it works, very expressive
story—really cute, it gets better as it goes along
concept—that's the best part, without changing points of view it's pretty lame
graphics—good for an IBM
speed—it should go faster
happy—very
expect length—40-45 min/1 hr
want length—40-45 min/1.5 hr
expect pay—$12-$15
4-5 hr—$17-$20
$9.95—great
concept—totally different, I love it
plot—really good, not the same as comics
Infocom—totally unexpected, different, good
worthy—yes

JACK

interesting idea, kind of interactive...it gives you some control over the story...simplistic idea
would expect it aimed at a young audience, they might like it...maybe if it had more adult subject matter

MATTHEW

good comic book—good writing, story with action, real world involvement, good flow and pace of story… good art...plot line exists throughout book but doesn't weigh it down...originality in plot
its cute but...its like a Flash Gordon movie, not much like a comic book
graphics—neat...zooming and panning were nice, maybe more color
story—wasn't too interesting...didn't remind me of any comics I've read recently
concept—didn't matter much, the graphics and storyline were enough...story went along well enough...
plot—it was just too cute...lost interest
speed—slow, made the story seem to drag
characters—generic, Flash, Buck Rogers
happy—more than what I expected when you said computerized comic book...neat new concept
add—more animation, smoother animation, save feature
expect length—1.5 hrs/2 hrs
want length—same
expect pay—$20.00-$30.00
4-5 hrs, 10.00—very good price, but too long
vs. comic book—much like choose your own adventure book, neat idea

CHRIS

good comic book—artwork...story should be exciting and reasonable...drawing quality...price...Marvel
kind of like a choose your own adventure book...pretty good

likes—graphics...switching points of view
add—controlling the guys, interaction...background, color, save feature
concept—neat, can't do that in comics
graphics—sketchy, maybe more colored in and colored backgrounds
plot—good story
flow—better than most computer games, even with jumping around
expect length—30-45 min/1 hr
want length—same
expect pay—$20-$25
4-5 hrs—$40.00, like a book
10.00—I'll take a couple
maybe have origins, history of Lane, same as in comics great overall

PAUL (of CHRIS and PAUL)
good comic book—Marvel...continuity throughout series...good action...different characters, crossovers
its good...you watch what you want to...the animation was good
concept—able to find out what's going on behind the scenes
characters—got to know a lot about them
add—more color...save feature
expect length—45 min/1.5 hrs
want length—same
expect pay—25.00-30.00
4-5 hrs—$40.00
10.00—I buy comics for a lot more than that
serial...monthly adventures, like comics

Observations of the market research participants:

Robert & Joseph provided us with no usable information because of their inexperience with computer games of any type but arcade. Jack is similarly unusable because of his familiarity with only simulators and his high-fallutin' intelligence and inability to deal with the product. Eric is not very useful because he doesn't buy any software; he has only shareware and pirated stuff.

Young Infocom players (Peter, Brendan, David) weren't overly impressed with anything but the price. Though they spoke kindly for the most part, they were not enthused at all. Notice the requests for interaction in the game.

Comic book readers were all excited by the concept. Though Matt hated the story in LANE (I'm bringing him back to try PIT) and Chris and Paul didn't quite know what to make of it, reactions were all distinctly positive. Many others also had specific problems with the story and/or characters.

Our main I/F audience will NOT enjoy this product. Teenage boys want more interaction if they have heavy exposure to interaction. Our target should be those who are not heavily into computer games.

The product should be positioned as a story, not a game. Package and advertising should appeal to comic book fans and a more mature audience. The story should be more branching, like PIT, but perhaps with better story-lines. LANE, as a spoof of comics, is a risky proposition with a comic book audience. The stories should be more "grown up," as comic books are today. Just about all who tested PIT really thought the mind sequence added tremendously to character development.

Summary of market research and list of improvements to be made:

As a result of the research done for Infocomics, the following areas deserved attention or action in development and marketing. An in-depth review of the actual research is described in subsequent sections. The areas

that need attention are:

speed animation/graphics content/positioning

Criticism of the speed of the story was universal. All respondents found that the game progressed too slowly.

Most respondents commented that the graphics were skimpy. More color and more development in the graphics were often suggested. Also, the animation, panning, and zooming were well received, in particular by comic book readers.

Comic book readers most often found the plot and characters in the story to be not up to par with those of modern comic books, that is, they found them too simplistic, juvenile, or poorly developed. Neither the storyline nor the characters resembled those of "good" comic books.

Adult non-comic book readers were intrigued responded favorably to the product. They, likewise, found the plots and characters to be lacking.

Overall, the product was reviewed favorably by teenage comic book readers, adult comic book readers, and adult non-comic book readers. The product received low marks from teenage non-comic book readers. Comic book readers of any age, and adults, comic book readers or not, were intrigued by the concept of changing characters, regardless of their opinions of the story.

At the meeting of August 27, we discussed the aforementioned areas and agreed that the following solutions will be implemented.

SPEED: Some type of user speed control device will be implemented. Discussions among all interested parties will continue to determine the actual nature of the device.

ANIMATION/GRAPHICS: Animation sequences will be used frequently, even if story length is sacrificed by doing so. Likewise, when possible, sketchy panels will be fleshed out, improving the graphic presentation of the story. Color use will also increase to boost the level of satisfaction.

CONTENT/POSITIONING: Infocomics must be more like today's comic books. Characters will be more fully developed. More branching will be used to augment plot and character development. The stories themselves will take on the following themes:

Pit of a Thousand Screams (working title) will become a superhero story. The trio of heroes will be featured characters, appearing significantly through the story (and in the title) and easily recognizable as superheroes.

Lane Mastodon will be a total and complete spoof. The main character will take on the persona of "the world's stupidest superhero." Lane will be easily recognizable as comedy and satire.

Zork will show all the traits of a fantasy comic, having characters recognizable as those in a fantasy or D & D type adventure. The plot will be an interesting and gripping adventure.

Work continues on InfoComics:

Date: 4 Jun 1987 1208-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: InfoComix To: IMPS at FRED

I've compiled a file of ideas and issues regarding the Tom Snyder development system. These are mostly the result of a bull session yesterday with Chris. If you're interested in reading it, it's <SEM>TOM-SNYDER.IDEAS or something like that.

Chris: let me know if you can remember anything we came up with that I left out.

Date: 12 Jun 1987 1618-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: InfoComix To: IMPS at FRED

The INFOCOMIX.IDEAS file in my directory has been updated with your responses but some additional

points of my own. Also, two additional files, INFOCOMIX.PLANETFALL and INFOCOMIX.LANE-MASTODON, go into more detail about two potential stories. Tom Snyder and his people are coming for a meeting/bull session Monday afternoon; if you're interested in commenting on these files, please do so before then.

Date: 27 Jul 1987 1355-EDT From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Peter R. To: CLR, JON, PDL

Peter called to say he'll be about 45 minutes late.
There are 11 new scenes in LANE-MASTODON.SCRIPT for your perusal.

Date: 11 Aug 1987 1653-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: InfoComix To: Imps at FRED

Mr. Stella informs me that several one-on-one interviews with comic book readers will be conducted this Saturday and Sunday here at Infocom. We hope to be interviewing Infocom fans and Infocom anti-fans. (All interviewees will be IBM [or clone] owners.)
If you wish to attend one of these sessions, please see Mr. Stella. (He doesn't want a lot of people all at the same session.)

Date: 8 Oct 1987 1452-EDT From: Elitzna Langizi <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Names To: Everybody at FRED

Any suggestions for male and female fantasy-type names for the woman who disguises herself as a man in the Zork Infocomic? It would be nice to have the names play off each other, as in Laura/Larry.

Date: 11 Jan 1988 1630-EST From: Big Land Devil <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Originality breeds contempt… To: MARC

I think future flexibility and independence depends entirely on how well our stuff sells. If this year's offerings sell well, fine. If not, then we will have even less independence than we do now, regardless of how closely we follow Activision's guidelines (whatever they are).
When you aren't selling those big numbers, you are not exactly dealing from a position of strength. Beyond Zork is the only game since Leather to sell over 50K units. These are not very good numbers.
Did you form any impression of how people viewed Infocomics? I am told press was very enthused, dealers still a little unsure.

Date: 11 Jan 1988 1643-EST From: Big Land Devil <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Originality breeds contempt… To: MARC

Theoretically they ship around March 1 (still safely in fiscal Q4). I find this somewhat optimistic, as TSP hasn't even started implementing Zorkquest. The script is written (Elizabeth Langosy fleshed out a plot I generated), but I think the schedule is tight. Lane and Gamma Force are in reasonable shape, though, so it may be possible.
I think the real question is whether there is still a market for I.F. Every other "category" that existed four years ago has grown (with the possible exception of arcade games). I.F. has shrunk. Why? No one really has any hard

answers to this question. There seems to be an insatiable market for look-alike FRP games, many of which aren't any better, technically or visually, than the ones that existed four years ago.

One possible answer is that our technology now looks antique or old-hat. I certainly hope that's the answer, because that's one thing we can "easily" do something about, but the ex-EA ActiMarketoons think that new technology might add about 10-15% to sales. Hardly a bunch.

In short, sigh,

Date: 21 Jan 1988 1649-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: LIZ

Infocomics have been in and out of testing, although there isn't a whole lot of testing as we know it. They're cute, but I'd rather have a meaty puzzle.

Date: 26 Jan 1988 1149-EST From: Alan J. Cope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Pit To: Eliz cc: Amy

The Pit disk that you and Gayle looked at yesterday DID include many scenes which Amy and I already edited. The fact that you were both confused at certain points is troubling. We may not have time to address all your concerns; but you and Gayle are more than welcome — indeed, encouraged — to help us edit the text. Timewise, I don't think it's practical to have more people "sign off" on a scene. But if you can be there when we're there to make suggestions, or to edit the text when we're not there, presumably more of your concerns would be addressed.

There's no way that ANY of the Infocomics will be as good as we hoped, given the schedule. I'm desperately trying to make them better than bad. If you and Gayle think they're bad — and you aren't as close to them as I am, so I respect your opinions — perhaps you ought to get more involved in the process, if you have time.

Date: 5 Feb 1988 0121-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Lane To: testers at FRED

I made a number of twiddles and fixes in Lane, especially in the area of adding more theme music. Peter Reynolds is supposedly coming in tomorrow (Friday) to work on Lane, so maybe you should wait until he's done before making new disks. After Friday's mail arrives, someone should probably call the outside testers we haven't heard from.

Date: 5 Feb 1988 0938-EST From: Alan J. Cope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Lane To: SEM at FRED cc: testers at FRED

Please DON'T wait for Peter's changes! He's making minor twiddles to Lane over the weekend, and the master IBM disk will be sent away early Monday. I suppose the only point in calling outside testers is to see if they found crashes we didn't know about.

So, get a fresh IBM Lane disk from me.

Date: 8 Feb 1988 1159-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: INFOCOMICS BUG To: TESTERS at FRED

TSP discovered an IBM Infocomics bug over the weekend: If you hit R (for Restart) when there's text in the narration window, garbage appears instead of the Restart message.

Peter thinks that this bug ISN'T on the Apple, but if it is, please call him at TSP and let him know.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1107-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: status report To: joel cc: jon

The status report I gave you is currently inaccurate regarding two items: ZorkQuest on the Apple and Lane on the Commodore. I expected ZorkQuest to have gone to XEMAG last week. Current plans are that it will ship the end of this week - early next week. Similarly, I expected Lane to leave last week. It may not leave until the end of next week. The holdup here seems to be the "Len connection". Also - several people at TSP took last week off. I still don't think it seems reasonable to have one person doing two machines, especially when it doesn't seem to be a simple transfer. Peter expresses complete confidence in Len's skills, so...

A brief intro to Gamma Force:

As we join the story, the evil overlord, suspecting a rebellion, forces one of our heroes to kill the waterbeast leader. (Show Nast killing Escobar. When text at bottom shows Nast thinking about how broad-scoped the rebellion is..)

Infocomics lets you move around within the story as you please. So if you want to find out what happened to Escobar before going any further, just press one key to rewind. Then, when the corner flap is down, just press ENTER and you'll "jump" to the other character's point of view.

(jump... "Escobar was dead..")

Summary of 'Zork Infocomix: Egreth Castle' (first draft):

Egreth Castle, once the proud home of King Duncanthrax, is now a crumbling ruin. Looming menacingly on a high crag in northwest Quendor, Egreth commanded the ? river valley. It was abandoned during the reign of Dimwit Flathead ("The Excessive"), and never reoccupied, as Dimwit wanted any tenant to sign a ten-million year lease at forty billion zorkmids a square foot. Soon the castle became a place of ill omen, and it was rumored that grues had occupied the lower levels. Few visited it, and of those, fewer still returned.

Our heroes are traveling with a small caravan of traders which wends its stately way south along the western shores of the Flathead Ocean. Just as the story opens, the caravan is passing the ominous dark pile of Egreth. Night is about to fall, and the caravan makes camp.

The cast:

Gurthark the Stout, a merchant. Stereotypically timid, he has reserves of courage that are rarely seen. Usually, he's complaining about his avaricious brother-in-law, who sent him on this trip. Later, we see that he'll fight to protect his goods, and finally, to protect his friends.

Ryker, a scout. He's the guy who's supposed to be protecting the caravan; woods-wise, crafty, tough. He's boastful, and has every reason to be. Conan the Barbarian crossed with Aragorn.

Dirinthrax, a kid. He's just a teenager, and this is his first real job other than working on the farm back home in

Miznia. His job is to tend the pack animals. Known as Dirin, or, to irritate him (which everyone seems to like to do), as Dir.

Frobwit the Fair, a magician. Traveling with the caravan for safety and companionship. Not really much of a magician, or he'd be on a flying carpet, right? Not to hear him tell it...

Acia, a young woman. Older than Dirin, but younger than Ryker. Both of them are interested in her. She, of course, looks down on Dirin, but makes goo-goo eyes at Ryker. She is travelling south to visit her aged and infirm grandmother.

Lilia/"Lyle", another young woman. She is Dirin's age, and in fact, Dirin thinks she's a guy, because she's in disguise. She's running away from home, where her stepparents were planning to sell her to the Green Magicians. They were doing this because they thought her fey, and rather feared her. Little did they know this was because of an amulet she wore, an amulet that she had found in the woods one day when she was five years old. Dirin thinks Lyle's a dope. Lilia will be referred to as "Lyle" or "he" in most of what follows.

The Story:

The caravan beds down for the night. Ryker is on watch, nodding sleepily next to the fire. The castle is visible from the campsite, a looming dark pile in which, occasionally, a dim light can be seen. The fire is also visible from the castle, its smoke forming a strange shape that indicates to the watching eyes that something they desire is there.

Stealthy eyes peer out of the foliage, as sharp claws tense for the attack. Suddenly, a troop of night gaunts bursts from the forest, attacking the sleeping travellers! Ryker is almost immediately bonked on the head and is out of action. Oddly, the gaunts don't seem interested in killing, or even goods: they go straight for Acia, grab her, and carry her off into the night. Dirin, who was awake and nearby, follows, grabbing a short sword, but the gaunts have long legs and get far ahead of him. They are heading directly toward Egreth.

The rest of the group, startled into wakefulness by the attack, finds Ryker out cold and revives him. They resolve, with some reluctance by Gurthark and Frobwit, to rescue Acia and, if it isn't too inconvenient, Dirin (whom they assume has also been captured). Gurthark volunteers to stay and guard the campsite (and their valuables).

Frobwit casts a vezza spell to augur the outcome of their search, and he sees a strange vision. (Possibilities: three minutes ahead? Dirin marrying someone from the party? No result?) Annoyed at his own lack of prowess, he reports that "The girl's rescuer will become rich and famous." Hearing this, Gurthark is suddenly interested in helping, and after removing a few select valuables from his bags, is ready to go. Lyle is delegated to watch the pack animals and the remaining trade goods.

The night gaunts deliver Acia to a shadowy, wizardesque figure in the castle. He questions them, discovers they didn't kill everyone, then orders them to go back and finish the job. Night gaunts are pretty stupid, and you have to give them really explicit orders. A contingent of trollish guards take Acia off to the dungeon.

The night gaunts return, attack the encampment (there is no one there but Lyle, who escapes into the woods), kill the pack animals, and ransack the trade goods. Lyle, with no post to guard, decides to try to catch up with the rescuers.

The rescuers follow the trail of the first night gaunt pack to the castle, and run into the second pack. (This is just a few minutes after Dirin has run into them). They think of fighting, but are outnumbered, and so they hide magically. Frobwit tries to make them look like a grove of trees, but the outcome is more like a clump of bushes. The night gaunts, to whom this sort of bush is like catnip, are ready to munch away when their leader calls them on. (Perhaps he had a mental communication from the evil magician).

The rescuers continue toward the castle. It's tight as a drum, no way in. Frustrated, they start to circle the ruins, keeping well down in the brush. Partway around, they see a window in one of the battlements.

Lyle is following the second party of night gaunts, hiding carefully, and listening to them complain about what a lousy job they have. It's almost dawn, their eyes are starting to hurt, there wasn't anyone at the camp anyway. One of the night gaunts is real quiet because, while ransacking the caravan, he found something really nice. He's

got it hidden, because he's a pretty low-ranking night gaunt and his superior would make him give it up.

Acia, in the dungeon, is rummaging in her clothes for her magic amulet, when she suddenly realizes that it's back in camp in her luggage.

Lyle, following the night gaunts and looking for signs of the party, goes into his clothes to find the magic amulet, and it's gone. It was Lyle's originally, and Acia stole it; partly out of greed, and partly because the amulet thought it would get to Egreth more quickly in her possession.

Ryker, Frobwit and Gurthark endeavor to get into the window. Frobwit says he'll float up, which he does, but only halfway. His spell wears off, leaving him clinging to a stone gargoyle poking out the side. Fortunately, he lowers a rope, and Ryker climbs it and then the wall the rest of way, not omitting to chide Frobwit for his boastfulness. The heroes perch insecurely outside a window, looking inside.

Where's Dirin? He set off after the night gaunts, but they were going pretty fast. He went as fast as he could, but before he got to the castle, a party of night gaunts was slinking along towards him. No cover, no place to hide; they go right by him! Well, you might wonder how he avoided them. Frobwit has been teaching him a little magic. With great effort and concentration, Dirin can now become somewhat invisible. Invisible enough in the dim pre-dawn light to avoid the night gaunts. Invisible enough to trot back into Egreth with them when they return! As luck would have it, the last night gaunt, who should be watching the rear, seems preoccupied with something else, and doesn't notice when Dirin becomes fully visible again. Dirin slips off into a shadowy corner and hides.

———

Dirin and Lyle find the night gaunt who has the amulet, and they get it from him. Gurthark finds a treasure room which has a trap door into the dungeon, but Acia isn't there. Acia is interviewed by the evil magician.

Dirin uses his amplified magic to attack the magician, which distracts him during the other party member's attack. Lyle suggests that Dirin get the amulet to Frobwit, whose amplified power would be much greater, so he flies it to the magician. Frobwit is not much more accurate as a powerful wizard than as a weak one, and he manages to defeat the evil one, but also destroys the castle in the process.

———

Notes from brainstorming meeting:

Evil magician can only use night gaunts a few times? Limited time contract? Contract "until something-or-other" (which has already happened but they haven't found out).

Acia allies herself with bad guys? Or thinks she has amulet until the bad guy asks her to reveal it.

Gurthark falls in love with Acia? Redeems her in the end?

Things for Ryker to do? He could get bonked on the head a lot.

Dirin knows mostly "domestic" spells, but he can use them offensively. Such as "create soap and water" to cause someone to slip.

———

The Amulet's story:

The amulet is a repository of magical power. It confers a certain amount of magical protection to its owner, and is also an amplifier of magic spells worked by its owner. It was created by a powerful magician. Just as it was finished, his apprentice betrayed him to steal the power. As his last act, the good magician cast a spell of seeking on it, meaning to send it to the Circle of Enchanters, but at the last moment, he thought of his grandchild, and it was sent toward her instead. The apprentice, being quick-witted, cast another seeking spell, less powerful, to make it return to him.

The amulet was thrown out the window into the moat, where a carp swallowed the glittering lure. The carp was eaten by a raccoon, who spit out the amulet, which was found by a rabbit. The rabbit was eaten by an eagle, who took the amulet to decorate its nest. The eagle's eggs were eaten by a snake, which swallowed the amulet as well. The snake was eaten by a fox, which carried the amulet into the woods near where Lilia was growing up. Lilia was walking in the woods when a gust of wind blew some leaves away from a beautiful shining amulet,

which she immediately picked up.

The spell of seeking being satisfied, the lower power spell took effect, beginning to draw Lilia towards the evil magician.

Of course, Lilia is not a magician, but it works some changes on her. Her small magics work better; and her stepparents believe that she is fey, and resolve to sell her to the Green Magicians. Before they can do so, she runs away, carrying the amulet south toward its goal.

A legend of the amulet has grown up in the intervening years (ten or so). The legend is that it was created by an evil magician and gives absolute power to its owner, but draws death to him soon afterward. The creator was killed by a paladin of exceptional courage and prowess. The legend gives a completely different physical appearance to the amulet and the evil magician. (Frobwit or Gurthark may tell this story at some point, and it would be counterpointed with the real history told by the evil magician later).

———

Lilia's story:

———

The Evil Magician's story:

———

Frobwit's story:

Frobwit the Fair is a rather low-level magician. His name once stood for the color of his hair, but now, his level of ability is closer to the mark. He spends most of his time in the rural areas, as the better magicians monopolize the big towns. When Dirin's parents offer to apprentice Dirin to him, Frobwit likes the idea, not because he can teach the boy all that much, but because he could afford a servant, and an apprentice is pretty nearly a servant.

Frobwit is traveling south to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, held yearly in Accardi-by-the-Sea.

———

Gurthark's story:

———

Acia's story:

Acia is a well-off, stuck-up, willful but beautiful young lady. She has been sent south to visit her sick grandmother, ostensibly to take care of her, but more properly to make sure the old lady's will leaves everything to her branch of the family. Acia would like to have that be her specifically. She's traveling with this small caravan because it was the only one leaving at the time. She's amused herself along the way by flirting with everyone, with most gratifying results. (Except for Lyle, who seems uninterested in her charms). She has Ryker and Dirin eating out of her hand. Frobwit is too old to be more than wistful, and Gurthark too shy, but they are captivated as well.

Acia is annoyed by Lyle, and watches him. (Maybe she discovers he's a she?) In any case, the day of the attack she notices Lyle examining something in his hand: a beautiful jewelled amulet! If Acia can't captivate him, she'll have his amulet instead! Lyle almost seems to know he's being spied on, and quickly tucks the amulet out of sight, but Acia resolves to get it. A few hours later, when Lyle is currying the horses, Acia sneaks to his bedroll, and searches. The amulet is buzzing softly to itself, easy to find! Acia sneaks away and hides the amulet on her person.

The night gaunts attack, seeming to go straight for Acia. She struggles, biting and scratching the nasty creatures, and in the struggle, her dress is torn (most fetchingly, of course) and the amulet rolls free and under a bush. Acia is carried off by the night gaunts.

———

Dirin's story:

Dirinthrax is a farm boy, originally with mud on his boots and straw in his hair, but he showed magical aptitude.

His parents, too poor to send him to one of the big magic schools in the south, apprenticed him to Frobwit the Great, a local magician. Not so great, unfortunately. Dirin has learned a little magic, but not much, and mostly he sweeps the floor, stokes the fire, and washes dishes. Frobwit likes the arrangement, though. Frobwit is heading south for a convention, and Dirin comes along, of course. Dirin wants to learn more magic: "When are you going to teach me some good spells?"

Dirin is quite captivated by Acia, too young to realize that she's merely having her fun with him. He thinks Lyle is a cloddish farmer, a phase of his life he'd like to pretend is past, and he's rather curt with Lyle. Lyle makes him feel weird, for some reason he can't really fathom, so Dirin treats him badly.

———

Ryker's story:

———

end of summary

Summary of 'Zork Infocomics: Assault on Egreth Castle' (final draft):

Egreth Castle, once the proud home of King Duncanthrax, is now a crumbling ruin. Looming menacingly on a high crag in northwest Quendor, Egreth commanded the Zorbwit River valley. It was abandoned during the reign of Dimwit Flathead ("The Excessive"), and never reoccupied, as Dimwit wanted any tenant to sign a ten-million year lease at forty billion zorkmids a square foot. Soon the castle became a place of ill omen, and it was rumored that grues had occupied the lower levels. Few visited it, and of those, fewer still returned.

Our heroes are traveling with a small caravan of traders which wends its stately way south along the western shores of the Flathead Ocean. Just as the story opens, the caravan is passing the ominous dark pile of Egreth. Night is about to fall, and the caravan makes camp.

The castle is visible from the campsite, a looming dark pile in which, occasionally, a dim light can be seen. The campfire is also visible from the castle, its smoke forming a strange shape that indicates to the watching eyes that something they desire is there...

The cast:

Gurthark the Stout, a merchant. Stereotypically timid, he has reserves of courage that are rarely seen. Usually, he's complaining about his avaricious brother-in-law, who sent him on this trip. Later, we see that he'll fight to protect his goods, and finally, to protect his friends.

Ryker, a scout. He's the guy who's supposed to be protecting the caravan; woods-wise, crafty, tough. He's boastful, and has every reason to be. Conan the Barbarian crossed with Aragorn.

Dirinthrax, a kid. He's just a teenager, and this is his first real job other than working on the farm back home in Miznia. His job is to tend the pack animals. Known as Dirin, or, to irritate him (which everyone seems to like to do), as Dir.

Frobwit the Fair, a magician. Traveling with the caravan for safety and companionship. Not really much of a magician, or he'd be on a flying carpet, right? Not to hear him tell it...

Acia, a young woman. Older than Dirin, but younger than Ryker. Both of them are interested in her. She, of course, looks down on Dirin, but makes goo-goo eyes at Ryker. She is traveling south to visit her aged and infirm grandmother.

Lia/"Lim", another young woman. She is Dirin's age, and in fact, Dirin thinks she's a guy, because she's in disguise. She's running away from home, where her stepparents were planning to sell her to the Green Magicians. They were doing this because they thought her fey, and rather feared her. Little did they know this was because of an amulet she wore, an amulet that she had found in the woods one day when she was five years old. Lia will be referred to as "Lim" or "he" in most of what follows.

The Amulet's story:

The amulet is a repository of magical power. It confers a certain amount of magical protection to its owner, and is also an amplifier of magic spells worked by its owner. It was created by a powerful magician. Just as it was finished, his apprentice betrayed him to steal the power. As his last act, the good magician cast a spell of seeking on it, meaning to send it to the Circle of Enchanters, but at the last moment, he thought of his grandchild, and it was sent toward her instead. The apprentice, being quick-witted, cast another seeking spell, less powerful, to make it return to him.

The amulet was thrown out the window into the moat, where a carp swallowed the glittering lure. The carp was eaten by a raccoon, who spit out the amulet, which was found by a rabbit. The rabbit was eaten by an eagle, who took the amulet to decorate its nest. The eagle's eggs were eaten by a snake, which swallowed the amulet as well. The snake was eaten by a fox, which carried the amulet into the woods near where Lia was growing up. Lia was walking in the woods when a gust of wind blew some leaves away from a beautiful shining amulet, which she immediately picked up.

The spell of seeking being satisfied, the lower power spell took effect, beginning to draw Lia towards the evil magician.

A legend of the amulet has grown up in the intervening years (ten or so). The legend is that it was created by an evil magician and gives absolute power to its owner, but draws death to him soon afterward. The creator was killed by a paladin of exceptional courage and prowess. The legend gives a completely different physical appearance to the amulet and the evil magician. (Frobwit tells this story at some point, and it is counterpointed with the real history told by the evil magician later).

Acia steals the amulet from Lim partly out of greed, and partly because the amulet thinks it will get to Egreth more quickly in her possession.

Lia's story:

Lia is the maternal granddaughter of a powerful magician, Thorman, whose long red beard and kindly manner she dimly remembers. Orphaned at an early age, she was brought up by distant cousins of her father.

When Lia was five years old, she was walking in the woods when a gust of wind blew some leaves away from a beautiful shining amulet, which she immediately picked up. The amulet buzzed happily in her hand, making Lia think that it had been waiting there just for her. She took it home and wore it on its gold neckchain.

As Lia grew to womanhood, her friends loved her willful nature and the small magics she was able to work. But her stepparents thought her fey and resolved to sell her to the Green Magicians. Overhearing their plans, Lia disguised herself as a boy and ran away. Taking the name Lim, he joined a small caravan of traders heading south, thinking to find work in one of the larger towns.

The caravan included a somewhat bumbling magician, a merchant, a kid to watch the horses, and a stuck-up girl who flirts with every man in sight. There is also Ryker, the handsome scout. Lim suspected that he would have to rely mostly on his own instincts and abilities on this journey.

One evening, the group sets up camp for beneath Egreth Castle, a creepy-looking ruin set high on a rocky precipice. Around the campfire that night, Frobwit tells the story of an evil black amulet that came from the castle but has been lost for years. Lim surreptitiously looks at his amulet, glad that it is so bright-colored and friendly.

Later that night, he is preparing for bed when Acia suddenly appears. Before Lim can stop her, she flings her arms around his neck and gives him a big kiss! She wants him to give her a nice present...like his amulet! Fat chance! He finally gets her away from his bedroll and falls asleep.

Shortly thereafter, Lim is startled awake by the sounds of an attack on the camp. Lim, Gurthark, and Frobwit find Ryker out cold and Dirin and Acia missing. They revive Ryker and resolve, with some reluctance by Gurthark and Frobwit, to rescue Acia and, if it isn't too inconvenient, Dirin. Gurthark volunteers to stay and guard the campsite (and their valuables).

Frobwit casts a vezza spell to augur the outcome of their search, and reports that "the girl's rescuer will become rich and famous." Hearing this, Gurthark is suddenly interested in helping, and after removing a few select valuables

from his bags, is ready to go. Lim is delegated to watch the pack animals and the remaining trade goods.

Not half a shlub goes by before a troop of night gaunts lope into the campsite. Lim hides in the forest just in time. He sees the night gaunts ransack the caravan's belongings, curiously stealing no more than a couple of cloaks and one of Gurthark's vests.

Having no incentive to stay in camp, Lim follows the second party of night gaunts, hiding carefully, and listening to them complain about what a lousy job they have. It's almost dawn, their eyes are starting to hurt, there wasn't anyone at the camp anyway. They arrive at the castle and Lim waits until the night gaunts are inside before checking out the place. There doesn't seem to be any way to get in at the lower level, except a barred window on the far side of where the Zorbwit River abuts the ruins. No sign of crocodiles or other hazards in the river. It seems a safe bet to swim across and try to break through the window.

There's a fairly wide bank between the far side of the river and the castle wall. Thinking of his future comfort, Lim takes off his leather tunic and britches, wraps them around a large stone, and tosses the stone across to the embankment. Then, dressed only in the flimsy woman's undergarment he wore as Lia, he swims across the river. By the time he reaches the other side, the soaking garment has fully revealed the woman's body beneath. Looking anxiously about, he pulls on his clothes.

Lim has barely finished dressing when Dirin suddenly appears at the barred window. Did he see...!!!???!!! But Dirin seems equally surprised at the sight of Lim. With a few blows of his short sword, Dirin easily breaks the rusted bars, allowing Lim entrance to the castle.

The two of them wander around the castle. At one point, Lim makes a furtive search in his clothes for the amulet, but can't find it. Did he lose it crossing the river? At another point, Lim steps on a transportation pentagram, which sends him into the harem of the Hobgoblins. Lim is saved in the nick of time by Dirin, who tells him a parable about a women who protects herself from being relegated to a harem by dressing like a man.

They come across Ryker, who tells them that he heard what sounded like an argument between Frobwit and another, unidentified person, and followed the noise to a door which a night gaunt entered. Then he saw a horrible flash of light and the argument resumed. He wants Lim and Dirin to go with him to this room and confront the vile villain within. Lim and Dirin suggest a more subtle route, but Ryker barges ahead and there is little for them to do but follow.

When they reach the room, they find it to be the lavish throne room of Egreth, now the somewhat seedy boudoir of an evil wizard! And the wizard himself, easily recognizable as such by his characteristic evil wizard look, is in mortal combat with Frobwit! They are changing each other into ever more horrible configurations. Ryker, Dirin, and Lim stand by helplessly as this battle of magical spells takes place. When Gurthark and Acia and even a couple of night gaunts appear, drawn by the commotion, they as well are unable to do anything.

Just as it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, Dirin steps forward in apparent desperation and casts a mighty spell. Everyone, including Dirin himself, is stunned as the Evil Magician's aura of power fades away and Frobwit resumes his normal shape.

There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But the E.M. appears to have lost his desire to fight and instead is staring intensely at Dirin, who is clutching...Lim's amulet! How did he get it?

"Ah!" says the Evil Magician. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward Acia.

All gasp in horror at the thought of the evil amulet being in the room with them. Lim hesitates, finding it hard to believe his friendly magic amulet is the evil Amulet of Egreth. But Acia unhesitatingly steps forward and plucks the amulet from Dirin, who is still somewhat stunned from the mighty spell he cast.

In some slimy way, the E.M. ushers a preening Acia into the throne chair and places the Crown of Egreth on her head. Lim feels that it would be better to hold back and see what happens. The E.M. commences to tell the story of the amulet. He says that it is not an evil amulet at all. It once belonged to Thorman, a powerful magician, often called "Red-beard". Lim thinks, "My grandfather's name was Thorman and he had a red beard!"

E.M. was Thorman's apprentice. Seduced by the power of the amulet, E.M. tried to take it away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. E.M.

had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

Thorman the red-beard...cousins in the Northlands...the amulet...Lia must be Thorman's granddaughter, the rightful owner of the fabled amulet! And this vile magician must be the murderer of her parents and grandfather.

Even as this realization comes upon her, the E.M. suddenly snatches the amulet from Acia, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown...anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

With incredible speed and agility, Ryker leaps for the amulet, grabbing it just in time but clonking his head against some low-hanging boudoir decor in the process, causing the amulet to spin away across the room.

Lia snatches it and places it around her neck. A magical transformation occurs, Lim's leather garments falling away and revealing the woman beneath. A brilliant light surrounds her and, as she holds out her hands toward the E.M., the light zaps towards him and he dissolves in a disgusting puddle of foul-smelling liquid.

The light reforms into the aura of Thorman, who gazes lovingly upon his granddaughter.

"With this amulet, granddaughter, thou hast gained my power," says Thorman, speaking in the voice of those beyond the pale. "It is thy right, and Radnor's evil cannot harm you. And take by thy side the one who has grown close to you in sympathies and in power, true heir to Duncanthrax — Dirinthrax, the Mage of Egreth!"

Dirin steps to Lia's side and they ascend to the throne. At that moment, the castle renews itself, returning to its former glory.

All that is left is the disgusting puddle that used to be the Evil Magician. Using the magic power that has grown more potent with his adventures, Dirin causes the liquid to be encased in a crystal ball. Then, as a final gesture to his old teacher, he lets Frobwit magically cast the ball into the nether regions. He also gives Frobwit the gift of an amulet which will increase Frobwit's power.

Gurthark leads them all down to a treasure room in the castle and Dirin and Lia graciously allow each member of the caravan to take whatever they like. Then Dirin and Lia remain at Egreth while the travelers go on their way.

Dirin's story:

Dirinthrax is a farm boy, originally with mud on his boots and straw in his hair, but he showed magical aptitude and a taste for new experiences. His parents, too poor to send him to one of the big magic schools in the south, apprenticed him to Frobwit the Great, a local magician. Not so great, unfortunately. Dirin has learned a little magic, but not much, and mostly he sweeps the floor, stokes the fire, and washes dishes. Frobwit likes the arrangement, though. When Frobwit heads south for a convention, Dirin comes along, of course. Dirin wants to learn more magic: "When are you going to teach me some good spells?"

It's fun being part of a caravan. The scout, Ryker, is brave and handsome, and Dirin rather looks up to him. He is also quite captivated by Acia, a very pretty girl traveling to visit her grandmother. Acia has her eye on him, too! He thinks Lim is a cloddish farmer, a phase of his life he'd like to pretend is past. Lim makes him feel weird, for some reason he can't really fathom. The sixth member of the caravan is a merchant named Gurthark.

One evening, the group sets up camp beneath Egreth Castle, a spooky ruin set high on a rocky precipice. Around the campfire that night, Frobwit tells the story of an evil black amulet that came from the castle but has been lost for years. The story is so eerily exciting that Dirin has trouble falling asleep that night. He lies in his bedroll, listening to the rustlings in the forest around him.

Suddenly, a troop of night gaunts bursts from the forest, attacking the sleeping travellers! Ryker is almost immediately bonked on the head and is out of action. Oddly, the gaunts don't seem interested in killing, or even goods: they go straight for Acia, grab her, and carry her off into the night.

It's up to Dirin to rescue her! He grabs a short sword and follows, but the gaunts have long legs and get far ahead of him. They are heading directly toward Egreth. Before Dirin reaches the castle, another party of night

gaunts comes slinking along towards him. No cover, no place to hide!

Luckily, Frobwit has been teaching him a little magic. With great effort and concentration, Dirin can now become somewhat invisible. Invisible enough in the dim pre-dawn light to avoid the night gaunts. Invisible enough to trot back into Egreth with them when they return! As luck would have it, the last night gaunt, who should be watching the rear, seems preoccupied with something else, and doesn't notice when Dirin becomes fully visible again. Dirin slips off into a shadowy corner and hides.

Inside the castle, Dirin is peeking out a ancient barred window when he sees Lim arrive at the river. Lim studies the river, then suddenly removes his leather outer garments, revealing himself as...a woman! The woman wraps her garments around a rock and throws them across the river to the embankment by the castle. Then she jumps into the water and swims across, hurrying back into her clothes on the other side. Watching her swim across, Dirin decides that it's better for now to pretend he didn't see this amazing transformation. He waits until Lim has dressed, then feigns surprise at the sight of his comrade, breaks the crumbling bars of the window with his sword, and lets Lim in.

The two of them wander around the castle. At one point, Lim steps on a transportation pentagram and disappears. Dirin searches frantically. In the lower regions of Egreth, he stumbles over something on the floor. It's a beautiful jeweled amulet! Dirin puts it in his pocket and promptly forgets about it. Finally Dirin finds Lim in the hobgoblin harem and rescues him magically. Some of the domestic spells he's learned from Frobwit come in handy; for example, he can "create soap and water" to cause someone to slip.

His desperate search to find Lim makes Dirin realize how fond he is of this mysterious person. After leaving the harem, Dirin wants Lim to know that he's aware of Lim's true identity so he tells a parable about a woman who saves herself from being put in a harem by dressing as a man.

Lim and Dirin come across Ryker, who tells them that he heard what sounded like an argument between Frobwit and another, unidentified person, and followed the noise to a door which a night gaunt entered. Then he saw a horrible flash of light and the argument resumed. He wants Lim and Dirin to go with him to this room and confront the vile villain within. Lim and Dirin suggest a more subtle route, but Ryker barges ahead and there is little for them to do but follow.

When they reach the room, they find it to be the lavish throne room of Egreth, now the somewhat seedy boudoir of an evil wizard! And the wizard himself, easily recognizable as such by his characteristic evil wizard look, is in mortal combat with Frobwit! They are changing each other into ever more horrible configurations. Ryker, Dirin, and Lim stand by helplessly as this battle of magical spells takes place. Dirin's common spells are nothing against such force. When Gurthark and Acia and even a couple of night gaunts appear, drawn by the commotion, they as well are unable to do anything.

When it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, Dirin feels an overwhelming sense of despair, which quickly turns to anger. If Frobwit dies, Dirin will never become a magician! Who else would take him on? And who is this jerk to deprive him of that?

Dirin is suddenly aware of a strange buzzing in his pocket. It's the amulet! When he takes it in his hand, he finds himself able to funnel his rage into a mighty spell. Everyone, including Dirin himself, is stunned as the Evil Magician's aura of power fades away and Frobwit resumes his normal shape. There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But the E.M. appears to have lost his desire to fight and instead is staring intensely at the amulet in Dirin's hand.

"Ah!" says the Evil Magician. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward Acia!

Dirin is visibly weakened from the might spell he has cast. Before he knows what's happened, Acia steps forward and snatches the amulet from him.

With a wary night gaunt on either side, E.M. ushers Acia into the throne chair and places the Crown of Egreth on her head! Then the E.M. tells the story of the amulet. He says that it is not an evil amulet at all. It once belonged to Thorman, a powerful magician, often called "Red-beard".

E.M. was Thorman's apprentice. Seduced by the power of the amulet, E.M. tried to take it away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. E.M.

had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

Before the night gaunts, caught up in the story, can react, the E.M. suddenly snatches the amulet from Acia, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown... anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

With incredible speed and agility, heroic Ryker leaps for the amulet, grabbing it just in time but clonking his head against some low-hanging boudoir decor in the process, causing the amulet to spin away across the room.

Lim snatches it and places it around his neck. A magical transformation occurs, the leather garments falling away and revealing the woman beneath. A brilliant light surrounds her and, as she holds out her hands toward the E.M., the light zaps towards him and he dissolves in a disgusting puddle of foul-smelling liquid.

The light reforms into the aura of Thorman, who gazes lovingly upon his granddaughter.

"With this amulet, granddaughter, thou hast gained my power," says Thorman, speaking in the voice of those beyond the pale. "It is thy right, and Radnor's evil cannot harm you. And take by thy side the one who has grown close to you in sympathies and in power, true heir to Duncanthrax — Dirinthrax, the Mage of Egreth!"

Dirin, heir to Egreth! Now Dirin understands the lust for adventure that so troubled his parents and his excitement at Frobwit's tale of the amulet. He steps to Lia's side and they ascend to the throne. At that moment, the castle renews itself, returning to its former glory.

All that is left is the disgusting puddle that used to be the Evil Magician. Using the magic power that has grown more potent with his adventures, Dirin causes the liquid to be encased in a crystal ball. Then, as a final gesture to his old teacher, he lets Frobwit magically cast the ball into the nether regions. He also gives Frobwit the gift of an amulet which will increase Frobwit's power.

Dirin and Lia remain at Egreth while the remaining members of the caravan go on their way.

Acia's story:

Acia is a well-off, stuck-up, willful but beautiful young lady. She has been sent south to visit her sick grandmother, ostensibly to take care of her, but more properly to make sure the old lady's will leaves everything to her branch of the family. Acia would like to have that be her specifically.

She's traveling with this small caravan because it was the only one leaving at the time. She's amused herself along the way by flirting with everyone, with most gratifying results. She has Ryker, the handsome scout, eating out of her hand. She's captured the heart of that skinny stableboy, Dirin. Frobwit the magician is too old to be more than wistful, and the merchant Gurthark too shy, but they are captivated as well. The only one uninterested in her charms is Lim, a young kid like Dirin, but with an air of mystery about him (unlike Dirin, whose feelings are always transparent).

One evening, the group sets up camp beneath the ruins of Egreth Castle. Around the campfire that night, Frobwit tells the story of an evil black amulet that came from the castle but has been lost for years. But Acia is barely listening. She's annoyed by Lim and is watching him. Everyone else is mesmerized by the story, but Acia notices Lim examining something in his hand: a beautiful jeweled amulet! If Acia can't captivate him, she'll have his amulet instead! Lim almost seems to know he's being spied on, and quickly tucks the amulet out of sight, but Acia resolves to get it.

A few hours later, she appears at Lim's bedroll, flings her arms around his neck and gives him an irresistible kiss. But that Lim must have a heart of stone! He jumps away as though she's carrying the plague! Acia conceals her irritation enough to try sweet-talking him into giving her the amulet. But words that would make Dirin hers for life seem to repel Lim all the more.

Well, she'll show him...! After Lim has finally dropped off to sleep, Acia sneaks back to his bedroll, and searches. The amulet is buzzing softly to itself, easy to find! Acia tiptoes away, hiding the amulet in the pocket of her cape, and drops off to sleep.

The next thing she knows, cold, scaly hands are clutching her, carrying her away! It's a night gaunt attack! Acia struggles, biting and scratching the nasty creatures, and in the struggle, her dress is torn (most fetchingly, of course). Acia is carried off by the night gaunts. They're heading for Egreth Castle!

The castle looks even spookier up close than it did from afar. But Acia is used to charming even the most vile individuals and this gives her courage. The courage falters somewhat when she is dragged before an evil-looking magician who immediately demands the amulet. Frightened, Acia searches for it, then realizes she left it in the inner pocket of her cloak. The magician orders the night gaunts to bring back every cloak at the campsite and summons guards to take Acia to the dungeon.

Acia kicks and screams as a contingent of trollish guards carries her down to a fetid cell. The dungeon is worse than anything she's ever experienced. But she draws on the resources that have always served her best and manages to charm the troll guard into unlocking the cell. When he does so, she darts out and runs off down the stone passage. Behind her, she hears the thudding feet of the guard and the swoosh of his troll sword being withdrawn from its sheath. He's gaining on her...she'll never escape! Suddenly, the familiar plump form of Gurthark appears around a corner! He hesitates but a moment before sending the heavy goblet in his hand flying at the troll. There's a thud as the creature falls to the ground. Gurthark makes a dash for his goblet, but they hear the sound of the troll guards marching toward the dungeon and flee in the other direction.

Acia clings to Gurthark as they traverse the torturous passages of the castle, trying to find a way out. But they only seem to be drawing nearer to the Evil Magician's horrid boudoir! Suddenly they hear the sounds of a powerful battle of magic! It's Frobwit versus the Evil Magician! Acia wants to flee, but Gurthark insists on going to Frobwit's aid. They venture to the door of the boudoir and peek inside.

That awful wizard is indeed in mortal combat with Frobwit! They are changing each other into ever more horrible configurations. Ryker, Dirin, and Lim are there, standing by helplessly as this battle of magical spells takes place. Gurthark and Acia can't think of anything to do, either.

Just as it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, that skinny little Dirin steps forward in apparent desperation and casts a mighty spell. Everyone, including Dirin himself, is stunned as the Evil Magician's aura of power fades away and Frobwit resumes his normal shape. Maybe there's more to Dirin that Acia thought!

There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But the E.M. appears to have lost his desire to fight and instead is staring intensely at Dirin, who is clutching...Lim's amulet! How did he get it?

"Ah!" says the Evil Magician. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward Acia! Even that slimebag can tell who the rightful owner is!

Everyone else gasps in horror at the thought of the evil amulet being in the room with them. But Acia can't believe that pretty amulet to be evil. She unhesitatingly steps forward and bestows her most seductive smile on Dirin, who hands over the prize.

What happens next is a dream come true! With the night gaunts on either side like palace guards, the E.M. ushers Acia into the throne chair and places a beautiful jeweled crown on her head. Acia...Queen of Egreth! The E.M. then tells the story of the amulet. He says that it is not an evil amulet at all. Acia could have told them that!

It turns out that the amulet once belonged to a powerful magician named Thorman. E.M. was Thorman's apprentice. Seduced by the power of the amulet, E.M. tried to take the amulet away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. E.M. had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

Just as Acia is plotting to fit these facts into the pattern of her own life, the E.M. suddenly snatches the amulet from her, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown...anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

Acia whips the disgusting crown off her head. Can you scrub that stuff off?

When she looks up again, Ryker is lying dazed on the floor and the amulet is spinning away across the room.

Lim snatches it and places it around his neck. Then the most amazing thing happens. Lim's leather garments fall away, revealing a woman beneath. No wonder Acia was unable to seduce him! A brilliant light surrounds the woman and, as she holds out her hands toward the E.M., the light zaps towards him and he dissolves in a disgusting puddle of foul-smelling liquid.

Suddenly, the light turns into the aura of a man with a long beard. The man tells the woman, whose name is Lia, that the amulet is hers and that Dirin is the heir to Duncanthrax! He also tells Dirin to stay in the castle with Lia! And if this isn't strange enough, Dirin magically makes a crystal ball and puts the disgusting liquid that used to be the Evil Magician inside it. Then Frobwit sends the ball away into the nether regions. And, right before their eyes, the castle transforms into its former glory.

Well, it doesn't seem as though Dirin wants Acia to be queen, although she can't understand why. She's about to leave in a huff for the campsite when Gurthark takes them all to a treasure room! Acia chooses a heap o' treasures to take along with her.

Acia, Gurthark, Ryker, and Frobwit load their treasures onto the caravan, as Dirin and Lia wave goodbye.

Gurthark's story:

Gurthark has spent much of his life being bossed around. First by his mother, then by his eldest sister, and finally by his sister's avaricious husband, Mirik the Lean, who offered Gurthark a position in his mercantile firm. All this bossing about gives Gurthark the constant feeling that someone, somewhere, is on the verge of telling him what to do. Who knows whether his habitual timidity is a result or a cause of all this bossing? Gurthark finds his consolation in the wealth he is slowly amassing, a nest egg ensuring his eventual independence.

But for now, under the thumb of Mirik the Lean, he has joined a caravan to take a load of satin coverlets to markets in the south. Fiercely protective of his goods, he is also terrified of the dangers he imagines lie along the route. Luckily, there's a well-muscled scout along to protect him, as well as a magician whose spells might be useful in a tight spot. There are also a couple of kids, whom Gurthark envies for their youthful bravado, and a beautiful girl he admires from afar.

One evening, the group sets up camp beneath Egreth Castle, a spooky-looking ruin set high on a rocky precipice. Around the campfire that night, Frobwit tells the story of an evil black amulet that came from the castle but has been lost for years. It gives Gurthark the creeps to think about it, and he envisions all sorts of malevolent things swooping down upon them from the crumbling ruins. But the big meal he ate helps him to fall promptly asleep despite his fears.

He is startled awake some time later by the sounds of an attack on the camp. By the time he stumbles from his bedroll, the attackers have left, apparently taking Dirin and Acia with them. Gurthark checks his goods in a panic, but they're all right. Ryker is out cold, but Gurthark, Frobwit, and Lim revive him. They resolve to rescue Acia and, if it isn't too inconvenient, Dirin. Frobwit and Gurthark don't see the need for all of them go go along. Finally it is agreed that Frobwit's spells might come in handy, but that Gurthark may stay and guard the campsite (and their valuables).

Frobwit casts a vezza spell to augur the outcome of their search, and reports that "The girl's rescuer will become rich and famous." Hearing this, Gurthark is suddenly interested in helping, and after removing a few select valuables from his bags, is ready to go. Lim is delegated to watch the pack animals and the remaining trade goods.

While the rescuers are following the trail of the marauders to the castle, they run into a pack of night gaunts! Gurthark has never seen a more horrible sight in his life than these lean and scaly creatures loping towards them. Ryker and Lim want to fight, but luckily realize they are outnumbered, and so they hide magically. Frobwit tries to make them look like a grove of trees, but the outcome is more like a clump of bushes. The night gaunts, to whom this sort of bush is like catnip, are ready to munch away when their leader calls them on.

The rescuers continue toward the castle. It's tight as a drum, no way in. They start to circle the ruins, keeping well down in the brush. Gurthark wonders whether Acia and Dirin might not be in the castle at all; perhaps they fled into the forest to escape the marauders. In this case, Gurthark, Ryker, and Frobwit would be letting themselves

in for trouble by going into this castle. But the others insist on continuing the search. Finally, partway around, they see a window in one of the battlements.

Ryker, Frobwit and Gurthark endeavor to get into the window. Frobwit says he'll float up, which he does, but only halfway. His spell wears off, leaving him clinging to a stone gargoyle poking out the side. Fortunately, he lowers a rope, and Ryker climbs it and then the wall the rest of way, taking the rope with him. He then lowers the rope for Frobwit and Gurthark in turn. It's tough going climbing up the rope, and Gurthark is sure with each agonizing moment that he's going to either slam against the stone wall or fall to his death. But going up is preferable to staying behind.

Finally, they are all up, perching insecurely outside a window, looking inside. Nothing can be seen within but an evil gloom barely pierced by the light from the window. Gurthark and Frobwit are ready to scuttle back down the rope, when Ryker suddenly hops inside and there's nothing for the others to do but follow. They make their way down to the basement, looking for the dungeon which they assume is the place to find Acia and Dirin. Frobwit, making himself intermittently invisible, darts into side passages, checking them out, while Ryker stalwartly marches ahead, his sword unsheathed, always at the ready. At one point, Gurthark starts to follow Frobwit down a side passage when Frobwit comes out, saying, "No, no, not that way! That's where the treasure is kept!"

Well, why not take some treasure? It must be ill-gotten if hidden in this evil place, and therefore not really stealing to help oneself. As Ryker and Frobwit turn a corner up ahead, Gurthark sneaks down the passage and comes to a room glittering with fabulous treasures.

Like a child let loose in a toy store, Gurthark cannot decide what he wants. He picks up a jeweled necklace, then a diamond tiara, then puts the tiara down to open a leather chest, stuffs his pockets with the jewels and coins within, finally puts the necklace around his neck to scoop up an armload of golden goblets encrusted with jewels. At last he realizes that he won't be much good in whatever dreaded battles might come if he's carrying that much, so he reluctantly leaves behind all but one golden goblet. He still has the jewels in his pocket, though, and has forgotten all about the necklace.

When Gurthark leaves the treasure room, Frobwit and Ryker are nowhere in sight. The passages of the castle and poorly-lit and filled with terrible scurrying sounds. Gurthark timidly makes his way along, staying close to the wall, ready to run for his life. He turns a corner and sees...Acia! She looks lovelier than ever, with her garments fetchingly torn by her attackers. She also looks terrified, and Gurthark sees why. A horrible trollish guard is thumping after her, swinging an evil-looking sword. Gurthark hesitates but a moment before sending the heavy goblet in his hand flying at the troll. There's a thud as the creature falls to the ground. Gurthark makes a dash for his goblet, but they hear the sound of the troll guards marching toward the dungeon and flee in the other direction.

Acia clings to Gurthark as they traverse the torturous passages of the castle, trying to find a way out. To Gurthark, being this close to Acia is almost as good as having his treasure. Suddenly they hear the sounds of a powerful battle of magic! It's Frobwit versus the Evil Magician! Acia wants to flee, but Gurthark is surprised to find himself insisting on rescuing Frobwit. They venture to a massive door and peek inside.

It's the Throne Room of Egreth Castle, now the vile boudoir of an evil wizard. And there's the wizard himself, in mortal conflict with Frobwit! They are changing each other into ever more horrible configurations. Ryker, Dirin, and Lim are there, standing by helplessly as this battle of magical spells takes place. Gurthark and Acia can't think of anything to do, either. Just as it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, Dirin steps forward in apparent desperation and casts a mighty spell. Everyone, including Dirin himself, is stunned as the Evil Magician's aura of power fades away and Frobwit resumes his normal shape.

There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But the E.M. appears to have lost his desire to fight and instead is staring intensely at Dirin.

"Ah!" says the Evil Magician. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward Acia!

Everyone gasps in horror at the thought of the evil amulet being in the room with them. But Acia unhesitatingly steps forward and takes the amulet from Dirin. Then, with the night gaunts on either side like palace guards, the E. M. ushers Acia into the throne chair and places a beautiful jeweled crown on her head. The crown is more

lavish than anything Gurthark saw in the treasure room!

The E.M. says that the amulet is not evil at all. It once belonged to a powerful magician named Thorman. E.M. was Thorman's apprentice. Seduced by the power of the amulet, E.M. tried to take the amulet away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. E.M. had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

Before the night gaunts, caught up in the story, can react, the E.M. suddenly snatches the amulet from Acia, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown...anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

With incredible speed and agility, heroic Ryker leaps for the amulet, grabbing it just in time but clonking his head against some low-hanging boudoir decor in the process, causing the amulet to spin away across the room. Lim snatches it and places it around his neck. Then the most amazing thing happens. Lim's leather garments fall away, revealing a woman beneath! A brilliant light surrounds the woman and, as she holds out her hands toward the E.M., the light zaps towards him and he dissolves in a disgusting puddle of foul-smelling liquid.

Suddenly, the light turns into the aura of a man with a long beard. The man tells the woman, whose name is Lia, that the amulet is hers and that Dirin is the heir to Duncanthrax, and thus to Egreth! He also tells Dirin to stay in the castle with Lia! And if this isn't strange enough, Dirin magically makes a crystal ball and puts the disgusting liquid that used to be the Evil Magician inside it. Then Frobwit sends the ball away into the nether regions. And, right before their eyes, the castle transforms into its former glory.

There's nothing left to keep them at Egreth...except the treasure. Acia seems pretty downcast about losing her claim to the throne, so Gurthark takes them all down to the treasure room, where Dirin and Lia say they can take whatever they like. Gurthark finds a gold goblet just like the one he lost, and a pretty crystal ball.

Acia, Gurthark, Ryker, and Frobwit load their treasures onto the caravan. Gurthark nestles his crystal ball among the satin coverlets. As he walks away, we see reflected in the crystal the sneering countenance of the Evil Magician.

Frobwit's story:

Frobwit the Fair is a rather low-level magician. His name once stood for the color of his hair, but now, his level of ability is closer to the mark. He secretly blames his lack of expertise on the fact that, upon graduating from magician's school, he was unable to be apprenticed to a very good magician. He had tried to arrange an apprenticeship with Thorman the Red-beard, one of the finest magicians of the time, but another, cleverer student, Radnor, had managed to convince Thorman to take him on instead.

Frobwit spends most of his time in the rural areas, as the better magicians monopolize the big towns. When Dirin's parents offer to apprentice Dirin to him, Frobwit likes the idea, not because he can teach the boy all that much, but because he could afford a servant, and an apprentice is pretty nearly a servant.

Frobwit is traveling south to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, held yearly in Accardi-by-the-Sea. Besides Dirin, the caravan includes another young boy, a gluttonous merchant, a scout whose opinion of himself is a tad too high, and a beautiful woman.

One evening, the group sets up camp beneath Egreth Castle, a creepy-looking ruin set high on a rocky precipice. Frobwit is reminded of the story of the Evil Amulet of Egreth, a tale well-known to all magicians. He tells the story around the campfire that night.

Frobwit feels uneasy that night and has a hard time falling asleep. It's clear that his fears were well-founded, as he is startled awake some time later by the sounds of an attack on the camp. By the time he disentangles himself from his bedding, the attackers have left, apparently taking Dirin and Acia with them. Ryker is out cold, but Gurthark, Frobwit, and Lim revive him. They resolve to rescue Acia and Dirin. Frobwit and Gurthark don't see the need for all of them to go along. Finally it is agreed that Frobwit's spells might come in handy, but that Gurthark may stay and guard the campsite (and their valuables).

Frobwit casts a vezza spell to augur the outcome of their search, and he sees the vision of a jeweled goblet flying through the air. Cleverly deciphering the image, he reports that "The girl's rescuer will become rich and famous." Hearing this, Gurthark is suddenly interested in helping, and after removing a few select valuables from his bags, is ready to go. Lim is delegated to watch the pack animals and the remaining trade goods.

While the rescuers are following the trail of the marauders to the castle, they run into a pack of night gaunts! Ryker and Lim want to fight, but realize they are outnumbered. Luckily Frobwit is along to hide them magically. He plans to make them look like a majestic grove of trees, but the outcome is more like a clump of bushes. The night gaunts, to whom this sort of bush is like catnip, are ready to munch away when their leader calls them on.

The rescuers continue toward the castle. It's tight as a drum, no way in. They start to circle the ruins, keeping well down in the brush. Gurthark wonders whether Acia and Dirin might not be in the castle at all; perhaps they fled into the forest to escape the marauders. In this case, Gurthark, Ryker, and Frobwit would be letting themselves in for trouble by going into this castle. But the others insist on continuing the search. Finally, partway around, they see a window in one of the battlements.

Ryker, Frobwit and Gurthark endeavor to get into the window. Frobwit says he'll float up, which he does. But the occupants of the castle must be sending out an evil counter-spell because he's only able to get halfway before his spell wears off, leaving him clinging to a stone gargoyle poking out the side. He lowers a rope, and Ryker climbs it and then the wall the rest of way, taking the rope with him. And it's just like Ryker that he chides Frobwit on his way up. Ryker then lowers the rope for Frobwit and Gurthark in turn.

Finally, they are all up, perching insecurely outside a window, looking inside. Nothing can be seen within but an evil gloom barely pierced by the light from the window. Gurthark is trying to talk Frobwit into fleeing back down the rope, when Ryker suddenly hops inside and there's nothing for the others to do but follow.

They make their way down to the basement, looking for the dungeon which they assume is the place to find Acia and Dirin. Frobwit, making himself intermittently invisible, darts into side passages, checking them out, but there's nothing of interest in any of them.

Ryker bulldozes ahead, just looking for trouble. And Gurthark is always bumbling around. More than once, he follows Frobwit down a side passage and Frobwit has to set him back on the right track. Finally, Gurthark disappears altogether.

Frobwit is uncertain about Ryker's frontal-attack method, especially when they come upon the troll's lounge, where the trolls are scoffing down their special brew as they await their turn at guard duty. Drawing his sword, Ryker is preparing to take them one on one, when Frobwit decides it's time to skedaddle. He'll watch out for his own neck, thank you!

Wandering through the castle, half-heartedly looking for his apprentice and making himself invisible whenever the least sign of danger appears, Frobwit makes his way to the upper regions of the place. He peeks around an open door and sees Radnor, his old rival from magician's school!

Well, why not let bygones be bygones. But as he greets his old classmate, he suddenly realizes something is wrong. This magician's magic has taken an malevolent turn. Radnor must be the legendary Evil Magician of Egreth!

"So," sneers Radnor. "It's Frobwit the Fair. Your name always did refer more to the color of your hair than to your expertise!" He challenges Frobwit to a duel of magic.

Before they begin, a night gaunt lopes into the room. Radnor demands that the creature hand over an amulet. When the night gaunt holds out his empty hands, Radnor in anger disintegrates the poor thing with a terrible blaze of light.

Now Frobwit knows he's in danger. Things rapidly go from bad to worse. Radnor's power far surpasses Frobwit's, and he is shortly changing Frobwit into any number of horrible configurations. Frobwit is using most of his strength to regain his regular shape, so that he is only able to retaliate by changing Radnor into ridiculously benevolent forms, which Radnor can easily counteract.

Frobwit barely notices when Ryker, Dirin, Lim, and then Gurthark and Acia, enter the room.

Just as it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, Dirin suddenly

steps forward and casts a mighty spell. Everyone, including Dirin himself, is stunned as the Evil Magician's aura of power fades away and Frobwit resumes his normal shape.

There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But Radnor appears to have lost his desire to fight and instead is staring intensely at Dirin. Frobwit sees that Dirin is holding a magic amulet!

"Ah!" says the Evil Magician. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward Acia!

Everyone gasps in horror at the thought of the evil amulet being in the room with them. But Acia unhesitatingly steps forward and snatches the amulet from Dirin. Then, with the night gaunts on either side like palace guards, Radnor ushers Acia into the throne chair and places a beautiful jeweled crown on her head.

Radnor says that the amulet is not evil at all. It once belonged to Thorman! Seduced by the power of the amulet, Radnor tried to take the amulet away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. Radnor had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

The story horrifies Frobwit, who cannot believe that Radnor's feelings of guilt are genuine. And he is right in his suspicions.

Before the night gaunts, caught up in the story, can react, Radnor suddenly snatches the amulet from Acia, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown...anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

With incredible speed and agility, Ryker leaps for the amulet, grabbing it just in time but clonking his head against some low-hanging boudoir decor in the process, causing the amulet to spin away across the room.

Lim snatches it and places it around his neck. Then the most amazing thing happens. Lim's leather garments fall away, revealing a woman beneath! A brilliant light surrounds the woman and, as she holds out her hands toward Radnor, the light zaps towards him and he dissolves in a disgusting puddle of foul-smelling liquid.

The light reforms into the aura of Thorman!

"With this amulet, granddaughter, thou hast gained my power," says Thorman, speaking in the voice of those beyond the pale. "It is thy right, and Radnor's evil cannot harm you. And take by thy side the one who has grown close to you in sympathies and in power, true heir to Duncanthrax — Dirinthrax, the Mage of Egreth!"

Dirin steps to the side of the woman, whose name is Lia, and they ascend to the throne. At that moment, the castle renews itself, returning to its former glory.

All that is left is the disgusting puddle that used to be the Evil Magician. Using the magic power that has grown more potent with his adventures, Dirin causes the liquid to be encased in a crystal ball. Then, as a final gesture to his old teacher, he lets Frobwit magically cast the ball into the nether regions. He also gives Frobwit the gift of an amulet which will increase Frobwit's power. Frobwit can't wait to show off his new abilities to the other enchanters at the convention!

Then Gurthark leads them all down to a treasure room in the castle and Dirin and Lia allow each member of the caravan to take whatever they like! Frobwit finds a lovely magic wand, but Dirin thinks it should stay in the castle, so Frobwit takes some other treasure instead.

Frobwit is sorry to lose his apprentice, but he doesn't need one as badly with his newfound powers. He waves goodbye to Dirin and Lia as the caravan sets off.

Ryker's story:

As long as he can remember, Ryker has been braver, stronger, and more handsome than anybody else. Every guy in school wanted him as his buddy and every girl wanted him as her sweetheart. As he grew up, he spent his time hunting, tracking, and doing other he-man types of things to keep himself and his skills in good shape.

Eventually the time came when he could earn a good living as a scout, and since he liked traveling as much as

he liked showing off his abilities, Ryker was very content. Sometimes he'd fling himself just a little too far into danger, or put himself in the path of a nasty crack on the head, but hey, that's part of the game.

And thus Ryker found himself being hired to protect a small caravan traveling south. The caravan included a useless yet somehow endearing magician, a scaredy-cat merchant, a couple of dopey kids, and a really dishy chick whom Ryker has eating out of his hand.

One evening, the group sets up camp beneath Egreth Castle, a crumbling ruin set high on a rocky precipice. Around the campfire, Frobwit tells the story of an evil black amulet that came from the castle but has been lost for years.

As usual, Ryker stands guard over the campsite that night. He nods over the fire, listening to the night sounds of the forest. Suddenly...furtive noises...could it be...? He whips around in time to see a contingent of night gaunts, the most stealthy beings in the kingdom, just before the bony claw of the lead gaunt crashes down on his skull.

The next thing he knows, Gurthark, Frobwit, and Lim are reviving him. Dirin and Acia are missing, apparently kidnapped by the night gaunts! With some reluctance on Frobwit and Gurthark's part, they resolve to rescue Acia and, if it's not too inconvenient, Dirin. Gurthark volunteers to stay and guard the campsite (and their valuables).

Frobwit casts a vezza spell to augur the outcome of their search, and reports that "The girl's rescuer will become rich and famous." Hearing this, Gurthark is suddenly interested in helping, and after removing a few select valuables from his bags, is ready to go. Lim is delegated to watch the pack animals and the remaining trade goods.

While the rescuers are following the trail of the marauders to the castle, they run into a pack of night gaunts! Ryker and Lim want to fight, but realize they are outnumbered, so Frobwit hides them magically by turning them into a clump of bushes. The night gaunts, to whom this sort of bush is like catnip, are ready to munch away when their leader calls them on.

The rescuers continue toward the castle. It's tight as a drum, no way in. They start to circle the ruins, keeping well down in the brush. Gurthark and Frobwit babble on a bit about the danger they're in, but Ryker keeps his nose to the grindstone and finally spots a window in one of the battlements.

Ryker, Frobwit and Gurthark endeavor to get into the window. Frobwit says he'll float up, which he does, but only halfway. His spell wears off, leaving him clinging to a stone gargoyle poking out the side. He lowers a rope, and Ryker climbs it and then the wall the rest of way, taking the rope with him. He can't resist chiding Frobwit for his boastfulness. Ryker then lowers the rope for Frobwit and Gurthark in turn. Finally, they are all up, perching outside a window. Well, there's nothing for it but to go inside. Ryker hops in and the others follow.

They make their way down to the basement, looking for the dungeon, the logical place to find Acia and Dirin. Frobwit wastes a lot of time making himself invisible and darting into side passages where there's obviously nothing of interest. And Gurthark is always bumbling around. More than once, he follows Frobwit down a side passage and eventually disappears altogether.

Finally, things start happening. They come upon the troll's lounge, where another group of trolls are scoffing down their special brew as they await their turn at guard duty. Ryker draws his sword, preparing to take them one on one, with Frobwit's magic (however feeble) as backup. But that old coward Frobwit cuts out at the last moment! Ryker battles the trolls one by one on a narrow stone staircase.

When they're all dead, Ryker continues to strut around. He hides as the original contingent of troll guards come stomping past. Luckily he knows all about keeping downwind from trolls, who have a very keen sense of smell. He follows the trolls to the dungeon, keeps himself hidden as they rant on about their fallen buddy, who apparently was struck down by a golden goblet, and about their missing prisoner. After they leave, Ryker verifies that the cells are empty. He finds Acia's silken handkerchief.

Ryker makes his way to the upper level of the castle. It seems pretty deserted. He is making a thorough reconnaissance of the area when he hears what sounds like an argument between Frobwit and another, unidentified person, and follows the noise to a massive door. He hides nearby and sees a night gaunt enter. There follows a horrible flash of light and the argument resumes. It's time to mount a full assault!

Ryker bounds through the castle, looking for Gurthark. Instead, he comes across Lim and Dirin. Too young

men -- all the better, despite their physical deficiencies. He tells them what he saw and insists they go with him to confront the vile villain within. Lim and Dirin would rather lie low, but there's no time for that. They quickly understand that they must follow Ryker and do their best.

When they reach the room, they find it to be the lavish throne room of Egreth, now the somewhat seedy boudoir of an evil wizard! And the wizard himself, easily recognizable as such by his characteristic evil wizard look, is in mortal combat with Frobwit! They are changing each other into ever more horrible configurations. Ryker and Lim stand by helplessly as this battle of magical spells takes place. When Gurthark and Acia and even a couple of night gaunts appear, drawn by the commotion, they as well are unable to do anything.

Just as it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, Dirin steps forward in apparent desperation and casts a mighty spell. Everyone, including Dirin himself, is stunned as the Evil Magician's aura of power fades away and Frobwit resumes his normal shape.

There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But the E.M. appears to have lost his desire to fight and instead is staring intensely at Dirin, who is holding some sort of amulet.

"Ah!" says the Evil Magician. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward Acia!

Everyone gasps in horror at the thought of the evil amulet being in the room with them. But Acia unhesitatingly steps forward and takes the amulet from Dirin, who seems glad to be rid of it. Then, with the night gaunts on either side like palace guards, the E.M. ushers Acia into the throne chair and places a jeweled crown on her head. Ryker stares at her admiringly. She looks just like a queen. And Ryker himself would make a great king... King of Egreth!

Then the E.M. tells the story of the amulet. He says that it is not an evil amulet at all. It once belonged to Thorman, a powerful magician, often called "Red-beard".

E.M. was Thorman's apprentice. Seduced by the power of the amulet, E.M. tried to take it away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. E.M. had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

Before night gaunts, caught up in the story, can react, the E.M. suddenly snatches the amulet from Acia, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown...anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

With incredible speed and agility, Ryker leaps for the amulet, grabbing it just in time but taking a wicked blow to the head in the process. The amulet drops out of his hand and spins away across the room.

Lim snatches it and places it around his neck. Then the most amazing thing happens, so amazing that Ryker groggily wonders if he's not dreaming. Lim's leather garments fall away, revealing a woman beneath! A pretty attractive woman, too! A brilliant light surrounds her and, as she holds out her hands toward the E.M., the light zaps towards him and he dissolves in a disgusting puddle of foul-smelling liquid.

Suddenly, the light turns into the aura of a man with a long beard. The man tells the woman, whose name is Lia, that the amulet is hers and that Dirin is the heir to Duncanthrax! He also tells Dirin to stay in the castle with Lia! And if this isn't strange enough, Dirin magically makes a crystal ball and puts the disgusting liquid that used to be the Evil Magician inside it. Then Frobwit sends the ball away into the nether regions. And, right before their eyes, the castle transforms into its former glory.

Well, it's obvious that this sweet little Lia is choosing Dirin over him, so Ryker can't see much point in hanging around the castle. He's about to leave for the campsite when Gurthark takes them all to a treasure room! Dirin and Lia let them each choose some treasures to take along.

Acia, Gurthark, Ryker, and Frobwit load their treasures onto the caravan, as Dirin and Lia wave goodbye.

The Evil Magician's story:

Radnor wasn't always such a bad guy. As a kid he was a bit mischievous, a bit arrogant, but no one would have thought he'd turn out to be the embodiment of evil. But sure enough, mischievousness turned to malevolence and arrogance to a love of power. Little Radnor, gifted and clever, grew up to be the diabolical Evil Magician.

By the time his schooling was completed, Radnor realized that the path to power was to acquire as much practical knowledge as possible. So he beat out his classmate Frobwit, who never would have amounted to much anyway, for the coveted position of apprentice to the great Thorman. Thorman and Radnor dwelled together at Thorman's home, where the great magician was putting all his knowledge and strength into a wonderful magical amulet. As time went on and Radnor himself became more powerful, he began to covet the amulet and could no longer wait for the day when it might naturally pass to him. With magic spells, he diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands. But Radnor followed this up with another spell, sending the amulet back to him after it reached the granddaughter.

Radnor moved to Egreth Castle, a place suited to his malevolent nature. The years passed as he awaited the return of the amulet that would revive his failing power. To ensure that no one else should desire it, he invented the legend of the evil Amulet of Egreth. As time went by, he grew more despicable, consorting with the trolls and enslaving a group of night gaunts. Even the grues left him in peace.

One evening, looking out the high window of Egreth, he sees a caravan make camp on the edge of the forest. As he watches, the smoke from their campfire forms a familiar shape...the shape of the Amulet of Egreth! The granddaughter must be among the travelers!

He waits until the embers of the campfire burn low, then sends out his troup of night gaunts, directing them to bring back any women they might find among the travelers. Shortly thereafter, the night gaunts return, bearing a lovely girl with long golden tresses. What remains of Radnor's heart stirs...here is a fitting bride, the granddaughter of Thorman! But his interest quickly sours when the girl is unable to produce the amulet, claiming that she left it in the pocket of her cloak.

Radnor orders her thrown in the dungeon and commands the night gaunts to return for whatever cloaks they might find. But when the gaunts return with two cloaks and a vast woolen vest, none contain the amulet! Enraged, Radnor casts a mighty search spell on the amulet and receives a vision of one of his night gaunts clutching the precious object. Now he feels content; the amulet has reached the castle. He telepathically orders the night gaunt to his boudoir.

Alone in his boudoir, Radnor fantasizes about the power that will be his with the amulet in hand. The door opens...to reveal his old classmate Frobwit! Where did that dimwit come from? Radnor makes a few derogatory comments as he toys with ideas on how to dispense with Frobwit. Finally he challenges his former classmate to a duel of magic.

Before they begin, the night gaunt lopes into the room. Radnor demands that the creature hand over the amulet. When the night gaunt holds out his empty hands, Radnor angrily disintegrates him with a terrible blaze of light.

And now to dispense with Frobwit... Radnor thinks his own magic is failing, but it's nothing compared to this guy. His power far surpasses Frobwit's, and he is shortly changing Frobwit into any number of horrible configurations. Frobwit is using most of his strength to regain his regular shape, so that he is only able to retaliate by changing Radnor into ridiculously benevolent forms, which Radnor can easily counteract.

A few more humans enter the room, but Radnor barely notices them; he is confident that they can easily be destroyed.

Just as it seems that Frobwit will never be able to recover from being changed into a giant slug, one of the humans, a scrawny lad not yet twenty, steps forward and casts a mighty spell. Radnor is horrified to find his aura of power fading away, as Frobwit resumes his normal shape.

There is a moment of silence, then the night gaunts rush forward to restrain the one who has so long oppressed them. But Radnor knows that there is one last chance for the ultimate power he has so long desired. That chance lies in the amulet. And the amulet is right here, in the room, in the lad's hand! A devious plan, long arranged for

just such a moment, begins to unfold. By good fortune, his fair-haired captive has managed to find her way to the room.

"Ah!" says Radnor to the lad. "No wonder your magic is so powerful. You have the Amulet of Egreth. But does it not belong to this fair young woman?" And he gestures toward his captive.

Everyone gasps as she steps forward and takes the amulet from the boy, who fortunately does not try to retain it. Then, with the night gaunts on either side like palace guards, Radnor ushers the fair maiden into the throne chair and, taking a beautiful jeweled crown out of its casket, places it on her head. Now, to buy time! Two turns of the long hand around the clock is all that is needed to gain him the amulet.

Radnor begins to tell the story of the amulet. He says that the amulet is not evil at all. It once belonged to a great magician, Thorman the Red-beard, to whom he was apprenticed. Seduced by the power of the amulet, Radnor tried to take it away, an act he now deeply regrets when he sees the lovely granddaughter on the throne and thinks of how he wronged her. Radnor had diminished Thorman's power, then caused the deaths of Thorman's only daughter and son-in-law. Thorman's last act was to fling the amulet out the window, casting a spell of sending so it would reach his granddaughter, off visiting cousins in the Northlands.

Radnor pauses, looking around. The group is mesmerized by his story. They all believe it. And now two turns of the clock have passed!

Before the night gaunts, caught up in the story, can react, Radnor suddenly snatches the amulet from the woman, laughing wickedly. "I have been awaiting this moment for forty-eight seasons! Your crown...anointed with Hereditary Magic Neutralizing Potent! And now the power of the amulet shall come to me!"

But as he starts to invoke the power of the amulet, a muscular human appears out of nowhere, knocking Radnor to the ground as the amulet is plucked from his hand. Radnor scrambles to his feet in time to see a tall, fair-haired male place the amulet around his neck. Suddenly, the man's leather garments fall away, revealing a woman beneath! A brilliant light surrounds her and he is horrified to see the image of Thorman in the aura. The woman holds out her hands toward Radnor and the light zaps towards him. That's the last thing he ever sees.

The Night Gaunt's Story:

The night gaunts were living their happy nocturnal life in the forest near Egreth Castle, when they were captured by the Evil Magician's trolls and enslaved under a magic spell. One evening, the E.M. calls them to his vile boudoir, and orders them to bring back whatever women they might find in a caravan that has set up camp at the edge of the forest.

The troop of night gaunts slinks through the forest. They are the stealthiest creatures around and are able to sneak up on the campsite without anyone seeing or hearing them.

Stealthy eyes peer out of the foliage, as sharp claws tense for the attack. Suddenly, the night gaunts bursts from the forest, attacking the sleeping travellers! The lead night gaunt beans the guard with his tough, scaly claw. The gaunts easily find the one woman, grab her, and carry her off into the night.

The night gaunts deliver the woman to the E.M. He demands that she give him her amulet, and she fearfully searches for it, then remembers she left it in the pocket of her cloak. A contingent of trollish guards take her off to the dungeon, as the wizard orders the night gaunts to return to the campsite for any cloaks they might find. On the way back to the campsite, they find a tasty clump of bushes and are ready to munch away when their leader calls them on.

Once again at the campsite, the night gaunts ransack the caravan's belongings, finding a couple of cloaks and one of Gurthark's vests. They carry these offerings back to the Evil Magician, complaining as they lope along about what a lousy job they have. It's almost dawn, their eyes are starting to hurt, there wasn't anyone at the camp anyway. One of the night gaunts is real quiet because, while ransacking the caravan, he found something really nice. He's got it hidden, because he's a pretty low-ranking night gaunt and his superior would make him give it up.

By now the night gaunts are back with the Evil Magician, who is once again enraged to discover that the amulet is nowhere in sight. He casts a searching spell, and "sees" the amulet in the possession of the preoccupied

night gaunt, who has snuck away to hide it with his belongings. When the amulet glows with the searching spell, the night gaunt (his poor eyes agonized by the light) casts it away in horror. But the magician doesn't see this; he's just glad that it's in the castle and he knows it's on its way to him. He calls the night gaunt to him.

When the night gaunt arrives without the amulet, the Evil Magician vaporizes him with a blinding light!

Other night gaunts are drawn by the sounds of the battle of magic. When the Evil Magician loses his power, the night gaunts regain their freedom, and take the E.M. under guard. But he ends up getting killed anyway.

Synopsis — ZorkQuest II:

Following their exciting adventures at Egreth Castle in ZorkQuest No. 1, Frobwit, Ryker, Gurthark, and Acia continue on their way. They leave behind Dirin and Lia, now rulers of Egreth.

Frobwit is traveling to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers at Accardi-by-the-Sea. Gurthark is transporting a load of silken coverlets to markets in the Southlands. Acia is journeying to the bedside of her ailing grandmother, hoping to inherit the old lady's fortune. Ryker is a scout, hired by the caravan for protection and guidance.

Unknown to the four travelers, the crystal ball nestled among Gurthark's coverlets contains the vital essence of the evil magician, Radnor. The group had defeated Radnor at Egreth Castle, reducing the sorcerer to a puddle of vile fluid. After entrapping the fluid in a crystal ball, Frobwit erroneously sent it to the castle treasure room, where Gurthark took it as a souvenir. Now this evil object is traveling with them, with nothing to distinguish it from an ordinary crystal ball.

Meanwhile, a couple of third-rate magicians in Accardi-by-the-Sea have stumbled upon the long-hidden spells and paraphernalia of the Zizbits, an ancient circle of wizards. With the Zizbits' magic at their disposal, the magicians (whose names are Moog and Slye) can obtain undreamt-of power as an evil force called the Triax. However, to form the Triax they need a third evil magician.

Using the Zizbits' magic reflecting pool, Moog and Slye locate Radnor's vile essence and unsuccessfully attempt to obtain it. The essence can only be released from the crystal ball by the one who entrapped it, namely Frobwit. Moog and Slye also learn that seven bursts of evil will come out of the crystal, as the essence randomly emits its malevolent power.

As the caravan journeys from Egreth to Accardi, the bursts of evil from the crystal cause a number of calamities. Acia falls desperately ill and Ryker must go on a dangerous quest for the potion necessary to heal her. Giant birds attack the travelers, causing Frobwit to become separated from the group. Gurthark's quilts burst into flames, putting the timid merchant into great debt. Later, a sea monster sweeps Gurthark into a river, where he narrowly avoids death and ends up being rescued by an elfin princess. Ryker becomes perilously vulnerable when he loses his strength and prowess. And the lovely Acia becomes old and unattractive, while her grandmother regains her youth and beauty.

In the end, Frobwit's continuous boasting of his accomplishments at Egreth Castle result in his mistakenly releasing Radnor from the crystal ball. The spell is quickly reversed by a fellow enchanter, but because Ryker is holding the crystal at the time, the scout's soul becomes entrapped in the crystal rather than the sorcerer's. The evil essence of Radnor then enters Ryker's body.

Now the odious Radnor has once again been made flesh, in the handsome form of Ryker. He joins Moog and Slye, and the Triax begins its reign of darkness over Quendor.

Plot outline for "ZorkQuest II: The Crystal Ball" — 3/29/88:

PREFACE

Following their exciting adventures at Egreth Castle, Frobwit, Ryker, Gurthark, and Acia continue on their way. They leave behind Dirin and Lia, now rulers of Egreth.

Frobwit is traveling to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers at Accardi-by-the-Sea. Gurthark is transporting a load of silken coverlets to markets in the Southlands. Acia is journeying to the bedside of her ailing grandmother, hoping to inherit the old lady's fortune. Ryker is a scout, hired by the caravan for protection and guidance.

Unknown to the four travelers, the crystal ball nestled amongst Gurthark's silken coverlets contains the vital essence of the Evil Magician, Radnor. (A jump here shows how this vile object came to be in Gurthark's possession - Lia reflecting Radnor's evil, Radnor melting, Frobwit enclosing the essence in a crystal ball, the ball being erroneously sent to the treasure room, Gurthark taking it.)

Unknown even to Radnor, a couple of evil magicians called the Triax are seeking to round out their group. This third member will make them all-powerful. They've fastened on Radnor and are trying to get his essence. However, it can only be released by the one who entrapped it, namely Frobwit.

THE TRIAX STORY

ZorkQuest II opens with Moog, a fledgling magician from the wrong side of town, breaking into an old lady's house (it's Acia's grandmother's) to steal an heirloom spell book. This is done with lots of gloom and creepy silhouettes. Dissolve to Moog with his equally delinquent buddy Slye. They are outside the ruins of Pheebor, which are protected by a magic circle. Using a spell from the spellbook, Moog and Slye break through the circle and enter the ruins. Cut to title.

Now, here's the story: Moog and Slye have located the fabled magic spells and paraphernalia of the ancient Zizbits of Pheebor (a revered circle of good wizards destroyed in the pillage of Pheebor in 396). With the Zizbits' magic at their disposal, they can obtain undreamt-of power as an evil force called the Triax. (Please see the opening sequence in the attached script.) However, to form the Triax they need a third magician.

These guys are really not evil — yet. They're just up to no good. Moog is smarter than Slye and more disposed to being truly evil in the end. Slye is just out for a good time and has no scruples about the good time being a bit on the crooked side.

Seeking the third magician described in the sacred scrolls they've found (he is described as being entrapped in a crystal ball), Moog and Slye locate Radnor's vile essence and attempt to obtain it. The essence can only be released by the one who entrapped it, namely Frobwit.

Looking for the crystal ball in the Zizbit's mystical reflecting pool, Moog and Slye see it in Gurthark's sack. The image pulls back to show the caravan leaving Egreth. From here we can jump to the start of the caravan's collective story.

The sacred scrolls also reveal that the evil essence has no comprehension of its surroundings or predicament. As usual in cases of mis-Sent entrapped vile essences, it has the power to emit an evil aura, which it does randomly. Seven times will peril come to those associated with the crystal ball; at the seventh the essence becomes totally impotent. So Moog and Slye must get hold of the essence before the last evil peril is caused and the essence rendered harmless.

Since Radnor's power is more powerful and immediate than theirs, Moog and Slye cannot prevent or counteract the perils. However, they want the caravan to remain unharmed so that they can attempt to get Frobwit to release the essence. And they believe his bond with the others might come in handy.

So they send a sky-written message to the caravan warning of 'seven misfortunes'. They didn't want the warning directly related to the crystal ball for fear that the travellers would discard it or send it far out of reach. But they did want the travellers to be on guard. However, our heroes don't understand the message, and Moog

and Slye watch helplessly as the essence wreaks havoc with the caravan.

When Frobwit is separated from the caravan, Moog sends some of his hoodlum friends off to get him. Knowing the extent of Frobwit's magical prowess as well as his natural timidity, they see him as easy prey. The hoods are armed with a gruesome weapon: replicas of the severed heads of Acia, Gurthark, and Ryker. They think the shock of his friends' deaths and the threat of the same fate will induce Frobwit to accompany them to Pheebor.

[If we follow the henchmen, we see that Moog and Slye direct them to Frobwit, where they set up four stakes, three topped with the fake heads, one for Frobwit himself. They're supposed to keep watch for Frobwit, but are too busy telling dirty stories and yukking it up to notice anything. Suddenly a maddened wizard jumps out of nowhere and lops off their heads with an elfin sword. The heads magically fly up into the air and replace the ones on the stakes. Looking down from a severed hoodlum head, we can jump to the maddened wizard (who is, of course, Frobwit). Otherwise, time passes and we can dissolve from the severed heads to the reflecting pool where Moog and Slye curse and wonder who did this terrible thing to their buddies.]

Moog and Slye lose track of Frobwit; can't understand why they are unable to locate him. They don't know that he's protected by his elfin sword.

Throughout the story, Moog and Slye keep track of the caravan and the crystal ball. They don't spend much time watching anything else because they want to keep track of the number of perils the vile essence sends out. Tension builds as the number approaches seven.

We can jump from the reflecting pool to the caravan and back again. We know it's time to jump when we see the image we're looking at "ripple." (Bob and Doug suggested this could be done simply by putting moving ripple lines or a "pebble in the water" effect over the picture.)

At the end, the essence has been released, giving Moog and Slye the power they seek. It happens pretty soon after the sixth peril. Their storyline ends with them seeing — in the reflecting pool — the essence being released. They run outside and cast the spell in the scroll and change in some mystical way (any ideas?).

FROBWIT'S STORY

Acia, Frobwit, Gurthark, and Ryker leave Egreth Castle and continue on their way.

Frobwit decides to cast an augur spell on the journey. The image shows a happy Frobwit regaling his buddies at the convention with the story of the Evil Magician. An attractive elfin female stands close by his side. "Ah!" says Frobwit. "The journey will go well! We will reach Accardi."

Suddenly, a strong wind fills the sky with stormy black clouds. Lightning flashes, leaving behind an afterimage of three strange symbols. "What does it mean?" Gurthark wonders.

"They are runes of the ancient Zizbits of Pheebor, a revered circle of wizards destroyed in the pillage of Pheebor in 396," says Frobwit. "Their potent magic was destroyed with them. Only their runes remain, and all enchanters must learn them."

"What does it say?" asks Acia.

"It says 'seven misfortunes.' It's probably the prank of some foolish enchanter, although I cannot imagine who would use the hallowed runes of the Zizbits to make mischief."

As they journey on to Accardi-by-the-Sea, a series of horrific events plagues the travelers. To our little group, these events are inexplicable, the mysterious "seven misfortunes". However WE know that they're caused by Radnor's vital essence, because the crystal ball glows malevolently just before something bad happens. If the bad thing happens to one of the travelers when he's not at the caravan, the glow will branch to the misfortune.

On the second day, the group heads inland along a little-traveled road. At midday, Ryker mentions that they are entering an area of many beautiful birds. We see the crystal ball glowing evilly. Suddenly, a swarm of giant corbies appears from nowhere, terrifying the horses and pushing the caravan to dangerous speeds as it flees the winged aggressors. Perhaps this could be shown from the travelers' perspective, inside the caravan. Then, rather than having to animate both the caravan and birds, we could just show the birds closing in.

Frobwit falls off the caravan as a bird swoops in close and he twists out of the way. Frightened of the corbies,

he takes shelter in a hut off the roadway. He falls asleep, waking at nightfall.

The owner of the hut returns. It is an aged enchanter, too old to journey to the convention. But he has news, received by messenger at the tavern where he spent the afternoon. A Great Danger is upon the land. This danger can be overcome unless it joins up with another great evil. Frobwit must hasten to the convention, where the enchanters will determine how to eliminate the danger before it becomes more lethal.

The next morning, as Frobwit sets off on foot, the aged enchanter gives Frobwit an elfin blade to protect him on his journey. Although he walks all day, Frobwit meets no other travelers on the lonely inland road. And at nightfall, there is no sign of shelter. Then he sees a campfire glowing.

Since his elfin blade is glowing with danger, he sneaks up on the fire, only to see three black-hearted bandits hunched around it, laughing uproariously at some gruesome story. Worse yet, impaled on stakes are the heads of Gurthark, Acia, and Ryker! A fourth stake awaits another victim.

Frobwit is overwhelmed with anger and grief. He leaps out and the elfin sword works its own magic, slashing off the heads of the bandits before they know what's hit them. The heads spin through the sky and land on the stakes as the other heads disappear.

Finding no other sign of his buddies or their possessions, Frobwit continues on his way, not daring to sleep, exhausted and hungry, mourning his dead friends. He is unaware that the elfin blade is providing him with protection from outside danger. However, not even the blade can protect him from his own follies.

The next day, he is picked up by another caravan heading due south. One of the travelers is a feisty female elf named Myla, whom Frobwit immediately recognizes as the individual in his augur vision. Myla is making her way east to the Enchanters and Sorcerers Convention and suggests that Frobwit travel with her on horseback. The caravan has an extra horse that he can buy.

Myla and Frobwit come to a river. They know that there's a bridge further ahead and plan to use it to cross over to Accardi-by-the-Sea. One day, they see what appears to be a man struggling against the current, but before they can assist him in any way, the swift river carries him out of sight. If we jump to the man from Frobwit, we see that it is Gurthark.

Eventually Frobwit and Myla reach Accardi-by-the-Sea. After Frobwit's recent terrible experiences, it is wonderful to be at the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers. His little amulet and elfin blade give him lots of self-confidence. He tells everyone about the confrontation at Egreth Castle, lamenting his dead friends but nonetheless giving himself a bigger role in Radnor's defeat with each telling. Eventually he finds himself acting out the final battle scene with Radnor, culminating with his disposal of the melted remains of Radnor in the crystal ball.

But as Frobwit repeats the magic spell, he mistakenly reverses two crucial phrases. Luckily, Myla catches it in time ("You just said the essence-releasing spell!") and quickly casts an essence-entrapping spell to counter it.

[If we jump to the crystal ball here — it would have to be just as Frobwit says the wrong spell or perhaps just as Myla catches it — we see the sequence of events told in Ryker's story.]

Back at the convention, we only see that a great darkness comes over the land. Everyone realizes that the Great Danger has reached its full strength, and that dread times are upon the Kingdom. Of course, no one connects this to Frobwit's story. This is the end of this storyline.

ACIA'S STORY

The group takes off. They see some strange writing in the sky. Frobwit foretells the future, saying only that they will reach Accardi. Acia wishes he could tell her if she'll inherit her grandmother's fortune. Ryker snuggles up to her, impressing her with his sensitivity by telling her that they're entering a land of beautiful birds.

We see the crystal ball glowing evilly. Suddenly, a swarm of giant corbies appears from nowhere, terrifying the horses and pushing the caravan to dangerous speeds as it flees the winged aggressors. When the birds just as suddenly disappear, they realize Frobwit is missing. When they return to look for him, the old magician is nowhere to be seen. So Acia, Gurthark, and Ryker venture on without him.

The next morning, Acia feels sick. Again, this is preceded by a glimpse of the glowing crystal ball, which we

notice although the travellers don't. Acia passes out. Dissolve to Ryker and Gurthark hovering over her. She feels pretty woozy. She learns that she's been very ill for a couple of days and that Ryker has just given her a healing potion obtained from a witch.

Acia soon feels much better. The caravan resumes its journey, turning off the coastal road to take the inland route to Accardi-by-the-Sea.

They have another adventure along the way, when they attempt a treacherous river crossing. Acia insists on the river crossing because she is worried about getting to Accardi before Grandmummy dies.

The trio must build a raft and avoid some gruesome flesh-eating river creature. The crystal ball glows, the placid river becomes turbulent, and Gurthark and one of the pack horses fall overboard. Ryker and Acia see the horse meet a violent end, and sorrowfully assume that the same has come to Gurthark.

After that, they get pretty close to each other, alone in their cosy caravan. Ryker is some hunk! Eventually, they reach Gran's house. While Acia tends to Grandmummy, Ryker parks the caravan in the yard and goes into town for a little R & R.

Back at the ranch, Acia's grandmother is ill indeed. Acia desperately tries to convince the old lady to change her will in her granddaughter's favor. But poor Grandmummy is too ill to comprehend. When Acia says "How about the money?", Gran thinks she says "How's my Grandmummy?". And when Acia angrily says "Shove it, Grandmummy," Gran thinks she says "Love you, Grandmummy."

Worse yet, the malevolent crystal ball glows and Acia's legendary beauty disappears, leaving a hideous caricature of her features. That afternoon, Gurthark shows up. He doesn't recognize Acia, and she's afraid to reveal who she really is. He has a new treasure: two beautiful golden horns. Losing her beauty has humbled Acia (although not enough to keep her from being attracted to Gurthark's wealth) and, although she is pretending to be her cousin, she and Gurthark get along well. She is even feeling pretty bad about Grandmummy.

Gurthark goes into town for an hour or so to try to sell his quilts, but comes back despondent. No one wants any. Acia cheers him up.

When Ryker comes home that night, Acia still pretends to be someone else. She doesn't want her lover to see her looking so unappealing. Ryker makes some that causes Acia to think that he loves her only for her now lost beauty. She tells Ryker that "Acia doesn't want anything more to do with you." He storms out. We can jump to Ryker here to learn about the deadly peril he's in.

Acia collapses in tears. When Gurthark comforts her, she spills the beans. And now for the Tender Moment — Gurthark reveals that she is much nicer now, and he thinks her looks weren't all that important. And that's the happy ending for Acia and Gurthark's storylines.

[Question — we changed the original ending, which was Grandmummy dying and Radnor's essence going into her body. So do we want to do anything with Grandmummy here? Should she die? Leave Acia her fortune? Still be alive at the end? I tend to think she should pass away, just to resolve things, and maybe Acia should get some minor inheritance. Do we have anyone notice that the ancient spell book is gone? I suppose that would be a good jump — from the empty spot in the bookshelf to Moog and Slye in the ruins.]

RYKER'S STORY

The group takes off. They see some strange writing in the sky. Frobwit foretells the future, saying only that they will reach Accardi. Later on, Ryker decides to impress Acia with his sensitivity by mentioning that they're entering a land of beautiful birds.

We see the crystal ball glowing evilly. Suddenly, a swarm of giant corbies appears from nowhere, terrifying the horses and pushing the caravan to dangerous speeds as it flees the winged aggressors. When the birds just as suddenly disappear, they realize Frobwit is missing. When they return to look for him, the old magician is nowhere to be seen. So Acia, Gurthark, and Ryker venture on without him.

Then Acia falls dangerously ill. Again, this is preceded by a glimpse of the glowing crystal ball, which we notice although the travellers don't. The local healer can find no natural cause for her malady. Seeking a cure, the trio is directed to an ancient witch who lives in a remote area accessible only by foot. Ryker volunteers to make

the journey, leaving Gurthark behind to tend to Acia.

Ryker undergoes danger and hardship on his way to the witch's hut. He eats some seemingly innocent foodstuff — like a fruit or nut — which causes him to have horrible hallucinations because it has been magically changed by the witch. Alternatively, to save space right up front, he has no danger and hardship at all, and we can just have a nice silhouette of him walking up the hill to the hut, with his lovely dark hair blowing in the breeze.

[If we wanted, we could have a little jump to the witch. As Ryker goes towards the hut, he could see a glint in a window. Jumping to the glint, we see that it's the witch's spyglass. She plots a hopeless task for Ryker and gives it to him. Dissolve to Ryker returning with the task completed. The witch is shocked and horrified, realizing that Ryker has killed her pet (see further on) and vows revenge. She tries to kill Ryker on the way back down the hut, but fails. At her failure, you jump back to Ryker. You would have to rewind on Ryker's path to find out how he succeeded in the task.]

When Ryker reaches the witch's hut, he must prove his worthiness in order to receive the necessary magic potion. This is normal witch procedure, not one of the misfortunes. The proof involves a task which seems simple to Ryker: bring back the root of the gumpwort, a flowering plant which grows only in a certain field at the top of the hill.

What Ryker doesn't know (but which the witch assumes EVERYONE knows) is that the gumpwort field is the pasture of the dread lum ox, a mythic beast with two golden horns who is fiercely protective of his mistress (the witch) and his pasture.

Ryker gambols up the mountain path, cross a footbridge over a wide, swiftly-rushing stream, and trots up to the field, which is protected by a heavy-duty fence (it's very high, made of logs, but arranged so you can see through into the field). He doesn't notice the lum ox snorting in the pasture. There's a gate with a huge lock. But what does Ryker care about gates? With his legendary prowess, using only his bare hands, he hacks a hole in the fence and scrambles through.

[Reading this through, I can see that the preceding paragraph is almost impossible graphically, between the gamboling and the snorting. Any suggestions for simplifying it? All we really need to show is that the field is a distance from the hut, that there's a stream with swiftly-rushing water — or even just a wide stream — and that he hacks a hole in the fence.]

Then the lum ox charges. It's a fearsome sight, this huge dark beast with horns of gleaming gold, snorting a foul black smoke as it rushes towards us.

Ryker's bravado extends only so far. He turns and runs back through the gate and towards the footbridge. Looking back over his shoulder at the lum ox, he trips and falls aside just before reaching the bridge. The lum ox, carried on by the momentum of its massive form, charges past and onto the bridge, whose center boards collapse under the creature's weight. The lum ox falls into the stream where it is carried away, thrashing against the current.

[If we jump to the lum ox here, we see it carried, still struggling and thrashing, into a river. It lands up on a small island in the middle of the river where it stays for a couple of days, fearful of the carnivorous creatures which inhabit the river. The lum ox, which is carnivorous itself, eats every little animal and bird on the island. Then it gets hungrier and hungrier. Finally it sees a tasty little morsel floating downstream. The morsel looks so tasty that the lum ox braves the waters to get to it. But it's disconcerted by the morsel which, rather than fleeing from the lum ox, swims right towards it and jumps on its back, clutching the golden horns. Flailing around, trying to dislodge the morsel and get out of the river, the lum ox manages to reach the shore where its horns become entangled in vines. The morsel hops off and the imprisoned lum ox is swiftly devoured by the river creatures.]

Back at the pasture, with the lum ox out of the way, Ryker easily finds the gumpwort, digs up the root, and brings it back to the witch. The witch is horrified to see him return, but is bound by witch creed to give him the potion since he has completed his task. Ryker thinks he has proven himself a worthy associate, but the witch vows vengeance.

As he goes back down the mountain, she sends a boulder crashing down upon him. But just as it reaches him, he stoops over to tie his shoe or pick up the potion he dropped or whatever, and the boulder skims over his head. Rats! Thwarted again!

Again, to simplify, we could cut the boulder and just dissolve to him returning to the caravan.

Ryker returns to the caravan just in time to save Acia. They turn off the coastal road to take the inland route to Accardi-by-the-Sea.

They have another adventure along the way, when they attempt a treacherous river crossing. They must build a raft and avoid some gruesome flesh-eating river creature. The crystal ball glows, and Gurthark and one of the pack horses fall overboard. Ryker and Acia see the pack horse meet a violent end, and sorrowfully assume that the same has come to Gurthark.

Ryker and Acia continue on their way to Accardi-by-the-Sea, where Acia's grandmother's house is located. Along the way, they get pretty close to each other, alone in the caravan. Eventually, they reach Gran's house. While Acia tends to Grandmummy, Ryker parks the caravan in the yard and goes into town for a little R & R.

However, his holiday is anything but relaxing. His strength is being sapped by Radnor — we saw the crystal ball glow as he walked past the wagon on his way into town — and he's no longer as powerful and agile as he was. When he attempts one of his hallmark acts of daring and agility, it falls flat. He is embarrassed and bewildered. What's going on? Of course, WE know that he has been weakened by that horrid Radnor.

That night, after drowning his sorrows at the local tavern, he returns to Acia's house, only to have her cousin tell him that Acia doesn't want anything more to do with him. She must have found out that he lost his strength! Feeling angry and rejected, he storms out of the house.

Ryker goes to the caravan wagon to collect his things. As he's holding or touching the crystal ball (perhaps to move it aside to get something under it), the ball suddenly glows with a more terrible and bright red light than ever before. We see the glow come out of the ball and hover in the air! Suddenly we see Ryker's life-force flow out of his body and into the crystal ball (maybe it's blue?). Then the red light zaps into Ryker! This storyline ends with a closeup of Ryker with the evil red Radnor glow in his eyes.

As Radnor's essence goes out of the ball, we could have a jump to Moog and Slye seeing this in their reflecting pool and knowing it is time to cast their Triax spell.

GURTHARK'S STORY

The group takes off. They see some strange writing in the sky. Frobwit foretells the future, saying only that they will reach Accardi. Gurthark hopes he will sell plenty of quilts. A while later, Ryker says that they're entering a land of beautiful birds.

We see the crystal ball glowing evilly. Suddenly, a swarm of giant corbies appears from nowhere, terrifying the horses and pushing the caravan to dangerous speeds as it flees the winged aggressors. When the birds just as suddenly disappear, they realize Frobwit is missing. When they return to look for him, the old magician is nowhere to be seen. So Acia, Gurthark, and Ryker venture on without him.

Then Acia falls dangerously ill. Again, this is preceded by a glimpse of the glowing crystal ball, which we notice although the travellers don't. The local healer can find no natural cause for her malady. Seeking a cure, the trio is directed to an ancient witch who lives in a remote area accessible only by foot. Ryker volunteers to make the journey, leaving Gurthark behind to tend to Acia.

While Ryker is away, the crystal ball glows so brightly that it seems to burst into flames. Then we see that a real fire has started, which destroys several of Gurthark's quilts before it can be extinguished. Gurthark, who cannot understand how the fire started, is heartbroken. He works for his avaricious brother-in-law, Mirik the Lean, who will surely be enraged at the loss of the goods. Gurthark will have to offset the loss with his own hard-earned savings or with his treasured gold goblet from Egreth Castle.

Finally, Ryker returns with the potion just in time to save Acia. They turn off the coastal road to take the inland route to Accardi-by-the-Sea.

They have another adventure along the way, when they attempt a treacherous river crossing. They must build a raft and avoid some gruesome flesh-eating river creature. The crystal ball glows, and Gurthark and one of the pack horses fall overboard. The horse meets a terrible end.

If we jump to Gurthark as he falls, we see that he manages to survive. However, he is helplessly carried away by the swift current. He manages to fend off a couple of carnivorous creatures with his heavy steel-toed boots. Then — what luck! — he sees a huge animal swimming along with horns made of gold! Safety and treasure all in one! Gurthark plows through the water in record time and hops onto the animal's back, out of danger.

Meanwhile, the carnivorous creatures are already at work on the poor thing. Gurthark tries to direct it towards shore but the animal only manages to entangle its horns in vines near the shore. Gurthark jumps off onto dry land and watches in horror as the animal is swiftly devoured. All that's left are the gold horns, which Gurthark plucks from the vines.

He makes his way to Accardi by hitching a ride with another merchant. The merchant's pride in his load of goods sets Gurthark to wondering about the fate of his silken coverlets. Upon reaching Accardi, he searches high and low, finally finding the caravan parked outside Acia's grandmother's house. His quilts are here, and they're safe! Acia's unattractive cousin opens the door. Acia is off getting Grandmummy some medicine.

But when he goes into town the next day to peddle his coverlets, he can't sell a single one. It's not that there isn't a market for quilts. It's that his have become very strange — they feel disgusting, or change into horrible colors, or move of their own accord, or whatever. Anyway, he doesn't know what's wrong, but of course no one wants them. (WE know that their proximity to the crystal ball has tainted them.) Gurthark's getting more and more frantic. What will Mirik say?

He returns to Acia's house and everything seems much better because the cousin is so nice and sweet. They have a good time playing fanucci. Then the doorbell rings. The cousin leaves to answer it, and Gurthark hears the sound of an argument. Just as he's decided to intervene, the cousin comes back in tears.

She admits that she is Acia! How did she lose her beauty? Gurthark doesn't know — he is too busy comforting her. She has had an argument with Ryker and he's gone for good! Well, it's Gurthark's Tender Moment. He tells Acia that her beauty is unimportant. She's become such a nice person, and that's what counts.

The happy end! Or — just before the Tender Moment, we could jump through the window to Ryker collecting his things from the caravan, and thus see him become possessed by the evil Radnor essence.

Ideas for future ZorkQuests —

Ryker returns as the evil Ryker. Everyone is glad to see him, little knowing that he is doing the work of the Triax.

Dirinthrax (with Lia?) shows up to help defeat the Great Danger.

When the vile essence is finally laid to rest in the Great Beyond, Acia's beauty returns.

The witch could reappear — still bent on vengeance against Ryker — in fact, perhaps inadvertently restore him to his real self by stealing his "soul", little knowing that it is actually Radnor's?

ZorkQuest II — Partial Script:

SCENE 5 — FROBWIT, ACIA, RYKER, GURTHARK LEAVE EGRETH

JUMP FROM END OF SCENE 0

[Dissolve from instructions to an image of the old, crumbling ruin of Egreth Castle. Then a glowing light envelopes the castle. It becomes new and beautiful again.]

NARRATOR: Egreth Castle was free at last from centuries of evil dominion.

[The castle dissolves into ripples.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: But elsewhere in Quendor, creatures of darkness continued to plot a deadly course. To learn more about these dark forces, press the return/enter key when you see the flap.

IFJ TO T14, SCENE 4

[We see Moog and Slye sneaking into the ruins of Pheebor.]

BLURBS INSIDE JUMP: Moog and Slye, two thugs dabbling in magic, used a stolen spell book to break the protective circle around the ruins of Pheebor. They were seeking the fabled treasure of the Zizbits, a revered circle of wizards lost in the sacking of the city in 396. But although they managed to find the Hall of the Zizbits...

[The castle reforms. Close in on front door. Frobwit, Acia, Ryker, and Gurthark come out.]

NARRATOR: Their task completed, a small caravan of travelers continued on its way.

[We see Dirin and Lia come to the door to wave goodbye.]

NARRATOR: They left behind two of their number: Dirinthrax and Lia, kind-hearted and brave, the new rulers of Egreth.

JUMP C5 FROM SCENE 4

[We pan across the travelers. Pause at Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit the Fair, a wizard somewhat past his prime, was traveling to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers at Accardi-by-the-Sea.

[Pan. Pause at Acia.]

NARRATOR: Acia, rich and beautiful, was journeying to the bedside of her ailing grandmother, hoping to inherit the old woman's fortune.

[Pan. Pause at Ryker.]

NARRATOR: Ryker, a brave and handsome scout, had been hired by the caravan for guidance and protection.

[Pan. Pause at Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark the Stout, employed by his avaricious brother-in-law Mirik, was transporting a load of silken coverlets to markets in the South.

[Focus in on crystal ball in Gurthark's hands as he places it amongst his quilts. We see Radnor's evil face inside it.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Unknown to the four travelers, the crystal ball Gurthark took as a souvenir contained the vital essence of Radnor, an evil magician. To see how Radnor became trapped in the crystal, press the return/enter key at the flap.

CONDITIONAL LOOP JUMP TO RADNOR BACKGROUND

[Here we see a brief runthrough of how Radnor came to be in the crystal ball: close-up of Radnor's evil face; Lia zaps him with amulet; Radnor melts; Frobwit entraps the essence in a crystal ball; he erroneously sends it to the treasure room; Gurthark takes it. This should all be as close as possible to the way it looked in [Assault on Egreth Castle] to provide identification for those who read that story. Text will be used as necessary to clarify.]

BACK TO STORY

[Dissolve to silhouette of group traveling along shore road with ocean behind them.]

NARRATOR: Leaving Egreth Castle behind them, the group traveled on along the western shore of the Flathead Ocean.

FROBWIT: I'll augur the outcome of our journey!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Frobwit was about to see into the future!

CONDITIONAL LOOP JUMP TO FROBWIT'S VISION

[Zoom in on Frobwit's closed eyes; dissolve to image of Frobwit and attractive elfin female at the convention. (The female is Myla, whom Frobwit meets later.) In the vision, Frobwit is regaling his buddies with the story of the Evil Magician.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I put his vital essence in a crystal ball...

BACK TO STORY

[Dissolve back to Frobwit's closed eyes. Frobwit opens his eyes.]

FROBWIT: Our journey will go well! We will reach Accardi!

[Suddenly, black clouds appear in the sky. Lightning flashes, leaving an afterimage of three strange symbols in the sky over the Flathead Ocean. They are the runes Moog sends out in Scene 4.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Suddenly a strong wind filled the sky with stormy black clouds. Lightening flashed, leaving an afterimage of three strange symbols. What could they mean?

IFJ TO T6, SCENE 4

[Zoom in on the message in the sky.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURBS: The symbols were sent by Moog and Slye, two magicians hiding out in the ruins of the ancient city of Pheebor. They were warning the travelers that the crystal ball would send out seven evil spells! Moog and Slye wanted to protect the caravan and the crystal... ...they needed Frobwit to release Radnor from the ball so they could use the evil sorcerer to form a malevolent triad!

[Move down from the sky to the group. Gurthark and Acia are terrified. Ryker has protectively put his arm around Acia. Frobwit looks wise.]

JUMP C6 FROM SCENE 4

GURTHARK: What does it mean?

FROBWIT: They are runes of the ancient Zizbits of Pheebor, a revered circle of wizards destroyed in the pillage of Pheebor in 396. Their potent magic was destroyed with them. Only their runes remain, and all enchanters must learn them.

ACIA: What does it say?

FROBWIT: 'Seven misfortunes.' No doubt it's the prank of some foolish enchanter, although I cannot imagine who would use the hallowed runes of the Zizbits to make mischief.

TO SCENE 7

SCENE 7 — CORBIES ATTACK FROBWIT, GURTHARK, RYKER, AND ACIA

[Dissolve to still silhouette of the travelers along an inland road.]

NARRATOR: The travelers left the coastal road to head inland.

RYKER: Although little traveled, this road is far more direct.

GURTHARK: Is it dangerous?

RYKER: Not with me around!

[We see the group walking along the road beside their caravan. Ryker cozies up to Acia.]

RYKER: I've traveled this way before. We're entering a land filled with beautiful birds.

ACIA: Why, aren't you sweet! I didn't think you noticed things like that!

[Ryker smirks.]

[The image pulls back to show that inside the wagon, the crystal ball is glowing evilly in its bed of quilts. I don't think the text should mention the evil glow; the travelers don't notice it, so we shouldn't point it out. The glow radiates out to a flock of giant corbies (ref. Lore and Legends booklet in Beyond Zork), which appear from nowhere, attacking the caravan.]

NARRATOR: Suddenly, a swarm of giant corbies appeared from nowhere!

[The group screams, jumps into the caravan, urges the donkeys on to ever greater speeds, etc. We see view from inside caravan as the landscape lurches by.]

NARRATOR: The huge carnivorous birds terrified the donkeys, pushing the wagon to dangerous speeds as it fled the winged aggressors.

[Pan around group huddled in wagon. Freeze on Frobwit, who is sitting dangerously near the open back of the caravan wagon.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Frobwit was overwhelmed by a sense of foreboding.

IFJ TO F6, SCENE 7

[Zoom in on Frobwit, who looks terrified.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: His fears were justified. A corbie was swooping towards him, ready to snatch him out of the wagon!

[Move out and up to show the corbies as they'd be seen from inside the caravan. One bird swoops particularly low, then all the corbies suddenly vanish. Pull back to show wagon. The view wavers as it would in the reflected pool.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The travelers' peril did not go unnoticed.

IFJ TO T6, SCENE 4

[We see Moog and Slye.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: From the ruins of Pheebor, two third-rate magicians named Moog and Slye were keeping a close eye on the caravan. They knew that the crystal ball would send out seven evil spells to imperil the travelers. They also knew that if Radnor was freed from the ball, Moog and Slye could use him to form the deadly Triax!

[View goes back to normal. Close in on Ryker, Acia, and Gurthark huddled in caravan. Frobwit is nowhere to be seen. The caravan continues to rock along, as we can see from the rollicking landscape visible from the open back of the wagon.

JUMP C7 FROM SCENE 4

[Ryker jumps up to try to rein in the donkeys.]

RYKER: Whoa, boys!

[The horses slow to a trot, as we can see looking out from Ryker's vantage point at the front of the wagon. Move back to Ryker, who looks back at the other travelers.]

RYKER: 'Our journey will go well', eh, Frobwit? Frobwit? Frobwit!

ACIA: He's not here!

GURTHARK: Maybe the corbies took him!

RYKER: We must go back for him!

GURTHARK: But the birds are back there!!! They'll get us, too!!!

[They go back to look for Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Despite Gurthark's protestations, the caravan retraced its steps. The birds were nowhere to be seen... and neither was Frobwit.

RYKER: We've done all we can.

ACIA: Poor Frobwit!

[The caravan continues. They travel through the night; we see a silhouette view of the caravan moving through the darkness, with a sole figure — lantern in hand — leading the horses.]

NARRATOR: The caravan resumed its journey. To reach safer territory, they traveled through the night, taking turns guiding the donkeys.

JUMP TO SCENE 8

JUMP F6 FROM SCENE 7 — FROBWIT FALLS OFF CARAVAN

[We see Frobwit's view out the open back of the caravan. One of the giant corbies swoops terrifyingly low. Then we pull back to see Frobwit instinctively twisting out of its way. Off-balance, he tumbles out the back of the caravan wagon and into the weeds by the side of the road. Then we see Frobwit's view of the caravan

wagon disappearing in a cloud of dust down the road. The view moves up to show that the corbies are still swooping around.]

NARRATOR: Their carrion tastes whetted by the fallen wizard, the corbies stopped pursuing the wagon.

[We see Frobwit's horrifying view of the giant corbies swooping down towards him. Frobwit tries to create a protective shield around himself.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit tried to protect himself with a magic shield. But his powers paled before the unearthly strength of the giant birds.

JUMP F5 FROM SCENE 4

[The birds swarm around Frobwit. A couple peck at him, leaving bloody gashes. Then, just as immense sharp talons descend to carry him off, Frobwit turns himself into a porcupine.]

NARRATOR: At the last moment, Frobwit was able to escape the savage creatures.

[The corbie pulls back and they fly off.]

[Zoom in on porcupine, who of course has Frobwit's face.]

FROBWIT: They might return!! I've got to find shelter!!!

JUMP TO SCENE 9

[A new day dawns. The caravan stops for breakfast. We see the crystal ball glowing evilly. The image wavers into the way it would look reflected in the pool.]

JUMP TO TRIAX

[The image refocuses. The glow radiates to Acia who, although Gurthark and Ryker are eating with gusto, suddenly has no appetite.]

NARRATOR: The next day...

ACIA: I don't feel well!

[Ryker rushes to her aid.]

RYKER: Sweetheart, what's wrong?

ACIA: Oh.....I feel awful!

[Acia collapses. The last thing we see is Ryker and Gurthark's concerned faces swirling in front of her.]

JUMP TO GURTHARK

[Strange dream images pass through Acia's head. She sees friends and family in strange fantastical settings. And there is a recurrent image of herself dropping into nothingness.]

[Dissolve to Ryker and Gurthark anxiously bending over her. We can tell that time has passed because Ryker is worn from his travels and Gurthark is smudged with the smoke from the fire he's put out.]

ACIA: Ohhhh.....

GURTHARK: Acia! Are you all right?

RYKER: My darling!

[Now we see Acia up and about.]

NARRATOR: Acia soon felt much better...

[Caravan packs up and leaves through the hamlet. The townspeople are goggle-eyed at Ryker's success with the witch.]

NARRATOR: ...and the caravan was once again on its way. As it passed through the hamlet, mothers pointed out to their children the one who had already become a legend...

[Close in on Ryker proudly driving the horses.]

NARRATOR: ...Ryker, who successfully bargained with the witch from the purple hill.

[We see the caravan traveling through the industrial wastelands and pleasant wooded countryside of Greater Borphee. Time passes. The caravan halts at the edge of the Borphee River. The river is bordered by woods.]

NARRATOR: Several days later, the caravan reached the pebbled shore of the great Borphee River.

RYKER: The Great Bridge is a day's journey downstream, close by Borphee. Then we can get back on the shore road.

ACIA: Can't we just cross the river here and keep on the inland road to Accardi?

GURTHARK: It will add a good week to our journey to travel through Borphee.

RYKER: The river is not safe to cross here. It's filled with vicious furred eels.

GURTHARK: Gulp!

RYKER: A couple of those can strip a man down to bare bones within minutes!

ACIA: But we left Mareilon so long ago! My grandmummy might be dead by now! Isn't there any way we can cross here?

RYKER: Well...we might build a raft.

GURTHARK: We've had enough danger for one trip! Let's go through Borphee!

ACIA: But my grandmummy...!

[Ryker indicates the nearby woodlands.]

RYKER: There's plenty of wood. It shouldn't take long for us to cut down a few logs and lash them together.

[Ryker eagerly flexes his muscles in anticipation of the task; Acia is admiring; Gurthark looks doubtful.]

GURTHARK: Well....

ACIA: Pleeeeeease...

RYKER: C'mon, Gurthark, we'll have this done in no time!

[Gurthark and Ryker disappear into the woods. Dissolve to them standing proudly by the finished raft.]

NARRATOR: Soon after...

ACIA: You boys are really something!

RYKER: I'll hold the raft in place while you load on the caravan, Gurthark.

[Gurthark loads on the caravan and pack horses; they pole off from the shore and begin crossing the river. Suddenly, we see the crystal ball glowing evilly. The image wavers into the way it would look in the reflecting pool.]

JUMP TO TRIAX

[The image refocuses. Waves of evil radiate out to the raft. Huge waves appear in the river. The raft is tossed violently.]

NARRATOR: Suddenly, violent waves swelled the placid river. Ryker and Gurthark struggled to maintain control of the raft.

[One of the pack horses slips overboard. Gurthark, who was clinging on to the horse's harness, goes too.]

ACIA: Ohhhhhh!!!!!

NARRATOR: Ryker extends a pole to Gurthark...

RYKER: Grab hold!!

NARRATOR: ...but the hapless merchant was soon lost in the swift and turbulent current.

JUMP TO GURTHARK

[Acia and Ryker see the gruesome sight of the pack horse eaten by furry eels. The eels make some horrible sound.]

NARRATOR: Up from the depths of the swirling waters came the vicious furred eels, their razor-sharp teeth ready to attack.

ACIA: Oh no!!!!!

NARRATOR: The gentle pack horse reared in agony as the eels tore into his flank. But he did not suffer long...

[Now the river calms down; we see the horse's bones floating away. Acia is weeping with horror.]

ACIA: Oh my God!!! That poor horse! And what about Gurthark?

RYKER: I fear that he's met the same fate.

[Acia tears her hair, wrings her hands, weeps copiously, etc. etc. We see the first signs that Acia is becoming less sleazy.]

ACIA: Oh, no!!!! Oh, why did I insist on crossing here?

RYKER: The river was calm. No one could have foreseen what happened.

[They pole to the other side; Ryker has his arm around Acia, who continues to weep.]

NARRATOR: Although their destination was close at hand, Ryker and Acia felt little gladness.

[Dissolve to shot of six original travelers cheerfully setting out, or sharing a pleasant moment around the campfire, or some other happy memory.]

NARRATOR: Of their original party of six...

[Dissolve to flashback shot of Dirin and Lia smiling from the doorway of Egreth.]

NARRATOR: ...two had been detained to a happy end...

[Dissolve to memorial pictures of Frobwit and Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: ...but two others had met a terrible fate.

[Dissolve back to Ryker and Acia.]

NARRATOR: Now only Ryker and Acia remained.

[Sexy scene of Ryker and Acia getting it on in the caravan.]

NARRATOR: Their losses brought them closer during the last lonely days of the journey.

RYKER (thinks): What a dish!

ACIA (thinks): What a hunk!

[Dissolve to the caravan limping into Accardi. Accardi is very festive — all decked out with banners, etc. for CES.]

NARRATOR: At long last the caravan reached Accardi. A festive air pervaded the seaside town, which was gaily decorated for the annual Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers.

[We see the town from the caravan's perspective, turning corners, etc. as we wend our way through the streets to

Granny's house. Then we get there. I suppose since she's rich, she should live in some huge Victorian-looking place, lots of gingerbread, turrets, kind of fantastical, obviously opulent but somewhat seedy, too, since no one's around to keep it up for her and she's too old and decrepit to do it herself.]

NARRATOR: Grandmummy's house was even grander than Acia imagined it to be.

ACIA (thinks): This could all be mine!

ACIA: Oh, Ryker, what if she's...

[Ryker gives Acia a comforting hug.]

ACIA: Will you stay for a few days, Ryker? You can park the caravan in the yard.

RYKER: Sure! I could use a little R and R.

ACIA: I'm going in to see Grandmummy!

RYKER: I'll be back later!

[They kiss.]

ACIA: Bye, honey!

[Ryker sets off for town.]

JUMP TO RYKER

[Acia ventures up to the front door and goes in.]

NARRATOR: Acia half-expected the door to be bolted. But it swung open at her touch.

[We see Acia's viewpoint of the inside of Granny's house: the front hall, the stairs, Granny's bedroom. And here's Granny!]

ACIA: Grandmummy!

[Gran's lying in bed with an older, Amazonian nurse in attendance.]

NARRATOR: Grandmummy looked ill indeed. She was lying in bed with a nurse in close attendance.

[Grandmummy looks around.]

GRAN: Who's there?

ACIA: It's Acia, your granddaughter.

GRAN: Who?

ACIA: It's me, Acia! Your granddaughter!

GRAN: Who?

NURSE: Better not bother her now, miss. It's time for medication and a nice nap.

[Nurse pours out some vile medication. Close in on the spoon, where the pale green medication is steaming and frothing.]

NURSE: Now, open your mouth, Granny.

[She sticks the spoon in Gran's mouth.]

GRAN: Aaakkkk....

[Gran passes out.]

NURSE: She's asleep now, miss. You know, she never told me you were coming.

[Acia bursts into tears.]

ACIA: It was a surprise for Grandmummy. But she didn't even recognize me!

NURSE: She'll be better after her nap. You come back then.

ACIA: All right. I'll unpack my things.

NURSE: Where are you staying?

ACIA: Here, of course.

[Close up of nurse's face, who looks upset by this news. Dissolve to Acia, back in Gran's room after the nap.]

NARRATOR: After an hour spent snooping through Grandmummy's financial records, Acia returned to the sick-room.

ACIA: Grandmummy?

GRAN: Who is it?

ACIA: It's me, Acia.

GRAN: Acia! My little granddaughter!

[Gran feebly reaches for Acia, who takes her hand. The nurse comes into the room.]

NURSE: Only a minute, now. She's not at all well.

[Nurse exits.]

ACIA (thinks): I've got to act fast!

ACIA: Did you make a will, Grandmummy? I can't find your will.

GRAN: Bill? I don't know any Bill.

ACIA: No, Grandmummy! Your money!

GRAN: What's that?

ACIA: HOW ABOUT THE MONEY?

GRAN: How's Grandmummy? Sweet of you to ask, but I'm not at all well.

ACIA: DO YOU HAVE A WILL, GRANDMUMMY!!!

GRAN: What?

ACIA: Oh, shove it, Grandmummy!

GRAN: Love you, too, darling.

[Nurse enters.]

NURSE: You'd better leave, now.

[Acia flounces out. She goes to her room where she sits staring in the mirror.]

ACIA (thinks): I wonder when Ryker will come back to his beautiful Acia?

[Outside the window, we can see the caravan parked. Close in on caravan. The crystal ball glows. The image wavers into the way it would look reflected in the pool.]

JUMP TO TRIAX

[The image refocuses. Rays come out from the crystal ball and in the window, striking Acia. As she looks in the mirror, we see the back of her head and her reflection. Then the mirror shows us the horrible sight of her features changing into a grotesque caricature of what they once were.]

NARRATOR: Acia's tormented wail filled the house. She ran from room to room, but every mirror showed the same horrible sight. Her fabled beauty was now no more than a legend.

[Acia flings herself on her bed, weeping.]

ACIA (thinks): Will Ryker still love me?

[Through the window, we see Ryker walking up to the house.]

JUMP TO RYKER

[We hear the doorbell ring.]

ACIA (thinks): I won't go down!

[Suddenly Ryker appears in the door of the room.]

RYKER: Oh, I'm sorry! The nurse told me I'd find Acia here!

ACIA: Ryker!

RYKER: You know my name? Acia must have told you about me!

ACIA: Ryker...it's...it's me...I'm Acia.

RYKER: Ha ha! Now tell me, where's my little Marielonian beauty?

ACIA (thinks): He only loves me for my beauty!

ACIA: She's...she's gone out! She never wants to see you again!

RYKER: What!!!

ACIA: Please leave now!

RYKER: I will, gladly!

[Ryker storms out.]

JUMP TO RYKER

[Closeup of Acia's tearstained face. We need the following lines of narrative and dialogue so that people who jump from Ryker's viewpoint to Acia here can learn that this is really Acia. They'll have to rewind to find out how she lost her beauty.]

NARRATOR: Acia is overwhelmed with misery.

ACIA (thinks): I lost my beauty, and now I've lost Ryker too!

[Acia flings herself, sobbing, onto her bed.]

[Dissolve to morning. A rumpled Acia starts up at the sound of the doorbell.]

ACIA (thinks): Ryker!

[Dissolve to Acia opening door or show Acia slipping out of bed and running downstairs to open the door. We see the door from Acia's perspective as it opens to reveal...]

ACIA: Gurthark!

[Gurthark, rumpled and war-torn as he is, looks very wonderful to Acia. Her eyes light up.]

ACIA: I...I thought you were dead!

GURTHARK: Goodness, Acia must have told you all about me! You even recognized me!

[Acia's hands fly to her face. She's forgotten that she lost her beauty.]

ACIA (thinks): I'd better pretend to be someone else.

ACIA: Yes, Acia's my cousin! She was very worried about you!

GURTHARK: Well, as you can see, I survived, although just barely. Is Acia here?

ACIA: No...she's...she's...uh...getting some medicine for Grandmummy! Won't you come in?

GURTHARK: Well, the caravan with my goods is out front. With your permission, I'll camp out there for a few days. I'd like to sell some quilts in Accardi.

ACIA: Please, there's room in the house. I'm sure Acia would want you to stay here.

GURTHARK: You're very kind.

[Acia ushers Gurthark into the house. As he passes by her, she notices the golden horns slung over his back. He makes a couple more trips, bringing in his quilts, crystal ball, golden goblet, and jeweled necklace and putting everything in a room off the parlor.]

ACIA (thinks): I'm hoping to inherit Grandmummy's riches, but Gurthark has much of his own!

ACIA: Would you like something to eat?

GURTHARK: I haven't had a decent meal in days!

[Dissolve to dining room where Gurthark and Acia are chatting over breakfast. Gurthark is eating masses of food with gusto.]

GURTHARK: ...and then I kicked the eel right in the snout...please pass the butter!

ACIA: Why, Acia never told me you were so adventurous!

GURTHARK: It's taken this journey to make me realize it myself!

[Dissolve to Acia and Gurthark in Granny's room.]

ACIA: Grandmummy, this is Gurthark.

GRAN: Who?

GURTHARK: How do you do?

GRAN: Eh?

GURTHARK: HOW DO YOU DO?

GRAN: My shoes are just fine! They don't wear out when you're stuck in bed!

ACIA: Grandmummy, he's asking how you are!

GRAN: Is he a salesman? We don't need any!

[Nurse appears.]

NURSE: It's time for a little nap, now.

[The nurse gives Granny her medicine. The green liquid froths and bubbles in the spoon.]

GRANNY: Acckkkk!!!

[Gran passes out.]

NURSE (to Acia and Gurthark): You had better leave now.

[Gurthark and Acia go downstairs to the parlor.]

GURTHARK: I think I'll take a few coverlets into town. Maybe I can sell them all here, and there will be no need to travel further!

ACIA: Okay, see you later!

JUMP TO GURTHARK

[Acia goes up to sit by Gran's bedside.]

NARRATOR: Grandmummy didn't wake up all afternoon. Sitting at her bedside, Acia began to remember the fun times she'd had with Grandmummy when she was a child.

[Dissolve to a couple of scenes of Grandmummy bringing the child Acia wonderful presents, playing fanucci with her, serving her a very special "grown-up" tea. These scenes should all be at Acia's house, which looks very different from Grandmummy's. I picture Acia's house as lighter and airier, nouveau riche as opposed to grand old home.]

[Dissolve back to Acia at Gran's bedside wiping a tear from her eye.]

ACIA: Oh, Grandmummy!

[Dissolve to Acia greeting Gurthark at door.]

NARRATOR: Late in the afternoon, Gurthark returned.

ACIA: How did it go?

[Gurthark looks really depressed.]

GURTHARK: I couldn't sell a single one! One shopkeeper said they smelt bad. Another said they felt funny. I can't understand it! What will I tell Mirik?

ACIA: How about a game of fanucci? It will take your mind off your problems.

[Dissolve to Acia and Gurthark in parlor, playing fanucci.]

GURTHARK: Argyle!!!

ACIA: You win!

[Acia puts down her cards, sighs.]

ACIA: Grandmummy loved to play fanucci.

[Quick dissolve to flashback of Grandmummy and Acia having a jolly time playing fanucci. Dissolve back to Acia.]

ACIA: Now she can't do anything but lie in bed! I hate to see her suffer!

GURTHARK: The nurse seems very competent.

ACIA: Do you think so? I was thinking of letting her go and nursing Grandmummy myself.

GURTHARK: Acia never told me she had such a kind-hearted cousin!

ACIA: Oh, anyone would do the same...

GURTHARK: No, you're very special.

ACIA (thinks): He really likes me!

[Nurse appears in door.]

NURSE: I have sad news, miss. Your grandmother has passed away.

ACIA: Oh no!

[Dissolve to Gurthark and Acia sitting in mourning in the parlor that night. Gran is laid out here, with lilies on her breast. Acia is weeping.]

NARRATOR: Acia and Gurthark sat in mourning late into the night.

ACIA: Poor Grandmummy! She's been alone all these years! If I hadn't come, she would have died alone!

GURTHARK: Acia's here, too! When will she be back?

ACIA: I...I am Acia!

GURTHARK: What!

ACIA: Yes, it's true! It...it was horrible to see my face...change in the mirror before my own eyes!

GURTHARK: Along with your new looks has come a sweeter disposition! I like the new Acia better than the old!

[Little hearts pop out of Acia's breast and sail towards Gurthark.]

ACIA (thinks): Gurthark might not be a hunk like Ryker, but he loves me for myself!

[Cut to Gurthark looking noble. Then back to Acia.]

ACIA (thinks): And he's got plenty of money, too!

[We see the nurse lurking in the doorway. Suddenly, Granny sits up and opens her eyes! This scene should look really terrifying. Acia and Gurthark are speechless with horror. Then...]

ACIA: Grandmummy?

[Gran turns towards Acia.]

GRAN: Hello, darling.

ACIA: Grandmummy, you're alive!

GURTHARK: A miraculous recovery, to be sure!

[Acia flings her arms around Grandmummy. It's a sweet and sentimental scene and Gurthark responds accordingly. We move away from the tender scene and across the parlor to the guest room. Looking inside, we see the broken crystal ball lying on the ground.]

NARRATOR: In Gurthark's room, the crystal ball lay broken on the floor. There was no sign of the vile fluid that was Radnor. And the look in Grandmummy's eyes was strangely familiar...

[Dissolve to Grandmummy's eyes which look just like the eyes Radnor had when we saw him trapped in the crystal ball. But it has to be clear here that Acia and Gurthark don't notice this. Maybe they could be hugging Grandmummy, obviously wrapped up in her recovery, smiling, etc. Whereas Gran stares straight at the viewer with them evil eyes.]

END

FROBWIT'S STORY

JUMP FROM ACIA'S STORY, POINT 1

[We see Frobwit frantically scrambling through the underbrush. He spies a hut at the edge of a field.]

FROBWIT: What lies within can be no worse than what lurks without!

[He staggers up to the hut, pushes open the door, and falls flat on his face on the floor.]

NARRATOR: Weakened by his ordeal, Frobwit collapsed onto the rough floor of the hut.

[Dissolve to dusk. The first stars twinkle in the sky. We see the hut from outside. The door is still open and Frobwit lies on the floor. There are a couple of puddles o' blood trickling from his wounds.]

NARRATOR: Toward evening...

[Gumboz enters the hut. He's an aged wizard, good and kind, yet even farther past his prime than Frobwit.]

GUMBOZ: What have we here!

[Gumboz rouses Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: Who...who are you?

GUMBOZ: I am Gumboz the Magnificent, wizard of the central regions, owner of this hut! And who, may I ask, are you?

FROBWIT: I am Frobwit the Fair, wizard of the northlands!

GUMBOZ: I will need further explanations. But first, we must tend to your wounds.

[Gumboz bandages up Frobwit.]

GUMBOZ: What caused these grievous injuries?

FROBWIT: Giant corbies, cruel of beak and claw!

GUMBOZ: But there are no giant corbies in these parts!

[We see the image of Gumboz listening as Frobwit tells the story.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit recounted the caravan's adventures.

GUMBOZ: Very interesting! I suspect those corbies were created by black magic.

FROBWIT: Ah!

GUMBOZ: We have much to fear in Quendor.

FROBWIT: How is that?

GUMBOZ: News reached me only today of a Great Danger upon the land. This danger can still be overcome. But if it joins with another great evil, then all is lost.

FROBWIT: What can be done?

GUMBOZ: I am too old to journey to the Convention. But you must hasten there to join the other enchanters in determining a solution.

FROBWIT: I'm not too old to journey. But neither am I young enough to fare well without my companions.

[Gumboz takes an elfin sword from its hiding place in the hut.]

NARRATOR: From its secret hiding place, Gumboz removed a sword forged in the fabled workshops of the elves.

GUMBOZ: Take with you this elfin sword. It will glow with a blue light to warn you of danger, and its sharp blade will fell the fiercest foe.

FROBWIT: How can I thank you?

GUMBOZ: By doing your best to defeat the Great Danger.

[Dissolve to next morning, when Frobwit is leaving. He is still bandaged.]

NARRATOR: The next morning, Gumboz packed enough provisions to last Frobwit through to Accardi. Armed with his elfin sword, the old wizard continued on his way.

[Now we see a Disneyesque view of Frobwit trudging along the inland road towards Accardi. We see the view go by behind him as he makes his way south. The sun rises to high noon over the plains and little copses of trees, then descends toward evening.]

NARRATOR: Although he walked all day, Frobwit met no other travelers on the lonely inland road...

[Then it gets dark.]

NARRATOR: ...and at nightfall, there was no sign of shelter.

[We see a campfire glowing through the trees.]

FROBWIT (thinks): Ah, what have we here? A campfire could mean good food and conversation...

[He draws his elfin sword, which is glowing with a blue light.]

FROBWIT (thinks): ...or it could mean danger.

[We see Frobwit's view as he sneaks through the woods, closer and closer to the campfire. Then we see, hunched around the fire, four black-hearted bandits, laughing uproariously at some gruesome story. The view moves up to the dastardly sight of Gurthark, Acia, and Ryker's bloody heads impaled on stakes! A fourth

stake awaits another victim. Now we move back to include Frobwit in the view.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit was overwhelmed with grief and rage at the loss of his friends.

[He leaps out from the underbrush.]

NARRATOR: Without stopping to think, he leapt out, and the elfin sword worked its magic.

[The elfin sword acts on its own accord to lop off the heads of the bandits before they know what's hit them. The heads spin through the sky and land on the stakes as the heads of Ryker, Acia, and Gurthark disappear.]

FROBWIT: Whaa....?

NARRATOR: Even after many retellings, the moment never lost its mystery.

[We see Frobwit searching through the goods of the bandits. It's kind of disgusting because their bloody, headless bodies are still lying around.]

NARRATOR: Finding no other trace of his friends or their possessions...

[We see Frobwit leaving the campsite and traveling slowly on down the inland road.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit continued on his way, exhausted and hungry, not daring to sleep, mourning his dead companions.

[Frobwit comes to a junction on the road. A path leads east, with a sign pointing to "Inland Delta Highway."

FROBWIT (thinks): On a more well-traveled road, I would surely find transport and shelter.

[He sets off down the path, which is creepy and overgrown. We see his view of the tangled growth before him, thick with cobwebs and glittering with the large bright eyes of unknown animals. Move back to include Frobwit when a giant spider swings down upon him. The elfin sword glows blue and hacks the beast open, spilling his vile blood upon the undergrowth.]

FROBWIT: Yaaaa!!!!

[Frobwit jumps aside just in time to miss the blood and the heavy corpse of the beast as it crashes to the path.]

NARRATIVE: Shivering, Frobwit hurried on his way.

[Return to Frobwit's view of the path, only now it's even creepier because we're expecting more monsters. But instead we see a pale glow ahead and, as dawn breaks, the path opens onto a wide distant view of the Borphee River Delta, about 100 miles east. The Inland Delta Highway lies just ahead, running from north to south.]

NARRATOR: At long last, Frobwit saw the Borphee River Delta spread out before him.

FROBWIT (thinks): I'm sticking to the highways from now on!

[After stretching and admiring the view, Frobwit sits down by the side of the road and opens his pack.]

NARRATOR: In his panic, Frobwit had forgotten all about the tasty supper Gumboz had packed for him.

[Frobwit eats his meal with relish, then takes a little snooze sitting by the side of the road with his cap pulled over his eyes. He awakes.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit woke refreshed.

[We see Frobwit walking south along the Inland Delta Highway. After awhile, a small caravan goes by and he flags it down.]

FROBWIT: Yo!

[The caravan slows to a halt and the caravan members jump out. It doesn't matter too much what they look like, but there should be three or four of them, and they are all pretty friendly. One of them is Myla, an elfin female, whom Frobwit foresaw in his augur vision.]

Caravan member #1: Hail, traveller!

Caravan member #2: Do you seek assistance?

Frobwit: My companions have been killed and my wagon lost! I need shelter and transportation to Accardi-by-the-Sea.

Myla: I go to Accardi! Others stop at Borphee! You go with me?

Frobwit (thinks): She was in my vision!

Frobwit: Yes, thank you!

Caravan member #1: The wagon will stay with us in Borphee. But we will gladly sell you a horse for the remainder of your journey.

Myla: You come in caravan now!

[Now we see the caravan travelling along. This caravan wagon is larger, and there are several horses pulling it, so the group is able to ride inside.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit was lucky to have fallen in with a kind-hearted group of travellers, who expected no payment for the shelter and meals they provided him and asked an honest sum for the horse he bought.

[Now we see the caravan travelling along the shore of the Borphee River.]

NARRATOR: Late the following day...

[Inside the caravan, they look at the river through the wagon window.]

MYLA: We at Borphee River now! Soon at Borphee!

[Suddenly, we see Gurthark in the river struggling against the swift current.]

JUMP TO GURTHARK

FROBWIT: Gurthark! But...how could it be? Gurthark's dead!

MYLA: We must help!

[They spur the horses into a gallop along the riverway, but see no sight of the man.]

FROBWIT: We're too late!

CARAVAN MEMBER #1: The current here is swift and treacherous, and the water teeming with vicious furred eels.

CARAVAN MEMBER #2: No one could survive for long. The only safe crossing is by the Borphee Bridge.

FROBWIT: When I saw that poor chap in the river, for a moment I really believed it was Gurthark.

MYLA: But Frobwit saw Gurthark dead...

FROBWIT: Yes, there was no mistaking that.

[Dissolve to group crossing the Borphee Bridge. Then we see the caravan stop; Frobwit exchanges money for a horse; Frobwit and Myla take off together, turning to wave goodbye to the other two. We see Frobwit and Myla traveling by horseback along the coast.]

NARRATOR: The pleasant journey by the scenic coastal road restored Frobwit's spirits. By the time the two reached Accardi...

[Close in on Myla and Frobwit. Frobwit is in high spirits. He is pompously telling the story of the events at Egreth.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped Radnor's vile essence forever in a crystal ball...

MYLA: That good!!!

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Myla at the convention, surrounded by other conventioneers. Just so it's clear where they are, a big banner on the wall reads "Annual Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, Accardi-by-the-Sea."]

NARRATOR: Soon Frobwit and Myla were mingling with their fellow enchanters at CES.

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped Radnor's vile essence forever in a crystal ball!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: Always a useful spell!

ANOTHER CONVENTIONEER: I find my amulet to be a big help in casting spells.

[Frobwit whips out the amulet Dirin gave him and shows it off.]

FROBWIT: Mine comes in handy, too. But I didn't use it when I trapped Radnor in a crystal ball. I just said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and...

[Behind Frobwit we see the leader of the convention take the podium. We zoom towards him and focus in on him.]

LEADER: A difficult task lies ahead. The Great Danger we've heard of is now powerless to harm us. But should it join with another great evil, the depth of its dark destruction would be measureless...

[Dissolve to Frobwit chatting with conventioneers.]

YET ANOTHER CONVENTIONEER: We must search all Quendor to find and halt this malevolent presence!

FROBWIT: Just let me get my hands on it! Why, at Egreth Castle, I defeated the Evil Magician Radnor! I reduced him to a puddle of goop, said "Fooblart Mugwart Buzmuz," and trapped him forever in a crystal ball!

CONVENTIONEER (aside to other conventioneer): Isn't that the essence-releasing spell rather than the essence-entrapping spell?

JUMP TO CRYSTAL BALL

[Suddenly, the Convention Hall darkens. Wind. Thunder. Everyone looks about with bewilderment and fear.]

CONVENTIONEER: The Great Danger!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: May Beyblort help us!

NARRATOR: Without warning, a black pall settled over the room. A thin wind whistled in through unseen cracks in the old walls, as an ominous thunderclap proclaimed the onset of a new reign of darkness.

END

RYKER'S STORY

[We see Ryker trudging through the little village towards the gristmill. He looks back and waves at the Gurthark and the healer who are standing by the caravan wagon. They look pretty far away.]

RYKER (thinks): I hope Gurthark takes good care of Acia.

[He reaches the gristmill. There's a path leading beside it. The miller is standing outside.]

RYKER: Is this the path to the Purple Hill?

MILLER: It is indeed, but woe be to he who takes it.

RYKER: Why so?

MILLER: The witch does not like trespassers.

RYKER: But I have business with her.

[The miller is startled.

MILLER: Your business must be pretty important for you to take such risks! You must travel swiftly and never stray from the path.

RYKER: I'll take your advice, friend. But now, I'm on my way.

[Ryker starts up the path. It is rugged going, for the hill is covered with tall purple heather which obscures vision ahead and the path itself is rocky. Eventually, Ryker catches sight of a hut high atop the hill. It's kind of quaint. The sun glints off of something in an open window.]

JUMP TO WITCH [zoom to witch watching from window w/spyglass]

RYKER (thinks): Hmmm...that must be the witch's hut. It doesn't look too scary.

[Move up to sky where sun is burning.]

RYKER (thinks): It's noon. And I forgot to bring anything to eat or drink.

[Back to Ryker, who's really sweating. The sun is beating down; he removes his jacket. We can tell he really would like some refreshment. Suddenly he comes upon a bush of luscious berries. He's so hot and thirsty that these berries look like something in a dream. Close in to show that they're ripe and juicy and dripping with dew. Then back to Ryker whose eyes bug out and mouth salivates with desire.]

RYKER (thinks): Those look like perfectly ordinary google berries to me.

[Now he looks stern.]

RYKER (thinks): But the witch doesn't like trespassers.

[Now he looks bug-eyed with desire.]

RYKER (thinks): But I won't be leaving the path. She can't deny me a little sustenance.

[He reaches out, grabs the berries, and starts stuffing them into his mouth.]

RYKER: Mmmmmmm....yum yummy.....

[Now we see that the bush is empty of berries. Ryker stands tall; flexing his muscles.]

RYKER: Ah!!!

NARRATOR: Ryker felt much better after eating the googleberries. Until...

[Now Ryker starts hallucinating. If we had followed the witch's path, we'd know that she magically poisoned the berries. But Ryker doesn't know that. First we see a horrible monster galloping towards him. Ryker tries to get out of the way, but the heather has turned to waving poisonous snakes.]

NARRATOR: There was no escape!

[But the monster gallops right through him and disappears. The heather resumes it's normal shape. Ryker, trembling and sweating, continues up the path. Then everything gets brighter and brighter. Suddenly we see that the sun is getting really huge and hurtling closer and closer. Ryker flings himself to the ground with his arms over his head.]

RYKER: Aaiiieee!!!!

[As soon as Ryker's head is covered, everything returns to normal. He cautiously looks out, then stands and resumes his trek.]

RYKER (thinks): I get it...she's....she's...tricking me...that's it...

RYKER: Yaahhhh!!!!

[He ducks again as a swarm of giant insects with huge stingers zoom towards him and over his head. We can hear

their evil drone. Suddenly, they disappear and all is still. Ryker staggers on. But looking down, he sees that all the little stones that make up the path have turned into eyeballs staring up at him.]

RYKER: Yiiii!!!!

[As he lurches off the path, everything starts changing colors, swirling around. He's caught up in a brilliant multi-colored tornado. (Of course, it's really just all in his head.) This psychedelic whirlwind deposits him at the door of the witch's hut, which he had managed to stumble to anyway.]

[The door pops open and the witch is standing there. She looks like a witch — warts, etc. — but she doesn't look as bad as she might. In fact, Ryker never learns just how horrible she is.]

[Now that he's reached the hut, Ryker swiftly recuperates.]

RYKER: Hi, there! You're just the person I'm looking for!

WITCH: That I may be. Then again, maybe I'm not.

RYKER: The Healer sent me here for a potion to cure my friend of sleeping sickness.

WITCH: Sleeping sickness, eh? I would think that to be within the realm of the Healer.

RYKER: He says it is not of mortal origin, and therefore has no mortal cure!

[Closeup on witch's sneering face.]

WITCH: Perhaps we have some business to transact after all!

[Witch ushers Ryker into her hut. It looks just like your everyday witch's hut, with jars and bottles of creepy-looking stuff lying around waiting to be made into salves and potions.]

WITCH: As the Healer may have told you, my potions have their price.

[Ryker looks eager to take on whatever task comes his way.]

RYKER: That is understandable!

[Witch sneers.]

WITCH: But for you, such a brave and handsome man, I have but a simple task. You must bring me back the root of the gumpwort, which you will find flowering in the field at the top of the hill.

RYKER: Should I go right now?

WITCH: The field is a short walk up the hill, and there are still a few hours left of daylight.

RYKER: I'm on my way!

[Ryker starts out the door, then turns back.]

RYKER: By the way, those were some wild tricks you played on me!

WITCH: They were all in fun, my boy.

[Ryker leaves, with witch watching from doorway.]

JUMP TO WITCH

[Dissolve to Ryker gamboling up the hill path. He doesn't have any more hallucinations. He crosses a footbridge over a wide, swiftly-rushing stream. At this point, it's important that we see his view of the stream and how wide and fast it is, foaming and tumbling along.]

[Just past the stream is the field. It's protected by a high fence, made of logs, but arranged so you can see through into the field. In the far corner of the field we can see the dread lum ox snorting and pawing. Close in on lum ox, which is a mythical creature with golden horns — I picture them as slender and curved.]

NARRATOR: Pawing and snorting in the far corner of the field was the witch's pet lum ox. A mythic creature with two golden horns, the lum ox was fiercely protective of his mistress and his pasture.

[Pull back to Ryker, who doesn't see the lum ox.]

RYKER (thinks): Silly...building a big fence like this for a little flower.

[There's a gate, which Ryker checks out, but it has a huge padlock. And the fence is too high to climb over.]

RYKER (thinks): Well, there's more than one way to get through a gate.

[Ryker hacks a hole in the gate with his bare hands and scrambles through.]

RYKER: Now, where's this....yikes!

[The lum ox charges. We see Ryker's view of the charge. It's a fearsome sight, this huge dark beast with horns of gleaming gold, snorting a foul black smoke as it rushes towards us.]

[Now we pull back to show Ryker's stricken face.

RYKER: Yaaaaaa!

[He turns and scrambles back through the hole, running towards the bridge. The lum ox charges after. Looking back over his shoulder at the lum ox, Ryker trips and falls aside just before reaching the bridge. He hits his head on a boulder and is knocked out. Pull back to have image include charging lum ox.]

JUMP TO LUM OX

JUMP FROM GURTHARK'S STORY

[Dissolve to nighttime scene. Ryker is sitting up and rubbing his head. The lum ox is nowhere in sight. We don't see the bridge yet.]

RYKER: The gumpwort... I... I must save Acia...

[Ryker feels in his pockets. Luckily, he has a pocket torch along. What a well-prepared guy. He lights the torch and stands up shakily.]

RYKER: Ooohhhh... Must save Acia...

[He struggles through the hole in the fence into the field, then suddenly jumps back out of the hole.]

RYKER: Lum ox... Gotta be careful...

[He peeks inside the hole again. We see his view of the field. The lum ox is nowhere in sight. Pull back to have scene include Ryker, who ventures into the field. He searches around.]

RYKER: Where's that blasted... Ah, here it is...

[He finds the gumpwort and picks some. Then goes back through the fence and down the path to the bridge. He's still kind of shaky.]

RYKER: Gotta get potion... Save Acia...

[We see his feet walking along the bridge and the swiftly-rushing current underneath. Suddenly, he comes to a big hole in the board, and falls through!]

RYKER: Whaaa...?!?

[There's a scary view of Ryker dangling down with the water rushing by. Luckily, he catches himself just in time and manages to pull himself up through the hole and onto the bridge.]

RYKER: That hole wasn't there before!

NARRATOR: The exhilaration of a close brush with death restored Ryker's strength.

[Dissolve to silhouette shot of Ryker walking down the path to the witch's hut. He still carries his torch.]

[Close in on Ryker as he reaches the hut. It's all dark. He knocks on the door. It takes a minute for a lantern to be lit within. Then the door opens to reveal the witch.]

WITCH: What are you doing here!?!

[Ryker holds out the gumpwort. We can tell he feels better and stronger.]

RYKER: I've met my part of the bargain. Now where's the potion?

WITCH: Where's my pet?

RYKER: That big lunk? How should I know?

[Closeup on witch's angry face.]

[Dissolve to inside the hut. The witch is fixing the potion as Ryker hangs out. He has put out his torch. Witch hands the little bottle of potion to Ryker.]

WITCH: The patient must drink the entirOse bottle.

RYKER: We'll make sure she does.

[Ryker heads out the door.]

RYKER: Thanks a lot!

WITCH: You earned it fairly.

[A little way down the path, Ryker shouts back.]

RYKER: By the way, your bridge is broken!

WITCH: What!!

JUMP TO WITCH

[Ryker gamboles down the path. Dawn is breaking.]

RYKER: I hope I'm in time to save Acia!

[Suddenly we hear a rumbling noise. (Do we have a rumbling noise?)]

RYKER: Hmmm, sounds like thunder. Better hurry before it starts raining!

[As he hurries, he drops the potion.]

RYKER: Oops!

[As he bends down to pick it up, a huge boulder comes crashing down, skimming over his head. If he'd been standing, he'd have been a goner!]

RYKER: Whew! That was close! Dangerous mountain, this!

[He trots on down the hill. Dissolve to him arriving in camp.]

JUMP TO GURTHARK'S STORY

RYKER'S STORY, PART II

JUMP FROM ACIA'S STORY

[As Ryker walks by the caravan wagon, we see evil rays coming out of the crystal ball and surrounding Ryker. Image wavers into the way it would look in the reflecting pool.]

[Image refocuses on Ryker, who obliviously walks on into town. As mentioned before, everything is festively decked out for the Convention.]

RYKER (thinks): Hmmm, I'll bring Acia back tonight for some fun.

[We see Ryker prowling about, peeking into shops, poking into pubs. He's near the harbor when a small child falls into the sea.]

NARRATOR: The holiday mood was suddenly shattered by near-tragedy...

RYKER: This is a job for Ryker!

[The crowd cheers. Ryker runs towards the wharf but the run quickly slows to a walk and he is exhausted by the time he gets there. The kid is going under for the third time. Ryker strips off his shirt, revealing a mysterious lack of bulging muscles, and dives into the sea. But he lands right on top of the kid, pushing him under the water, and the next thing we see is Ryker himself sputtering and struggling.]

[Dissolve to Ryker coming to on the shore. Pan to the kid, who is nearby with his rescuers. The rescuers — two motley-looking guys — are being congratulated.]

OFFICIAL-LOOKING BYSTANDER: You're heroes! The key to the city will be yours!

KID'S MOTHER: You saved my son! How can I thank you!

[Pan back to Ryker. The crowd is laughing at him. It's like a nightmare!]

MACHO BYSTANDER: You really missed the mark, bud!

SEXY FEMALE BYSTANDER: Good thing there were some REAL men around!

[Kid's mother appears.]

KID'S MOTHER: My son almost died! You only made things worse!

KINDLY ELDERLY BYSTANDER: Better not try anything like that again, son!

[Macho bystander kicks sand in Ryker's face as he walks off arm-in-arm with sexy female bystander.]

[Close in on Ryker. He looks in horror at his scrawny chest.]

RYKER (thinks): What's happening to me?

[He heads back to Acia's house, maybe exhibiting a couple of other weakling traits along the way. He tries to vault over a fence but can't get up speed and falls over it instead, etc. etc.]

RYKER (thinks): I just need a little rest...that's it. I'll cuddle up to Acia for a few days and everything will be fine.

[Ryker rings Acia's doorbell. We see his viewpoint of the nurse opening the door.]

RYKER: Is Acia home?

[Nurse lets him come in.]

NURSE: She's in her room at the end of the hallway upstairs.

[Ryker goes up the stairs and down the hall to Acia's room. The door is open and he goes in. There he sees an unfamiliar woman (it's really the magically-transformed unattractive Acia, but he doesn't know that and neither should the reader unless they've seen Acia's story) sitting on the bed, crying.]

RYKER (thinks): Who's this!?!

RYKER: Oh, I'm sorry! The nurse told me I'd find Acia here!

ACIA: Ryker!

RYKER: You know my name? Acia must have told you about me!

ACIA: Ryker...it's...it's me...I'm Acia.

RYKER: Ha ha! Now tell me, where's my little Marielonian beauty?

ACIA: She's...she's gone out! She never wants to see you again!

RYKER: What!!!

RYKER (thinks): Acia found out I lost my strength! And now she doesn't love me any more!

ACIA: Please leave!

RYKER: I will, gladly!

[Ryker storms out. In the doorway, he looks back at Acia's stricken face.]

JUMP TO ACIA

[Ryker turns away and walks down the stairs. No longer can he bound down as he used to.]

RYKER (thinks): I lost my strength, and now I've lost Acia, too!

[He walks out the door.]

RYKER: Well, what do I care? There are plenty of chicks in Accardi!

[He walks back into town. People are pointing and staring at him, in stark contrast to the heroic impression he made when he won out over the witch. He tries to kick a can by the side of the road and ends up stubbing his toe.]

RYKER: Oh, drat it all!

[He goes into the nearest pub. Dissolve to late that night, when he staggers out the door.]

NARRATOR: When the bartender refused to serve him another, Ryker took to the streets...

[We see Ryker stumbling around the ill-lit streets.]

RYKER: She was greedy and conceited. Who needs someone like that?

[Through the drawn curtains of a window overhead, Ryker sees the silhouette of a couple embracing.]

RYKER: Oh, Acia, how could you turn me away?

[Ryker yells out Acia's name.]

RYKER: Acia!!!!!!

[Window opens, man leans out.]

MAN: Shut up down there!!!

[Ryker shakes his fist at the man and walks on. The gloomy streets pass in a blur. Suddenly, Ryker is grabbed from behind by Slye, who darts out of an alley.]

RYKER: Hey!!!

SLYE: You're coming with me, bucko.

[Ryker is so weakened that before he knows what's happened Slye has bound him with magic and Ryker can neither move nor call for help.]

NARRATOR: Ryker was helpless against the magic shackles of his assailant.

[Slye bundles Ryker into the sidecar of his three-wheel bike and sets off. Silhouette image of them riding over a ridge. Slye is pedaling REALLY fast.]

NARRATOR: The crazed abductor pedaled through the night at breakneck speed.

[Close in on Ryker, who looks very worried, if not terrified.]

NARRATOR: With his strength and dexterity gone, what hope was there for Ryker?

[Now we show Ryker's view of the countryside whizzing by. It's getting lighter out. As dawn breaks, we see Pheebor ahead.]

NARRATOR: As dawn broke, Ryker saw the ruins of Pheebor on the horizon.

[Seemingly invincible, Slye continues pedaling rapidly up to the tumbledown gates of the city.]

NARRATOR: Ryker knew the ruins were protected by the magic spirit of the Zizbits, who dwelled there long ago...

[Slye pedals right through the gates.]

NARRATOR: ... but this did not seem to stop his odious kidnapper!

[Slye pedals through the ruins to the hall of the Zizbits.]

NARRATOR: The scoundrel apparently knew exactly where he was going.

[They stop in front of Moog, who is lounging around by the reflecting pool.]

NARRATOR: Another ruffian, somewhat better turned out than the first, was waiting in the wreckage of a great hall.

SLYE: I've brought the scout.

MOOG: So I see. Put him over there.

[Ryker is hauled out of the sidecar and dragged to a corner of the hall. Close up of Ryker looking disgusted at his predicament.]

RYKER (thinks): Just wait till I'm back in shape...!!!

[Now we see Ryker's view of Moog and Slye on the other side of the room. They're deep in animated conversation, but we're watching the whole thing from Ryker's distant viewpoint.]

NARRATION: Ryker is unable to hear the hooligans' conversation, but he's sure they're up to no good.

JUMP TO TRIAX

[Time passes. We continue to see Ryker's view as Moog and Slye jump up and start to prepare some vile concoction in a beaker. Slye runs out and comes back with weird things.]

NARRATION: The ruffians are mixing up some vile concoction filled with disgusting ingredients.

GURTHARK'S STORY

RYKER: We must get help!

[They put Acia in the caravan and hurry off, eventually coming to a little village. Ryker stops a woman on the street.]

RYKER: Is there a healer in the village?

[The woman points the way.]

WOMAN: In the cobblestone house down the street.

[Dissolve to healer examining Acia. She still lies in a makeshift bed in the caravan, which is parked in front of the cobblestone house.]

HEALER: This illness has no human cause. It comes from the realm of darkness.

GURTHARK: Oh no!!! Will she die?

HEALER: Certainly.

RYKER: Is there nothing that can save her?

HEALER: There is one who can help. But she is half a day's journey from here and her cures are not without their price.

[Ryker is the picture of nobility.]

RYKER: I will risk anything to save Acia.

[Gurthark takes his precious necklace from Egreth Castle out of his pocket.]

GURTHARK: Take...take this, Ryker, to help pay for the cure.

HEALER: That is not the sort of payment she demands. You must prove yourself worthy of her assistance.

[Gurthark snatches back the necklace and puts it back in his pocket.]

GURTHARK: Goody!

RYKER: Hmmm...I have never failed before.

HEALER: You will find the witch — for that she is — on the south slope of the purple hill. Take the path by the gristmill, and do not stray from it.

RYKER: Gurthark, set up camp and take good care of Acia.

[Dramatic pause. Gurthark's stricken face. Ryker's brave farewell.]

RYKER: I'll be back.

JUMP TO RYKER

[We see Gurthark setting up camp; he makes a nice little corner for Acia with a bedroll and canopy and she lies there all day; he sits beside her eating and worrying.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark set up housekeeping on the outskirts of the hamlet. That night…

[We see Gurthark sleeping close by Acia. Then we pan to the caravan and look inside, where the crystal ball is glowing so brightly that it seems about to burst into flames. The image wavers into the way it would look in the reflecting pool.]

JUMP TO TRIAX

[Image refocuses. Now we see that a real fire has started, which destroys several of Gurthark's quilts before he wakes up. Pull back to show Gurthark starting up from his sleep.]

GURTHARK (thinks): I smell smoke!

[Gurthark sees the fire.]

GURTHARK: Oh no! My coverlets!

[He grabs the water bucket, runs to the caravan, and douses the fire. Then he sits on the edge of the wagon, downcast.]

GURTHARK (thinks): How did that start? Mirik will be furious.

[Close up on Gurthark; dissolve to Gurthark's tortured thoughts. We see Mirik berating Gurthark.]

MIRIK: Idiot! Why weren't you more careful?

GURTHARK: I'm sorry, Mirik.

MIRIK: I knew it was risky taking you into the firm. But your sister insisted on it!

GURTHARK: I'm sorry, Mirik.

MIRIK: Well, now you're fired!

GURTHARK: Yes, Mirik.

MIRIK: And don't forget that you owe me a thousand zorkmids for the damage you've done!

GURTHARK: Yes, Mirik.

[Gurthark reaches into his tunic, pulls out his precious gold goblet, and gives it to Mirik.]

[Dissolve back to Gurthark's anguished face.]

GURTHARK (thinks): I will never give Mirik my goblet!! I earned it myself, for my bravery at Egreth Castle!

[He goes to check on Acia, who seems weaker than ever.]

GURTHARK (thinks): Ryker should have been back by now! Oh, when will he return?

[A cloud bubble from Gurthark's head shows that he's thinking of Ryker.]

JUMP TO RYKER

[More scenes of Acia languishing, Gurthark eating.]

NARRATOR: But it was not until the following morning that...

[Ryker strides into camp.]

GURTHARK: Ryker!!!!

RYKER: How is she?

GURTHARK: She's almost gone, Ryker!!! Did you get the potion?

[Ryker withdraws the potion from his tunic. Gurthark is visibly relieved.]

GURTHARK: Thank God!

[They give Acia the potion and she groggily comes to.]

NARRATOR: The magic potion swiftly did its work. Acia was saved.

End of partial script

ZorkQuest II — Full Script

SCENE 0 — MOOG STEALS SPELL BOOK

[We see a moonlit silhouette view of the quaint little town of Accardi-by-the-Sea. The town includes the Enchanter's Hall, where the convention is taking place, but that famous edifice doesn't necessarily have to be in this view.]

NARRATOR: The little town of Accardi-by-the-Sea was deep in peaceful slumber...

[We see the silhouette of Moog darting behind the houses.]

NARRATOR: ...save for a disreputable character bent on mischief.

[Dissolve to Moog using a magic spell to break into Grandmummy's house. The spell should be somewhat ridiculous — maybe she makes a hairpin magically appear and then picks the lock with it.]

NARRATOR: Using tricks learned in a correspondence course in magic...

[Dissolve to Moog in Grandmummy's house. She removes a stone from the front of the fireplace, revealing a cavity where a spell book is hidden.]

NARRATOR: ...Moog entered an old woman's house to steal a most precious object.

[Close in on spell book. It says 'Rites and Prophecies of the Zizbits'. Pull back to show Moog leering as she snatches the book out of its hiding place. This is the first time that we see Moog is female.]

NARRATOR: The book would give Moog power beyond her wildest dreams. And the Kingdom of Quendor would never be the same again...

[Dissolve to credits.]

SCREEN: Infocom and Tom Snyder Productions Present

SCREEN: ZORKQUEST

SCREEN: Episode Two

SCREEN: The Forging of the Triax

[Lead-in to instructions, as in ZorkQuest I.]

TO SCENE 1 (INSTRUCTIONS) OR JUMP TO SCENE 5 (CARAVAN)

SCENE 1 — INSTRUCTIONS

[Instructions, same as in ZorkQuest I.]

TO SCENE 2

SCENE 2 — MOOG AND SLYE AT THEIR HIDEOUT

[Dissolve from instructions to spell book, with title clearly showing.]

NARRATOR: The Zizbits were a revered circle of wizards destroyed in the downfall of Pheebor in 396. Their fabled magic spells and paraphernalia were lost with them...

[Pull back to show Moog holding the spell book. She looks mighty pleased with herself.]

NARRATOR: ... or so it was thought. But now these powerful spells were in Moog's hands!

[Pull back even further to show that Moog is clambering up a hill. This could be a still shot.]

NARRATOR: Moog was meeting her pal Slye at their childhood hideout. They still spent a lot of time there.

MOOG: Wait'll Slye sees this!

[Dissolve to Moog meeting Slye at the hilltop, as in Peter's sketch. Only I think their meeting place should be a little more secluded — perhaps a little cave in the hill?]

NARRATOR: Slye was waiting in the cave.

[Close in on Moog and Slye, two down-at-heel characters in their late teens or early twenties. Slye is Dickensian in his sleazy back alley looks and attitude. Moog is Felliniesque, with a buxom, slothful appearance and tough, devil-may-care view of life.]

NARRATOR: Moog and Slye were two fledgling magicians from the wrong side of town.

[Zoom in on Moog.]

NARRATOR: Moog was a bit more skilled than Slye. After all, she had earned a diploma from the Frobozz Magic Magic Correspondence School.

MOOG: Hi, Slye! Hey, I used the Gorch spell to break into the old lady's house.

[Close up of Slye.]

NARRATOR: But Slye was a good accomplice, always willing to do the dirty work.

SLYE: You should'a brought me along to knock her out.

[Pull back to show both Moog and Slye.]

NARRATOR: Up to then, their magical escapades hadn't extended much farther than playing nasty tricks on their friends. But now...

[Moog close-up.]

MOOG: Well, Slye, that nursing job paid off after all.

SLYE: Yeah, you earned the money for your magic correspondence course.

MOOG: It paid more than money. Right from the start, I knew the old dame was hiding something in her parlor. She wouldn't let me alone in there for a second.

[Slye close-up.]

SLYE: She didn't trust you with her knickknacks. Haw haw!

[Moog close-up.]

MOOG: No... she was guarding something valuable...

[Moog holds up book. It glows with a magical light.]

MOOG: ...the Zizbit spell book! With this book, we can break the magic circle around the ruins of Pheebor. Then the Zizbit treasure will be all ours!

[Dissolve.]

TO SCENE 3

SCENE 3 — MOOG AND SLYE AT RUINS OF PHEEBOR

[Dissolve to Moog and Slye sneaking up to the ruins of Pheebor.]

NARRATOR: According to legend, the fabulous wealth of the Zizbits was buried within the ruins of Pheebor, an ancient city located at the conflux of the Rivers Phee and Bor.

[They are stopped by a glowing protective circle.]

NARRATOR: The ruins were guarded by a protective spell cast by the wizards as the city fell.

MOOG: This spell's got nothing on us!

SLYE: You said it, Moog!

[Moog looks in the book.]

MOOG: Ah, here it is. The Zizbit Protective Circle Undo Spell!

[Moog casts the spell. It looks pretty impressive.]

MOOG: Zeemala zeemala pocar rabolar; meera meera feeblar modar!

[The protective circle breaks apart. Slye is impressed.]

SLYE: Yahoo! Where's the treasure?

[Moog and Slye enter ruins. Schmoo through ruins — crumbling buildings and weedy vegetation. (Can you schmoo through ruins?)]

NARRATOR: The ruins of Pheebor seemed to stretch on endlessly... ...the crumbling artifacts of a great city tangled with the weedy shrubs that were growing amongst the rubble.

[Now we see Moog and Slye.]

SLYE: There's nothing here but junk! It's giving me the creeps!

MOOG: Wait! Up ahead...

[Pan to the remains of an impressive building.]

NARRATOR: It was the sacred Hall of the Zizbits!

[We see Moog and Slye enter the building. Dissolve.]

TO SCENE 4

SCENE 4 — MOOG AND SLYE IN ZIZBIT HALL

[Dissolve back to Moog and Slye squatting by reflecting pool, which shows only ripples. They're looking in the spell book.]

SLYE: I don't get it. Even in this dump, there's no treasure.

MOOG: Hold on. Maybe the book will give us a clue.

SLYE: If you want to know what I think, Moog: I think you brought us on a wild goose chase.

MOOG: Hey, Slye, there's more than spells in here. Look at this!

[Close in on book; the page is covered with strange runes.]

[Close-up of Slye.]

SLYE: Aw, we can't even read it!

[Close-up of Moog.]

MOOG: I can! They're Zizbit runes. I had to learn them to get my diploma.

[We see the page with the runes. The runes dissolve into the words of the prophecy. If we can't fit them all on one page (which doesn't seem likely) could we show the page flipping over to reveal the rest of the prophecy? Or dissolve from one sentence to the next?]

So it shall be...

Six eyes and six hands form the Triax,
Inscribing the arc spell in the sand.
The runes foretell the destiny of Quendor —
A reign of darkness upon the land.

[NOTE: This prophecy is changing to include the information about the imprisoned mage who must be set free by the one who entrapped him. It will be 6 - 8 lines in all.]

[Slye look puzzled.]

SLYE: Huh?

[But the light begins to dawn for Moog, who we can clearly see is the brighter of the two. She eagerly turns the page. Again, the runes change into the letters. However, three runes remain untranslated at the bottom of the page.]

Arc Spell

Inscribe upon the sands where the great rivers meet.

[Now Moog looks puzzled.]

MOOG: These last three runes don't look like any I've ever seen before.

SLYE: None of it makes sense to me.

MOOG: Hmmmm..... How do we find this magician?

[Moog studies the book. Meanwhile, in response to her question, the the reflecting pool shows the caravan by Egreth Castle.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: A mysterious image appeared in the pool. What did it mean? To find out, press the return/enter key at the flap.

IFJ TO C5 — SCENE 5

[Zoom in on travelers.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: Far from Pheebor, a small caravan was journeying to Accardi-by-the-Sea.

[Pull back from image in pool to Slye, who suddenly notices it.]

SLYE: Moog, lookie here!

MOOG: Do you realize, Slye, that we could become the Triax? Then we'll rule all Quendor!

SLYE: But Moog...

MOOG: We've got the arc spell; we're here at the Phee and Bor… We've just got to find an imprisoned magician.

SLYE: Moog, there's a magician!

MOOG: Huh?!?

[They both look at the reflecting pool.]

NARRATOR: Moog and Slye had found the legendary reflecting pool of the Zizbits!

[We see inside the pool. Zoom into travelers. We can clearly see Frobwit.]

MOOG: Very good, Slye. You do see a magician! But he's not imprisoned!

[Image zooms even closer, to Gurthark, who is carrying the crystal ball. We can clearly see the face of Radnor inside the crystal.]

[Pull back to Moog and Slye.]

MOOG: Now, THAT is a trapped magician, Slye!

[Pull back to Slye's face. He is cowed by Moog's sarcasm. Still he makes a valiant attempt to show his cleverness.]

SLYE: That fat guy carrying the ball must be the one who put the magician inside it!

[Moog is scornful.]

MOOG: Impossible! Only a powerful mage could do something like that. It must be that old wizard in the group.

[Moog looks thoughtful.]

MOOG: The prophecy didn't say anything about the magician being trapped in a crystal ball. Hmmm...

[Moog turns the pages of the book.]

MOOG: Ah ha! 'Cautions Regarding Evil Magicians Entrapped in Crystal Balls.'

[Close in on book. As before, the runes turn into words.]

In crystal ball, magician trapped
Avoids for now intended death.
Seven spells hath he, which random spill,
And taint the air with dire breath.

Only the one who set the trap
May free the magician from the sphere.
Until that time, the wicked spells
Imperil all who venture near.

When seven spells hath run their course,
Then shall the magician meet his end.
Nevermore his evil curse
Through Quendor's sacred lands to send.

[NOTE: This is also being rewritten. It will have about 8 lines and not mention who must free the magician from the ball. Only that if he's freed before the spells come out, he regains his evil power. Otherwise, the jig is up.]

MOOG: We've got to get that crystal before the seven spells are used up. And we better warn that old wizard. If he gets hurt, he can't release the magician.

SLYE: We'll just tell him to ditch that crystal ball.

MOOG: You brogmoid! He'd send it so far away that we'd never get our hands on it!

SLYE: Oh...

MOOG: I'll send a sky message in runes. I learned how to do that in correspondence school.

[Moog sends the message. I suppose it would be some kind of mental telepathy directed at the reflecting pool, such as little circles coming out of his fingertips. View zooms into the pool, where we see the message in the sky.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: How would the caravan respond to Moog's message? Find out by pressing the return/enter key at the flap.

IFJ TO C6 — SCENE 5

[We see the travelers.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: The travelers stared in bewilderment at the strange writing in the sky.

LABEL T6 (FROM SCENE 5)

[We see the message in the pool. Then pull back from pool to show Moog and Slye crouching by it.]

SLYE: What does it say?

MOOG: "Seven misfortunes." That should give them a good warning.

NARRATOR: But later that day...

[Dissolve to indicate time passing. Moog and Slye see the Giant Corbie attack in the reflecting pool. First, they see the crystal ball glowing in the wagon. Then the corbies attack. Frobwit falls off the caravan. Then the image fades.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The oracle revealed that the caravan was in trouble!

IFJ TO C7 — SCENE 7

[We see the terrified travelers inside the caravan.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: Unknown to the travelers, the crystal ball had released its first evil aura, causing giant corbies to attack them!

LABEL T4 (FROM SCENE 5)

[Pull back from pool to show Moog and Slye.]

MOOG: Drat!!! There's the first peril. And those idiots have no idea what was going on!

SLYE: The wizard fell off! We'd better keep an eye on him.

MOOG: We need to follow the crystal ball! Otherwise, we'll never know how close the magician is to losing his power! Remember, his power will come out of the ball in seven bursts. After the seventh, he has lost his power completely and we can never use him to form the Triax!

SLYE: Why don't we just get the old wizard? I know I could make him release the magician.

MOOG: With your methods, he'll never survive to help us!

SLYE: I won't hurt him! I'll pretend to be his friend! I'll trick him into doing what we want!

MOOG: Hmmm.... He's all alone now... It just might work, Slye. You should find him just south of Castle Egreth, on the coastal road.

ENTICEMENT BLURB: With some misgivings, Moog sent Slye to befriend the old wizard. Would he succeed?

IFJ TO S5 - SCENE 6

[We see Slye sneering as he hurries away. Moog is in the background.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: Finally Slye had the chance to prove that he could be just as clever as Moog!

[Moog looks in the reflecting pool.]

MOOG: Where is that old wizard now?

[Close in on the pool, which reveals Frobwit running from the corbies.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The oracle revealed that the corbies were in hot pursuit of the wizard!

IFJ TO F5 — SCENE 7

[We see Frobwit trying to create a magic shield around himself.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: The wizard, whose name was Frobwit, tried to protect himself with a magic shield. But his powers paled before the unearthly strength of the giant birds!

[Pull back from pool to show Moog looking inside it.]

MOOG: He may have entrapped the magician in the crystal, but he doesn't seem to have much power. He can't even defend himself against the corbies!

[Moog looks relieved.]

MOOG: I guess Slye won't have any trouble with him. I hope he's not too rough on the old man.

[Moog glances around the hall - maybe we could have a quick glance around from Moog's viewpoint.]

NARRATOR: Moog was getting hungry. But there didn't seem to be anything to eat in the ruins.

[A rat runs across the hall.]

MOOG: Ah ha!

[Moog throws a stone at the rat. It falls.]

NARRATOR: Moog always prided herself on making a tasty meal out of whatever little tidbits were on hand.

[Now we see Moog roasting the rat over a little fire. I imagine it stuck on the end of a stick like a marshmallow or a hot dog.]

MOOG: Yum yum!

[Dissolve to Moog sitting by the oracle.]

NARRATOR: Moog was sleepy after her meal, but she knew she had to stay awake. The crystal ball had already released one burst of evil. Six more, and the magician's power would be lost forever, along with any hope of forming the Triax!

[Dissolve to morning. A bleary-eyed Moog is staring at the oracle.]

NARRATION: The next morning, Moog's diligence was rewarded...

[Close in on oracle, in which the image of the caravan appears. The crystal ball glows and Acia puts her hand to her head, looking ill.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The crystal ball had sent out another of its deadly bursts of evil! How would it affect the caravan?

IFJ TO SCENE C8 — SCENE 8

[We see Acia unconscious.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: The crystal ball had caused the lovely Acia to fall desperately ill!

LABEL T7 (FROM SCENE 8)

[Pull back from oracle to show Moog squatting beside it. She's upset.]

MOOG: Five more bursts from the crystal ball, and the magician will be lost forever!

[Her face brightens.]

MOOG: Perhaps Slye has found the wizard.

[Close in on oracle, which reveals that Slye is galloping along on horseback towards Egreth. Although Slye looks a little ridiculous, the horse is swift and powerful — and Slye has used an apple levitation spell to cause an apple to dance in front of the horse all the way.]

[NOTE: Any other ideas on a speedy way for Slye to get to Frobwit? It doesn't seem as though he could use any kind of transportation spell — he's not that skilled. I kind of like the idea of him galloping madly through the night. Then Frobwit could pick up a horse somewhere and they could ride back together.]

NARRATOR: There was Slye, riding along on his swift horse. Moog was both proud and dismayed to see that he had cleverly used an apple levitation spell to entice the steed.

ENTICEMENT BLURB: How close was he to his destination?

IFJ TO S6 — SCENE 6

[We see Slye riding along.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: Slye had not rested since leaving Pheebor. Nor had his horse. They were now only a few bloits from Egreth!

[Pull back from oracle to Moog, who looks a little worried.]

MOOG: Perhaps I should have gone myself and left Slye here to watch the oracle.

[Repeat previous sequence of Moog winging a stone at a rat.]

MOOG: At least I would have had a more varied diet.

[Dissolve to night. How about a view of Moog sitting by the oracle with background changing from daylight to dusk to night? Maybe we could see a couple of stars twinkling outside the window or through a gap in the roof or whatever.]

NARRATOR: All day long, and well into the evening, Moog sat by the oracle. She dared not look for Slye again. She must watch the crystal ball!

[We see an image appear in the oracle. It is the glowing crystal, nestled in Gurthark's quilts. It bursts into flames and the quilts begin to burn.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The crystal ball had caused a fire in the caravan wagon!

IF TO C9 - SCENE 8

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: The silken coverlets Gurthark the Stout was taking to market were all in flames!

LABEL T8 (FROM SCENE 8)

[We see the burning quilts in the oracle. Then pull back to see Moog gazing into the oracle.]

NARRATOR: Moog was horrified to see that the third burst of evil had been released.

[Moog sits bleary-eyed by the oracle. Night turns to day.]

NARRATOR: Once again, Moog forced herself to stay awake through the night. Her fears grew as the hours slowly passed. The next morning...

MOOG: I must see if Slye is with the wizard. He's our only hope!

[Moog looks in oracle, which now shows Slye talking to Frobwit.]

MOOG: Ah ha!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: It looked as though Slye was doing his job well.

IFJ TO S7 — SCENE 10

[We see Slye and Frobwit talking.]

BLURB INSIDE JUMP: Moog would have been horrified to know that Slye was growing genuinely fond of the old wizard.

[Pull back to Moog. She looks pleased and relieved.]

MOOG: Maybe everything will be all right, after all. And we'll have power over all Quendor!

[Go inside Moog's head. Dissolve to fantasy of people bowing down before Moog. I see this as a simple, outlined view. It's not a jump, just an interesting thing for people to watch as they hang out with Moog.]

NARRATOR: Moog thought it would be fun to rule the kingdom. She'd show everyone who was boss!

[Simple picture of Moog with pretty women.]

NARRATOR: Never again would she be turned down for a date. She'd have her choice of all the fellows in Quendor!

[Simple picture of Moog with bags of money.]

NARRATOR: She'd be rich, too! No more drudgery for Moog.

[Simple picture of Moog with Slye and Radnor. They're dressed in regal garb.]

NARRATOR: The Zizbit spell book talked about the Triax as an evil force. And the wizard in the crystal seemed pretty bad.

[Same view, 2nd blurb.]

NARRATOR: But Moog didn't want to be evil. She just wanted the riches and power she deserved!

[Same view, 3rd blurb.]

NARRATOR: Now she had to steal and fight for that wealth and power. But as ruler of Quendor, she could get anything she wanted without lifting a finger!

[Dissolve back to Moog sitting by oracle.]

[NOTE: Somewhere in here we should have a jump or two from Slye to Moog.]

MOOG: I wonder where the caravan is now?

[The oracle reveals the caravan traveling through the woods. They're on their way to the river. Pull back to show Moog.

MOOG: Hmm... they seem to be all right.

[We once again see the oracle. The water is clear.]

NARRATOR: But shortly thereafter...

[We're still looking in the oracle. The image appears of the group on the raft in the river. We see the crystal ball glow red in the wagon. Then a huge tentacle comes up and pulls a horse overboard. Gurthark, who is clinging to the horse's bridle, goes overboard, too!]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The crystal ball was once more wreaking havoc with the caravan. Only this time it could mean the end of one of the travelers!

IFJ TO G5, SCENE 11

[We see Gurthark struggling under the water.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Gurthark was caught up in the swift underwater currents.

LABEL T9 (FROM SCENE 11)

[Pull away from oracle to show Moog. She is distressed.]

MOOG: The fourth spell has been released! Only three remain! If the magician isn't freed soon, I'll never rule Quendor!

[Moog peers into oracle.]

NARRATOR: Through the rest of the day and into the night, Moog kept watch on the caravan. There were only two people in it now, but the crystal ball was still with them.

[Close in on oracle. It's nighttime now. The waters reveal that Ryker and Acia are cuddling and kissing on a blanket spread out by the wagon.]

NARRATOR: The hussy seemed to be having some luck with the handsome fellow. If only Moog could be so lucky... Well, soon the good-lookers would all be flocking to Moog, Queen of Quendor!

[Pull back to show Moog continuing to peer into the oracle.]

NARRATOR: By watching the oracle throughout the night, Moog managed to keep herself awake.

[Show view in oracle of Ryker and Acia sleeping.]

NARRATOR: Eventually, the travelers drifted off to sleep.

[Dissolve to Slye and Frobwit sleeping.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: And there was Slye, sleeping like a baby. What was taking him so long? He should have tricked the old fellow into freeing the magician by now!

IFJ TO S8, SCENE 10

[Zoom in on Slye, whose eyes pop open.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Slye couldn't sleep a wink. He had come to trap and trick the wizard, but instead he had

agreed to become Frobwit's apprentice!

[Pull back to Moog getting sleepier by the minute. But she still stays awake! What a guy!]

NARRATOR: She found herself wishing once again that she had gone after the wizard. Not only would she have good food to eat, she would also get some much-needed rest!

MOOG: I'd better keep my strength up.

[Moog grabs a centipede scuttling by and pops it in her mouth.]

[Dissolve to Moog sitting by oracle in daytime.]

NARRATOR: Moog might well have slept through the night. The crystal ball was quiet until late the next morning, when the travelers appeared to have reached their destination.

[Close in on oracle. We see the caravan parked at Grandmummy's house.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: They were right in Accardi, at the old lady's house where Moog had stolen the Zizbit spell book!

IFJ TO A5, SCENE 12

[We see Acia standing in front of the house.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: The house belonged to Acia's grandmother!

[We continue to look in the oracle. We see Acia wave goodbye. Pan to Ryker, who is walking away from the house. As he passes the caravan, the crystal ball glows red. Ryker stumbles. Pull back to Moog.]

LABEL T10 (FROM SCENE 12)

MOOG: The fifth spell! Only two more to go, and we will lose the Triax forever!

[Moog picks up the spell book.]

MOOG: Maybe I can find something in this book to give us more time.

[She searches through the book.]

MOOG: Hmmm.... Enchantment Alteration Spell. If I cast this spell as the ball is sending out its evil peril, I wonder what would happen?

[Moog gazes into the oracle.]

NARRATOR: Moog gazed intently into the oracle, her hunger and fatigue forgotten in her quest for wealth and power. Her diligence was soon rewarded.

[Close in on oracle. We see Acia in her bedroom, gazing in the mirror. The crystal ball is in her room. The ball glows red and Acia grows old.]

MOOG: Now is my chance!

[Moog casts a spell into the reflecting pool. Again, it should look like some kind of mental telepathy.]

MOOG: Zweebar mobilar fweebar!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Would Moog's Enchantment Alteration Spell change anything?

IFJ TO M5, SCENE 13

[We see the image of Acia's ailing grandmother lying in bed.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: The spell altered things in ways that Moog could never have imagined.

[Pull back from pool to show Moog looking really frustrated.]

MOOG: It didn't change a thing! And that was the sixth spell! We'll never get him out in time!

LABEL T11 (FROM SCENE 13)

[Now Moog is enraged.]

NARRATOR: Moog hadn't realized until that very minute how important the Triax had become to her.

MOOG: Where is Slye??? He should have straightened things out by now!!

[Look into oracle, which shows Slye and Frobwit at the convention. But all Moog can tell is that they're with a bunch of people.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Slye was supposed to bring the wizard back to the ruins! Where were they now??

JUMP TO S9, SCENE 14

[Close in on Slye and Frobwit.]

INSIDE BLURB JUMP: Slye and the wizard, Frobwit, were at the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers at Accardi-by-the-Sea!

[Pull back to show Moog by the oracle. She's really flaming.]

LABEL T12 (FROM SCENE 14)

MOOG: That good-for-nothing!! I never should have trusted him!!

[Moog frantically looks through the spell book. She could even rip out pages, etc. in her frenzy.]

NARRATOR: Moog pawed through the spell book, frantically looking for a way out of her dilemma. But she could find nothing to help her!

[In dispair, Moog casts away the spell book.]

NARRATOR: The day was drawing to a close. Another sleepless night lay ahead. When would Moog's ordeal end?

[Close in on oracle. An eerie red light is bubbling out of it.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: As if in answer to Moog's despair, an eerie redlight bubbled up out of the oracle. And the waters revealed a most amazing sight!

IFJ TO C10, SCENE 15

[Zoom into bubbles. Dissolve to closeup of Ryker holding clear ball.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Ryker had been about to smash the crystal ball when he was suddenly paralyzed by a great and powerful force.

[Staying with Moog, in the oracle, we see that the crystal ball is now clear. But hovering over it is the red aura of Radnor! Ryker is holding the ball. Suddenly Ryker's blue essence seeps into the ball and Radnor's red aura jumps into Ryker's body! Close in on the evilly glowing eyes of Ryker/Radnor.]

MOOG: The magician is freed! The spell book...

[Moog snatches up the spell book. She doesn't notice that a page drops out of it and onto the ground. Moog runs outside. Zoom in on page, which has runes on it. Fade to black.]

[NOTE: This fallen page will never be explained in ZQ2, but it might come in handy in a future episode, where X could find it to solve X problem.]

TO SCENE 15

SCENE 15 — GRAND FINALE WITH TRIAX — RYKER/RADNOR, SLYE, MOOG]

[Dissolve to Moog standing at the junction of the Phee and Bor Rivers. It should be getting dark out cause that's creepier! She has a stick in her hand.]

MOOG: The arc spell...

[She begins to write in the sand.]

MOOG: Inscribe in the sand... where the rivers meet...

[Track down to show that Moog is inscribing the arc spell runes in the sand. When she has finished, there are bursts of lightening and the crackling sound of thunder.]

LABEL T13 (FROM RYKER SCENE 15 AND SLYE SCENE 14)

[Radnor/Ryker and Slye materialize beside Moog at the same moment that Moog metamorphosizes into the Triax Moog. They are all wearing some kind of common Triax outfit. They all have an evil glint in their eye. Slye should look a little less evil and a bit more bewildered than the others.]

NARRATOR: The prophecy was fulfilled! The Triax began its reign of darkness, a grim tyranny that would take many years and much valor to undo.

THE END

SCENE 5 — FROBWIT, ACIA, RYKER, GURTHARK LEAVE EGRETH

JUMP FROM END OF SCENE 0

[Dissolve from start of instructions to an image of the old, crumbling ruin of Egreth Castle. Then a glowing light envelopes the castle. It becomes new and beautiful again.]

NARRATOR: Egreth Castle was free at last from centuries of evil dominion.

[The castle dissolves into ripples.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: But elsewhere in Quendor, creatures of darkness continued to plot a deadly course. To learn more about these dark forces, press the return/enter key when you see the flap.

IFJ TO T14, SCENE 4

[We see Moog and Slye sneaking into the ruins of Pheebor.]

BLURBS INSIDE JUMP: Moog and Slye, two ruffians dabbling in magic, used a stolen spell book to break the protective circle around the ruins of Pheebor. They were seeking the fabled treasure of the Zizbits, a revered circle of wizards lost in the sacking of the city in 396. But although they managed to find the Hall of the Zizbits...

[The castle reforms. Close in on front door. Frobwit, Acia, Ryker, and Gurthark come out.]

NARRATOR: Their task completed, a small caravan of travelers continued on its way to Accardi-by-the-Sea.

[We see Dirin and Lia come to the door to wave goodbye.]

NARRATOR: They left behind two of their number: Dirinthrax and Lia, kind-hearted and brave, the new rulers of Egreth.

LABEL C5 (FROM SCENE 4)

[We pan across the travelers. Pause at Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit the Fair, a wizard somewhat past his prime, was traveling to the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers at Accardi-by-the-Sea.

[Pan. Pause at Acia.]

NARRATOR: Acia, rich and beautiful, was journeying to the bedside of her ailing grandmother, hoping to inherit the old woman's fortune.

[Pan. Pause at Ryker.]

NARRATOR: Ryker, a brave and handsome scout, had been hired by the caravan for guidance and protection.

[Pan. Pause at Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark the Stout, employed by his avaricious brother-in-law Mirik, was transporting a load of silken coverlets to markets in the South.

[Focus in on crystal ball in Gurthark's hands as he places it amongst his quilts. We see Radnor's evil face inside it.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Unknown to the four travelers, the crystal ball Gurthark took as a souvenir contained the vital essence of Radnor, an evil magician. To see how Radnor became trapped in the crystal, press the return/enter key at the flap.

CONDITIONAL LOOP JUMP TO RADNOR BACKGROUND

[Here we see a brief runthrough of how Radnor came to be in the crystal ball: close-up of Radnor's evil face; Lia zaps him with amulet; Radnor melts; Frobwit entraps the essence in a crystal ball; he erroneously sends it to the treasure room; Gurthark takes it. This should all be as close as possible to the way it looked in *Assault on Egreth Castle* to provide identification for those who read that story. Text will be used as necessary to clarify.]

BACK TO STORY

[Dissolve to silhouette of group traveling along shore road with ocean behind them.]

NARRATOR: Leaving Egreth Castle behind them, the group traveled on along the western shore of the Flathead Ocean.

FROBWIT: I'll augur the outcome of our journey!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Frobwit was about to see into the future!

CONDITIONAL LOOP JUMP TO FROBWIT'S VISION

[Zoom in on Frobwit's closed eyes; dissolve to image of Frobwit with Slye at the convention. In the vision, Frobwit is regaling his buddies with the story of the Evil Magician.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I put his vital essence in a crystal ball...

BACK TO STORY

[Dissolve back to Frobwit's closed eyes. Frobwit opens his eyes.]

FROBWIT: Our journey will go well! We will reach Accardi!

[Suddenly, black clouds appear in the sky. Lightning flashes, leaving an afterimage of three strange symbols in the sky over the Flathead Ocean. They are the runes Moog sends out in Scene 4.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Suddenly a strong wind filled the sky with stormy black clouds. Lightening flashed, leaving an afterimage of three strange symbols. What could they mean?

IFJ TO T6, SCENE 4

[Zoom in on the message in the sky.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURBS: The symbols were sent by Moog and Slye, two magicians hiding out in the ruins of the ancient city of Pheebor. They were warning the travelers that the crystal ball would send out seven bursts of evil!

[Move down from the sky to the group. Gurthark and Acia are terrified. Ryker has protectively put his arm around Acia. Frobwit looks wise.]

LABEL C6 (FROM SCENE 4)

GURTHARK: What does it mean?

FROBWIT: They are runes of the ancient Zizbits of Pheebor, a revered circle of wizards destroyed in the pillage of Pheebor in 396. Their potent magic was destroyed with them. Only their runes remain, and all enchanters must learn them.

ACIA: What does it say?

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Frobwit pondered the runes.

CONDITIONAL LOOP JUMP TO FROBWIT'S STORY

[Close up of Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit understood the first rune. It was the number 7. And he also understood the last rune. It meant 'luck' or 'fortune.' But he could not for the life of him remember what the middle one meant. As he enjoyed being a bearer of good tidings, he took a guess...

BACK TO STORY

[Frobwit looks pleased.]

FROBWIT: It means 'seven good fortunes.' Yet another indication that our journey will go well!

TO SCENE 7

SCENE 7 — CORBIES ATTACK FROBWIT, GURTHARK, RYKER, AND ACIA

[Dissolve to still silhouette of the travelers along an inland road.]

NARRATOR: The travelers left the coastal road to head inland.

RYKER: Although little traveled, this road is far more direct.

GURTHARK: Is it dangerous?

RYKER: Not with me around!

[We see the group walking along the road beside their caravan. Ryker cozies up to Acia.]

RYKER: I've traveled this way before. We're entering a land filled with beautiful birds.

ACIA: Why, aren't you sweet! I didn't think you noticed things like that!

[Ryker smirks.]

[The image pulls back to show that inside the wagon, the crystal ball is glowing evilly in its bed of quilts. I don't

think the text should mention the evil glow; the travelers don't notice it, so we shouldn't point it out. The glow radiates out to a flock of giant corbies (ref. Lore and Legends booklet in Beyond Zork), which appear from nowhere, attacking the caravan.]

NARRATOR: Suddenly, a swarm of giant corbies appeared from nowhere!

[The group screams, jumps into the caravan, urges the donkeys on to ever greater speeds, etc. We see view from inside caravan as the landscape lurches by.]

NARRATOR: The huge carnivorous birds terrified the donkeys, pushing the wagon to dangerous speeds as it fled the winged aggressors.

[Pan around group huddled in wagon. Freeze on Frobwit, who is sitting dangerously near the open back of the caravan wagon.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Frobwit was overwhelmed by a sense of foreboding.

IFJ TO F6, SCENE 7

[Zoom in on Frobwit, who looks terrified.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: His fears were justified. A corbie was swooping towards him, ready to snatch him out of the wagon!

[Move out and up to show the corbies as they'd be seen from inside the caravan. One bird swoops particularly low, then all the corbies suddenly vanish. Pull back to show wagon. The view wavers as it would in the reflected pool.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The travelers' peril did not go unnoticed.

IFJ TO T4, SCENE 4

[We see Moog and Slye.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: From the ruins of Pheebor, two third-rate magicians named Moog and Slye were keeping a close eye on the caravan. They knew that the crystal ball would send out seven evil spells to imperil the travelers!

[View goes back to normal. Close in on Ryker, Acia, and Gurthark huddled in caravan. Frobwit is nowhere to be seen. The caravan continues to rock along, as we can see from the rollicking landscape visible from the open back of the wagon.

LABEL C7 FROM SCENE 4

[Ryker jumps up to try to rein in the donkeys.]

RYKER: Whoa, boys!

[The horses slow to a trot, as we can see looking out from Ryker's vantage point at the front of the wagon. Move back to Ryker, who looks back at the other travelers.]

RYKER: 'Our journey will go well', eh, Frobwit? Frobwit? Frobwit!

ACIA: He's not here!

GURTHARK: Maybe the corbies took him!

RYKER: We must go back for him!

GURTHARK: But the birds are back there!!! They'll get us, too!!!

[They go back to look for Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Despite Gurthark's protestations, the caravan retraced its steps. The birds were nowhere to be seen... and neither was Frobwit.

RYKER: We've done all we can.

ACIA: Poor Frobwit!

[The caravan continues. They travel through the night; we see a silhouette view of the caravan moving through the darkness, with a sole figure — lantern in hand — leading the horses.]

NARRATOR: The caravan resumed its journey. To reach safer territory, they traveled through the night, taking turns guiding the donkeys.

JUMP TO SCENE 8

LABEL F6 (FROM SCENE 7) — FROBWIT FALLS OFF CARAVAN

[We see Frobwit's view out the open back of the caravan. One of the giant corbies swoops terrifyingly low. Then we pull back to see Frobwit instinctively twisting out of its way. Off-balance, he tumbles out the back of the caravan wagon and into the weeds by the side of the road. Then we see Frobwit's view of the caravan wagon disappearing in a cloud of dust down the road. The view moves up to show that the corbies are still swooping around.]

NARRATOR: Their carrion tastes whetted by the fallen wizard, the corbies stopped pursuing the wagon.

[We see Frobwit's horrifying view of the giant corbies swooping down towards him. Frobwit tries to create a protective shield around himself.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit tried to protect himself with a magic shield. But his powers paled before the unearthly strength of the giant birds.

LABEL F5 (FROM SCENE 4)

[The birds swarm around Frobwit. A couple peck at him, leaving bloody gashes. Then, just as immense sharp talons descend to carry him off, Frob turned himself into a porcupine.]

NARRATOR: At the last moment, Frobwit was able to escape the savage creatures.

[The corbie pulls back and they fly off.]

[Zoom in on porcupine, who of course has Frobwit's face.]

FROBWIT: They might return! I've got to find shelter!!!

JUMP TO SCENE 9

SCENE 8 — ACIA GETS SICK, QUILTS CATCH FIRE

[A new day dawns. The caravan stops for breakfast. We see the crystal ball glowing evilly.]

NARRATOR: The next day...

[The glow radiates to Acia who, although Gurthark and Ryker are eating with gusto, suddenly has no appetite.]

ACIA: I don't feel well!

[Image of Acia wavers as it would in reflecting pool.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Acia's sudden illness caused panic to those who watched her in secret.

IFJ TO T7, SCENE 8 — TRIAX

[We see the image in the reflecting pool. Pull back to show Moog squatting by pool.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Unknown to the travelers, Radnor's essence was inside the crystal ball! The bursts of evil it was sending out could prevent the magicians Moog and Slye from using Radnor's power to form the malevolent Triax!

[Ryker rushes to her aid.]

RYKER: Sweetheart, what's wrong?

ACIA: Oh.....I feel awful!

[Acia collapses. The last thing we see is Ryker's concerned face swirling in front of her.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Ryker's face swam before Acia. Then all went black!

IFJ TO C8, SCENE 8 — RYKER

[Ryker's face focuses.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Ryker suspected that Acia's illness was of otherworldly origin!

[Strange dream images pass through Acia's head. Maybe some of these images could have something to do with Radnor, which would provide a clue to the astute viewer.]

[Dissolve to Ryker and Gurthark anxiously bending over her. We can tell that time has passed because Ryker is worn from his travels and Gurthark is smudged with the smoke from the fire he's put out.]

JUMP TO A6, SCENE 8 — RYKER, GURTHARK, ACIA

LABEL C8 (FROM SCENE 8 AND SCENE 4) — RYKER, GURTHARK

[We see Ryker and Gurthark talking.]

RYKER: Acia is deathly ill.

GURTHARK: Gasp!!! We must find a doctor!

RYKER: No doctor can help her. I've seen that strange blue pallor before; some deadly magic has caused this illness.

GURTHARK: Oh no!!! Will she die?

RYKER: Only one thing can save her... the gumpwort fungi found in a fairy circle. It's an incredibly difficult and dangerous job to get it... but I will risk anything to save Acia.

[Close-up of Gurthark's stricken face.]

GURTHARK: Take care of yourself, Ryker!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Ryker would take care of himself. But would Gurthark take good care of Acia?

IFJ TO G6, SCENE 8 — GURTHARK

[Ryker and Gurthark bid each other farewell.]

RYKER (INSIDE JUMP BLURB): Keep Acia warm and dry. I will return as soon as I can.

[NOTE: This is Ryker's view, if you haven't jumped to Gurthark.]

[Ryker and Gurthark bid each other farewell.]

RYKER: Keep Acia warm and dry. I will return as soon as I can.

JUMP TO SCENE 17 — RYKER WITH LUM OX

LABEL G6 (FROM SCENE 8) — GURTHARK WITH ACIA

[We see Gurthark setting up camp; he makes a nice little corner for Acia with a bedroll and canopy and she lies there all day; he sits beside her eating and worrying. This could be a small series of "snapshot" views with the sky darkening until the last one is nighttime.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark set up housekeeping. That night...

[We see Gurthark sleeping close by Acia. Then we pan to the caravan and look inside, where the crystal ball is glowing so brightly that it seems about to burst into flames. The image wavers into the way it would look in the reflecting pool.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: While Gurthark slept, someone else kept watch on his quilts.

IFJ TO T8, SCENE 4 — TRIAX

[We see the image in the reflecting pool. Pull back to show Moog squatting by the pool.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Although Moog could see what was happening in her oracle, she could not prevent the catastrophe that followed. She was far away in the ruins of Pheebor, and was more interested in obtaining the essence of the evil magician inside the crystal ball than in preventing the deadly perils it was causing.

[Image refocuses. Now we see that a real fire has started, which destroys several of Gurthark's quilts before he wakes up. Pull back to show Gurthark starting up from his sleep.]

GURTHARK (thinks): I smell smoke!

[Gurthark sees the fire.]

GURTHARK: Oh no! My coverlets!

[He grabs the water bucket, runs to the caravan, and douses the fire. Then he sits on the edge of the wagon, downcast.]

GURTHARK (thinks): How did that start? Mirik will be furious. [Close up on Gurthark; dissolve to Gurthark's tortured thoughts. We see Mirik berating Gurthark. I don't see this as a jump, just as something interesting for viewers to watch as they wait for Ryker to get back.]

MIRIK: Idiot! Why weren't you more careful?

GURTHARK: I'm sorry, Mirik.

MIRIK: I knew it was risky taking you into the firm. But your sister insisted on it!

GURTHARK: I'm sorry, Mirik.

MIRIK: Well, now you owe me a thousand zorkmids for the damage you've done!

GURTHARK: Yes, Mirik.

[Gurthark reaches into his tunic, pulls out his precious gold goblet, and gives it to Mirik.]

[Dissolve back to Gurthark's anguished face.]

GURTHARK (thinks): I will never give Mirik my goblet!! It is a souvenir of my bravery at Egreth Castle!

[He goes to check on Acia.]

GURTHARK: She seems weaker than ever!

[A cloud bubble from Gurthark's head shows that he's thinking of Ryker.]

GURTHARK (thinks): Ryker should have been back by now! Oh, when will he return?

[Zoom into picture of Ryker in thought bubble.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: What was taking Ryker so long?

IFJ TO R5, SCENE 17 — RYKER WITH LUM OX

[We see Ryker on the plateau.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Having made it to the lofty mesa where the fairy circle grew, Ryker was now face to face with the dread lum ox, guardian of the circle!

[Pull back to Gurthark. Dissolve to morning.]

NARRATOR: It was not until the following morning that...

[Ryker strides into camp.]

GURTHARK: Ryker!!!!

RYKER: How is she?

GURTHARK: She's almost gone, Ryker!!! Did you get the mushroom?

[Ryker withdraws the gumpwort from his tunic. Gurthark is visibly relieved.]

GURTHARK: Thank God!

[They feed Acia the gumpwort and she groggily comes to.]

NARRATOR: The gumpwort fungi swiftly did its work. Acia was saved!

LABEL A6 (FROM SCENE 8)

ACIA: Ohhhh.....

GURTHARK: Acia! Are you all right?

RYKER: My darling!

[Now we see Acia up and about.]

NARRATOR: Acia soon felt much better...

[Caravan packs up and leaves.]

NARRATOR: ...and the caravan was once again on its way.

JUMP TO SCENE 11

SCENE 12 — RYKER AND ACIA IN STREETS OF ACCARDI

[Dissolve to the caravan limping into Accardi. Accardi is very festive — all decked out with banners, etc. for CES.]

NARRATOR: At long last the caravan reached Accardi. A festive air pervaded the seaside town, which was gaily decorated for the annual Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers.

[We see the town from the caravan's perspective, turning corners, etc. as we wend our way through the streets to Granny's house. Then we're there! We already know what Granny's house looks like.]

NARRATOR: Grandmummy's house was not quite as grand as Acia imagined it to be. But it was still a nice piece of property in a pretty seaside town.

ACIA (thinks): This could all be mine!

ACIA: Oh, Ryker, what if she's...

[Ryker gives Acia a comforting hug.]

ACIA: Will you stay for a few days, Ryker? You can park the caravan in the yard.

RYKER: Sure! I could use a little R and R.

ACIA: I'm going in to see how Grandmummy is!

RYKER: I'll be back later!

[They kiss.]

ACIA: Bye, honey!

[Ryker sets off.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Acia was sure that Ryker would have a good time.

IFJ TO R6, SCENE 13 — RYKER LOSES HIS STRENGTH

[Close in on Ryker.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Little did she know that his afternoon would be anything but relaxing.

[NOTE: This is Acia's viewpoint after Ryker leaves.]

[Acia ventures up to the front door and goes in.]

NARRATOR: Acia half-expected the door to be bolted. But it swung open at her touch.

JUMP TO A7, SCENE 13 — ACIA WITH GRANDMUMMY

LABEL R6 (FROM SCENE 13)

[As Ryker walks by the caravan wagon, we see evil rays coming out of the crystal ball and surrounding Ryker. Image wavers into the way it would look in the reflecting pool.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The stranger who watched his every move saw that Ryker was in peril.

IFJ TO T10, SCENE 4 — TRIAX

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Moog, a magician hiding out in the ruins of Pheebor, knew that the crystal ball was sending out bursts of evil. If seven were released in all, she would not be able to use the magician trapped inside it to form the deadly Triax!

NARATOR: Ryker felt a momentary weakness. The trip must have taken more out of him than he'd thought.

[Image refocuses on Ryker, who walks on into town. We could use the same views of the town as before. As mentioned before, everything is festively decked out for the Convention.]

RYKER (thinks): Hmmm, I'll bring Acia back tonight for some fun.

[Ryker is near the harbor when a small child falls into the sea.]

NARRATOR: The holiday mood was suddenly shattered by near-tragedy...

RYKER: This is a job for Ryker!

[Ryker runs towards the wharf but the run quickly slows to a walk and he is exhausted by the time he gets there. The kid is going under for the third time. Ryker strips off his shirt, revealing a mysterious lack of bulging muscles, and dives into the sea. But he lands right on top of the kid, pushing him under the water, and the next thing we see is Ryker himself sputtering and struggling.]

[Dissolve to Ryker coming to on the shore. Pan to the kid, who is nearby with his rescuer, his mother, and an official. The rescuer — a motley-looking guy — is being congratulated.]

OFFICIAL-LOOKING BYSTANDER: You're a hero! The key to the city will be yours!

KID'S MOTHER: You saved my son! How can I thank you!

[Pan back to Ryker. A small crowd is laughing at him. It's like a nightmare!]

MACHO BYSTANDER: You really missed the mark, bud!

SEXY FEMALE BYSTANDER: Good thing there were some REAL men around!

[Kid's mother appears.]

KID'S MOTHER: My son almost died! You only made things worse!

SEXY FEMALE BYSTANDER: Better not try anything like that again, honey!

[Macho bystander kicks sand in Ryker's face as he walks off arm-in-arm with sexy female bystander.]

[Close in on Ryker. He looks in horror at his scrawny chest.]

RYKER (thinks): What's happening to me?

[He heads back to Acia's house, maybe exhibiting a couple of other weakling traits along the way. He tries to vault over a fence but can't get up speed and falls over it instead, etc. etc. I know there probably isn't any room for any of this, but I'll leave the suggestions in anyway.]

RYKER (thinks): I just need a little rest... that's it. I'll hang around with Acia for a few days and everything will be fine.

[Ryker rings Acia's doorbell. We see his viewpoint of Acia opening the door. But it's the old Acia!]

JUMP TO R7, SCENE 13

SCENE 9 — FROBWIT IN HUT WITH OLD ENCHANTER

FROM SCENE 7

[We see Frobwit frantically scrambling through the underbrush. He spies a hut at the edge of a field.]

FROBWIT: What lies within can be no worse than what lurks without!

[He staggers up to the hut, pushes open the door, and falls flat on his face on the floor.]

NARRATOR: Weakened by his ordeal, Frobwit collapsed onto the rough floor of the hut.

[Dissolve to dusk. The first stars twinkle in the sky. We see the hut from outside. The door is still open and Frobwit lies on the floor. Maybe there are a couple of puddles of blood trickling from his wounds.]

NARRATOR: Toward evening...

[Gumboz enters the hut. He's an aged wizard, good and kind, yet even farther past his prime than Frobwit.]

GUMBOZ: What have we here!

[Gumboz rouses Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: Who...who are you?

GUMBOZ: I am Gumboz the Magnificent, wizard of the central regions, owner of this hut! And who, may I ask, are you?

FROBWIT: I am Frobwit the Fair, wizard of the northlands!

GUMBOZ: I will need further explanations. But first, we must tend to your wounds.

[Gumboz bandages up Frobwit.]

GUMBOZ: What caused these grievous injuries?

FROBWIT: Giant corbies, cruel of beak and claw!

GUMBOZ: But there are no giant corbies in these parts!

[We see the image of Gumboz listening as Frobwit tells the story.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit recounted the caravan's adventures.

GUMBOZ: Very interesting! I suspect those corbies were created by black magic.

FROBWIT: Ah!

GUMBOZ: We have much to fear in Quendor.

FROBWIT: How is that?

GUMBOZ: News reached me only today of a Great Danger upon the land. This danger can still be overcome. But if it joins with another great evil, then all is lost.

FROBWIT: What can be done?

GUMBOZ: I am too old to journey to the Convention. But you must hasten there to join the other enchanters in determining a solution.

FROBWIT: I'm not too old to journey. But neither am I young enough to fare well without my companions.

[Gumboz takes an elfin sword from its hiding place in the hut.]

NARRATOR: From its secret hiding place, Gumboz removed a sword forged in the fabled workshops of the elves.

GUMBOZ: Take with you this elfin sword. It will glow with a blue light to warn you of danger, and its sharp blade will fell the fiercest foe.

FROBWIT: How can I thank you?

GUMBOZ: By doing your best to defeat the Great Danger.

[Dissolve to next morning, when Frobwit is leaving. He is still bandaged.]

NARRATOR: The next morning, Gumboz packed enough provisions to last Frobwit through to Accardi. Armed with his elfin sword, the old wizard continued on his way.

JUMP TO F7, SCENE 10

SCENE 17 — RYKER WITH LUM OX

[We see Ryker walking away with Gurthark in the background.]

NARRATOR: Ryker did not trust Gurthark to care for Acia. But he certainly couldn't bring her along. He could only hope that she would still be alive when he returned.

[Silhouette or still shot of Ryker walking to the mesa.]

NARRATOR: The mesa where the fairy circle grew was some distance from the campsite.

[Show Ryker fording a swift stream. He should be about chest deep in it. It's very important to have this in since the lum ox falls in here later.]

NARRATOR: It was a difficult task to ford the swiftly-running stream at the base of the mesa.

[Dissolve to Ryker climbing up the mesa.]

NARRATOR: It was even more difficult to scale the steep slope.

[Ryker nears the top of the mesa.]

NARRATOR: But for Ryker, no difficulty was insurmountable.

[Ryker climbs onto the mesa. A brightly-colored bird is there, but no mention is made of him. Perhaps it is perched on a small rock. Pan to lum ox.]

NARRATOR: Guarding the mesa was the fairies' pet lum ox.

[The lum ox warily checks out Ryker.]

NARRATOR: A mythic creature with golden horns, the lum ox was fiercely protective of the fairy circle.

LABEL R5, FROM SCENE 8

[Pull back to show both Ryker and ox. Ryker holds his ground.]

NARRATOR: Ryker had come across such creatures before. They did not intimidate him.

[The lum ox approaches.]

NARRATOR: The beast moved closer. Why wasn't this human fleeing in terror at the mere sight of its massive form?

[Zoom in on lum ox. He charges towards us, snorting black smoke. (Okay, you can forget about putting in the black smoke if you have to.)]

NARRATOR: Ryker's lack of fear made the lum ox wild with anger...

[Pull back to show lum ox charging Ryker. Ryker whips out his red cape and holds it up.]

NARRATOR: ...so wild that it did not see the trap Ryker had set!

[Lum ox charges cape. Ryker whips it aside and ox plummets over edge.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: The beast plunged over the edge of the mesa!

JUMP TO L1 — SCENE 18

[We see the lum ox falling down the side of the mesa. This could be a still view.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: The lum ox plummeted down the rocky slope...

[Dissolve to Ryker by fairy circle. He reaches down and plucks one of the mushrooms.]

NARRATOR: With the lum ox out of the way, it was an easy job to pick the gumpwort.

RYKER: Now Acia will live!

[Ryker stands up again. The fairy circle is just a tiny little thing at his feet.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Ryker did not think the fairies would mind.

CONDITIONAL LOOP JUMP TO FAIRY CIRCLE

[We see Ryker walking away from the fairy circle. But we don't follow him. Instead, we zoom in on the circle. Dissolve from day to night.]

NARRATOR: Day turned to dusk...

[We see the mushrooms transforming into the little fairy people. Even the bottom of the stem of the one Ryker picked turns into a fairy.]

NARRATOR: ...and the fairies awoke.

[The brightly-colored bird flies down to talk to them.]

NARRATOR: The bright-plumaged bird who lived on the mesa told the fairies what had happened.

[Close in on fairies with bird.]

NARRATOR: The fairies didn't mind that the man had picked a mushroom to save someone's life...

[Fairies get angry.]

NARRATOR: ...but they were terribly angry with him for causing the death of their beloved lum ox.

[The fairies argue about what to do with Ryker.]

FAIRY #1: We must turn him to stone!

FAIRY #2: We must set a plague upon his house!

[The fairy king stepped forward. He has a little crown on his head.]

NARRATOR: The fairy king ended the discussion.

FAIRY KING: He has destroyed our guardian! We will take his soul and set it spinning forever in the void!

BIRD: I will help you find him.

FAIRY KING: I shall go myself!

[Dissolve to bird setting off with the fairy king on its back.]

NARRATOR: The fairy king and the bright-plumaged bird set off in search of Ryker. It would be many a long day before they found him.

[The bird flies up into the sky. Then we see a high up view of the landscape. There's a silvery ribbon of road. We zoom in on the road and find there's a little person walking along it. We can see that it's Ryker, although we're still pretty far away from him. Dissolve into the following close-up.]

END LOOP JUMP

[Dissolve to Ryker walking back to the campsite. This could be a silhouette image of him walking along in the darkness. It should be nighttime, with stars in the sky.]

NARRATOR: Ryker made his way back to the campsite where Gurthark and Acia awaited him.

[Dissolve to morning.]

JUMP TO NEAR THE END OF SCENE 8, RIGHT AFTER THE DISSOLVE TO MORNING

AND RIGHT BEFORE NARRATION "It was not until the following morning that..."

SCENE 11 — CARAVAN ON RIVER; GURTHARK OVERBOARD

[We see the caravan traveling through the industrial wastelands and pleasant wooded countryside of Greater Borphee. Time passes. The caravan halts at the edge of the Borphee River. The river is bordered by woods.]

NARRATOR: Late that afternoon, the caravan reached the pebbled shore of the great Borphee River.

RYKER: The Great Bridge is half a day's journey downstream, close by Borphee. Then we can get back on the shore road.

ACIA: Isn't there a faster way to go?

RYKER: Well, we could ferry to Borphee, through the Borphee Canal, and down the coast to Accardi.

ACIA: Let's do that! We left Largoneth so long ago! My grandmummy might be dead by now!

GURTHARK: Aren't we safer traveling by land? We've had enough problems with this trip! I vote we go through Borphee!

ACIA: But my grandmummy...!

RYKER: You'll enjoy the cruise, Gurthark. I'll make arrangements with the ferryman right now.

[Ryker heads off. The view pulls back to include the ferryman. We see Ryker chatting with him. Dissolve to caravan on the boat. Ryker and Acia are lounging on the deck. Gurthark is fishing.]

RYKER: See, Gurthark, this isn't so bad.

ACIA: It's heavenly!

GURTHARK: Hey, I've got a bite!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Gurthark hoped that a tasty red thrub was on the end of the line!

IFJ TO G7, SCENE 18 — GURTHARK OVERBOARD

[We follow the line from Gurthark down into the water where a little fish has seized the bait.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Gurthark was in luck!

[The crystal ball glows evilly. We see Gurthark proudly begin to reel in the line. Then he is pulled right into the water!]

GURTHARK: Ahhhhh!!!!!

NARRATOR: With a sudden, strangled scream, Gurthark disappeared into the dark waters of the river!

ACIA: Ohhhhhh!!!!!

[Ryker dives into the water.]

NARRATOR: Ryker bravely attempted a rescue, but...

[Dissolve to Acia helping Ryker back onto the boat.]

RYKER: I couldn't find him anywhere!

[Acia tears her hair, wrings her hands, weeps copiously, etc. etc. There are first signs that Acia is becoming less sleazy.]

ACIA: Oh, no!!!! Oh, why did I insist on taking the ferry?

RYKER: It's not your fault, Acia! No one could have foreseen what happened.

[The boat continues to ply its way down the river.]

NARRATOR: Although their destination was close at hand, Ryker and Acia felt little gladness.

[Dissolve to shot of six original travelers cheerfully setting out, or sharing a pleasant moment around the campfire, or some other happy memory. This could be a simple line drawing. It seems nice to have in here as a sort of recap.]

NARRATOR: Of their original party of six...

[Dissolve to simple image of Dirin and Lia smiling from the doorway of Egreth.]

NARRATOR: ...two had been detained to a happy end...

[Dissolve to simple memorial pictures of Frobwit and Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: ...but two others had met a terrible fate.

[Dissolve back to Ryker and Acia.]

NARRATOR: Now only Ryker and Acia remained.

[Dissolve to night. Sexy scene of Ryker and Acia getting it on. Maybe they're in a secluded nook in the ferry boat. Or perhaps they're in a little cabin. Whatever you think makes sense graphically.]

NARRATOR: Their losses brought them closer during the final hours of their journey.

[Dissolve to show that it is morning. The ferry is in Borphee Harbor.]

NARRATOR: They reached Borphee Harbor the following morning...

[Pull back as ferry is sailing away from the shore on its way to Accardi.]

NARRATOR: ...and set off for Accardi-by-the-Sea along the sheltered rim of the Gurth Inlet.

JUMP TO SCENE 12 — ACIA AND RYKER IN ACCARDI

SCENE 18 — GURTHARK FALLS OVERBOARD

LABEL L1 FROM SCENE 17 — RYKER WITH LUM OX

[We see the lum ox plunging into the river. The view in scene 17 just before this shows it plummeting down the mesa.]

NARRATOR: ...and into the swiftly-running stream.

[Close in on lum ox, which is just a lump in the water with two golden horns.]

NARRATOR: The beast did not survive the fall.

[The lum ox is carried along in the current. Day turns to night. Then it is day again. We need to show the passage of time here to have it work with the rest of the story.]

TRAVELING NARRATIVE BLURB: Swept along by the current, the body of the ox traveled downstream.

[We see it tangled in weeds by the side of the stream.]

NARRATOR: At times, its golden horns became entangled in the weedy growth by the side of the stream...

[We see it pulling loose from the weeds.]

NARRATOR: ...but it always broke free to continue its journey toward the sea.

[We see an overview of the stream flowing into the Borphee River. The ox is a blob in the stream. If we wanted to get fancy, we could animate this to show the blob flowing along with the current from the stream into the river.]

NARRATOR: The stream joined the great Borphee River.

[We see the lum ox in the middle of the Borphee River.]

NARRATOR: Now the body of the lum ox moved more quickly toward the Borphee River Delta and the vast expanse of the Great Sea.

[We see a wide view. A little blob suddenly appears in front of the lum ox.]

NARRATOR: After years of guarding the fairy circle, the ox had met his nemesis. It might have felt some consolation in knowing that it could still offer protection...

[Close in on the blob, who turns out to be Gurthark!]

NARRATOR: ...to Gurthark, who was being pursued by a vicious sea monster!

JUMP TO LABEL G8, SCENE 18 — GURTHARK IN RIVER

LABEL G7 FROM SCENE 11 — GURTHARK OVERBOARD

[We see the evil rays from the crystal zapping down through the water to the fish. Before our eyes, the fish grows huge and tentacled. The next thing we see is Gurthark being pulled down under the water!]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Gurthark's predicament did not go unnoticed.

IFJ TO T9, SCENE 4 — TRIAX

[We see the image in the pool. Pull back to show Moog squatting by pool.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Hiding out in the ruins of Pheebor, Moog was horrified to see that the power of the evil magician in the crystal continued to ebb away.

[We see that Gurthark is entangled in the tentacled grip of the sea monster!]

NARRATOR: He was entangled in the tentacled grip of a sea monster!

[We see the monster dragging Gurthark along. Gurthark tries unsuccessfully to fight it off.]

NARRATOR: The monster dragged Gurthark far downstream. The poor merchant struggled in vain against the slimy beast.

[Gurthark starts to drown!]

NARRATOR: He could hold his breath no longer!

[The monster rears back in horror.]

NARRATOR: Suddenly...

[The monster lets go of Gurthark, who struggles to the surface.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark barely made it to the surface. He came up sputtering and gasping for breath...

[Gurthark sees the lum ox.]

NARRATOR: ...right in front of a enormous ox with beautiful golden horns! Now he knew what had terrified the sea monster!

LABEL G8 FROM SCENE 18 — LUM OX VIEW

[Gurthark starts to swim away.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark was sure he would make a tasty snack for the ox...

[He notices that the lum ox is not following him.]

NARRATOR: ...but, strangely, the beast paid no attention to him.

[He goes a little closer.]

GURTHARK: It's dead!

[Suddenly, we see the head of the sea monster rising above the surface.]

NARRATOR: Unfortunately, this also became apparent to the sea monster!

[The sea monster's mouth opens toward Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: There was only one thing to do...

[Gurthark climbs onto the lum ox's back. Taking out his pocket knife, he hacks off the horns. Then he uses them to beat off the sea monster. The monster disappears.]

NARRATOR: Now Gurthark was safe from the sea creature. But how would he get back to the caravan?

[We see Gurthark floating downstream on the lum ox. He is clutching the golden horns.]

NARRATOR: The river was wide and swift, and the ferry carrying Ryker and Acia nowhere in sight. If only Gurthark could reach the shore, his friends were sure to come by!

[Now we see Gurthark's view of the rushing river. Far ahead, we see Myla in her boat materializing out of the evening fog.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: A figure in a fantastic boat materialized out of the fog. Who could it be?

IFJ TO E1, SCENE 18 — MYLA

[Close in on Myla.]

NARRATOR: It was an elfin princess named Myla, who had been sent forth on a dangerous mission!

[The boat comes closer until we can clearly see Myla.]

NARRATOR: It was a beautiful elfin female!

[Now we see the close-up of Gurthark with the little heart popping out.]

NARRATOR: At Egreth Castle, Gurthark had experienced bravery and courage for the first time in his life. Now an equally unfamiliar emotion swept through him!

[Close-up of Myla, who looks equally taken with Gurthark. Runes appear to indicate that she is speaking in elf language. As she speaks, she is gesturing to her boat.]

[Close-up of Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark could not understand the language of the elves. But it appeared that the woman was offering him the safety of her boat.

GURTHARK: She'll take me to the shore, where I can wait for Acia and Ryker!

[Pull back to show both Gurthark and Myla, who is again speaking in runes. Now she is gesturing to the horns.]

NARRATOR: The elfin woman thoughtfully reminded Gurthark to bring his golden horns.

[We see Gurthark climb into Myla's boat, clutching his horns.]

NARRATOR: Gurthark gingerly climbed into the boat. It didn't look very stable, but it was certainly better than floating along on a dead monster!

[Closeup of Myla, who is once again speaking in runes and smiling cheerfully.]

NARRATOR: The woman welcomed Gurthark aboard. He thought he had never seen a sweeter smile on anyone!

[Closeup of Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: He could not bear the thought of leaving her. But he knew his obligation lay with the caravan.

GURTHARK: Hey, thanks for the lift, babe. Could you drop me off on the shore? [NOTE: Well, that's the gist of it, anyway.]

[Pull back to show boat sailing away into the fog.]

NARRATOR: Many months would pass before Gurthark saw his friends again. But where he went, and what he did there, is a story for another day.

[As the boat disappears, pan to shore of the river. Two figures are passing on horseback.]

JUMP TO F8, SCENE 10 — FROBWIT AND SLYE

LABEL E1 FROM SCENE 18 — MYLA

[Closeup of Myla, smiling sweetly.]

NARRATOR: She had been sent to find someone who might defeat the cyclops threatening the Kingdom of the Elves.

[Closeup of Gurthark.]

NARRATOR: And here was a handsome adventurer not lacking in courage! He had defeated the legendary lum ox...

[Close in on golden horns.]

NARRATOR: ...and the proof of that was as plain as could be! Not only was he riding the dead beast; he possessed the prized golden horns!

[Pull back to show Myla. She gestures to her boat.]

MYLA: O brave one, we have great need of a warrior such as yourself. Will you accompany me to my kingdom to help defeat a deadly foe?

[Gurthark smiles. We see runes which indicate he is speaking.]

NARRATOR: Myla could not understand the warrior's language. But he seemed willing to help.

[Myla gestures to the horns.]

MYLA: You must bring the horns of the lum ox as proof of your bravery! My father will be much pleased to see them.

[Gurthark climbs into the boat with the horns.]

MYLA: Perhaps you will decide to remain with us in the kingdom as husband to one of our maidens! Many of our men have been killed in battle.

[Gurthark once again speaks in runes.]

NARRATOR: Myla hoped that the brave one would decide to stay. She herself was of marriageable age, and there were few men worthy of a princess.

[Gurthark and Myla share a Tender Moment. Then we pull back to show the boat sailing into the mist.]

NARRATOR: But all that must wait. Great battles lay ahead, and much hardship, before the Kingdom of the Elves would once again be free from peril.

[As the boat disappears, pan to shore of the river. Two figures are passing on horseback.]

JUMP TO F8, SCENE 10 — FROBWIT AND SLYE

[Note: I had thought of having the jump from Myla's side to be Ryker and Acia getting it on in the ferry. But you can get to that by rewinding, whereas you can't get to Frobwit and Slye other than by going back to the beginning. Or we could have this one end altogether (with the capability of rewinding) thus forcing the viewer to go back to Gurthark's view of the scene, from which they could go to Frobwit and Slye or re-wind to Ryker and Acia. What do you think?]

SCENE 6 — SLYE GOES TO GET FROBWIT

LABEL S5 FROM SCENE 4

[We see Slye scurrying along. It is mid-day.]

NARRATOR: Slye hurried home to get his horse.

[Dissolve to Slye by a seedy hut climbing onto his ragtag horse.]

NARRATOR: Slye's faithful steed was waiting for him. However nasty he was to his fellow humans, Slye had always been somewhat kinder to old Dobo.

SLYE: Hey, boy, we're going for a ride!

[Dissolve to Slye riding along the coastal road.]

NARRATOR: This was the first time Slye had set out on an adventure without Moog. He felt a strange thrill of excitement.

SLYE: Dobo, we're gonna find that wizard and bring him back, all by ourselves!

[Dissolve to night.]

NARRATOR: Day turned to night.

[Slye and Dobo pause by the side of the road.]

NARRATOR: Moog had said the wizard was traveling by the coastal road, but there was still no sign of him.

[Slye pulls an apple out of his rucksack and gives it to Dobo, who munches happily.]

NARRATOR: There was nothing Dobo loved more than apples. And after eating a few, there was nothing he'd rather do than a nap.

SLYE: We've gotta keep going, Dobo. If we go to sleep, we might miss the old man!

[Close up of Dobo, who looks dismayed.]

NARRATOR: Dobo was getting tired. Other than his fondness for Slye, there was little incentive for him to go on!

[Close in on Slye, who looks frustrated.]

NARRATOR: Dobo was a good friend, but he was also stubborn and lazy. He was likely to stay put until morning unless Slye gave him a good reason to keep moving.

[Now Slye's eyes light up.]

SLYE: Ah ha!

NARRATOR: Once when Moog and Slye had been traveling on Dobo, Moog had used a certain spell to entice the horse onward. If only Slye could remember it...

[Slye holds another apple in front of Dobo, but not close enough so the horse can get it.]

SLYE: Guide the horse with dancing apple; let the apple ever dance.

[As Dobo moves toward the apple, it stays the same distance from him, leading the horse onward.]

NARRATOR: Slye wasn't such a bad magician after all!

[Slye jumps on Dobo and they set off. We could have a nice silhouette of them riding through the night with the Flathead Ocean in the background, stars twinkling, etc.. Then day could slowly break behind them.]

NARRATOR: Slye rode on through the night. He didn't even feel tired! When the sun rose over the Flathead Ocean, he was only a few bloits from Egreth.

LABEL S6 FROM SCENE 4

[Dissolve to Slye galloping along on Dobo, who is still chasing after the apple. It is noon.]

NARRATOR: It was time to give Dobo a rest.

SLYE: Let the apple cease dancing.

[The apple falls to the ground. Dobo screeches to a halt to eat it. Slye hops off the horse.]

NARRATOR: Slye was sure that the magician would be along any time now. Then his real work would begin!

[Slye sits by the side of the road.]

NARRATOR: Slye had just settled himself down for lunch when...

[Pull back to show Slye's view down the road. A little blip comes closer and closer.]

JUMP TO S10, SCENE 10 — SLYE WITH FROBWIT

SCENE 10 — FROBWIT AND SLYE

LABEL F7, FROM SCENE 9 — FROBWIT WITH GUMBOZ

[Now we see a Disneyesque view of Frobwit trudging along the inland road towards Accardi. We see the view go by behind him as he makes his way south.]

NARRATOR: Although he walked all morning, Frobwit met no other travelers on the lonely inland road...

[Frobwit comes to a junction on the road. A path leads east, with a sign pointing to "Delta Highway."

FROBWIT: On a better-traveled road, I will surely find transport and shelter.

[He sets off down the path, which is creepy and overgrown. We see his view of the tangled growth before him, thick with cobwebs and glittering with the large bright eyes of unknown animals. Suddenly, a giant spider swings down at us! The elfin sword glows blue and attacks of its own accord, hacking the beast open and spilling his vile blood upon the undergrowth.]

FROBWIT: Yaaaa!!!!

[Frobwit jumps aside just in time to miss the blood and the heavy corpse of the beast as it crashes to the path.]

NARRATIVE: Shivering, Frobwit hurried on his way.

[Return to Frobwit's view of the path, only now it's even creepier because we're expecting more monsters. But instead we see a pale glow ahead and the path opens onto a wide distant view of the Borphee River Delta, about 100 miles east. The Delta Highway lies just ahead, running from north to south.]

NARRATOR: At long last, Frobwit saw the Borphee River Delta spread out before him.

FROBWIT: I'm sticking to the highways from now on!

[We see Frobwit walking south along the Delta Highway. Pull back to show his view of the road ahead. There are two little blips, a man and a horse.]

NARRATOR: At last, another traveler!

[Drawing closer, we see that it is Slye and his horse!]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: It was the same young man who had appeared in Frobwit's vision! Who could he be?

IFJ TO S11, SCENE 10 — SLYE'S VIEWPOINT

[Close up of Slye.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Little did Frobwit know that Slye had traveled north to meet him! He was plotting to trick Frobwit into releasing the evil Radnor from the crystal ball!

LABEL F10 FROM SCENE 10 — SLYE'S VIEWPOINT

FROBWIT: Yo!

SLYE: Hail, traveler! Would you like some of my lunch?

[He smiles pleasantly.]

FROBWIT: Why, thank you very much.

[Frobwit and Slye sit down together to eat.]

FROBWIT: I am Frobwit the Fair, wizard of the northlands!

SLYE: I am Slye the Stupendous, magician of the southlands.

FROBWIT: A magician, are you!?!

SLYE: Well, I'd like to be. I haven't had much chance to learn anything.

FROBWIT: Hmmm...

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye traveling along on Slye's horse.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit and Slye got on famously. What luck for Frobwit that the young man was on his way to Accardi-by-the-Sea!

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye sitting around campfire.]

NARRATOR: That evening, around the campfire, Frobwit entertained Slye with tales of his magical escapades.

[Close up of Slye.]

SLYE: Tell me again how you avoided from the night gaunts!

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: Gladly! Since the gaunts were already enchanted, there was no hope of working further magic on them. So I cleverly...

[Dissolve to following day. Frobwit and Slye are once again traveling on horseback. We can see that they are enjoying each other's company.]

NARRATOR: The following morning, Frobwit and Slye continued on their way to Accardi. The hours slipped as the two exchanged tales.

[Close up on Slye.]

SLYE: Gosh, you know an awful lot of swell stuff! I wish I could be a great magician like you!

NARRATOR: Slye didn't seem very bright, but Frobwit sensed a hidden potential. The lad's abilities had been squashed, first by his beastly parents and then by an overbearing friend to whom he constantly referred.

SLYE: I wanted to go to magic school, but Moog said...

[Close up of Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit had not realized until then how much he missed Dirin. The lad had not only been an apprentice — he had made Frobwit feel like a master! Now Slye seemed eager to step into Dirin's shoes!

FROBWIT: I have just lost my apprentice. Perhaps you would consider taking his place!

[Close up of Slye, who looks genuinely excited.]

SLYE: Wow! And you'd teach me everything you know?

FROBWIT: Of course.

SLYE: I'll be a REAL magician then!

FROBWIT: So it's agreed! You will accompany me to the convention as my apprentice!

[Now we see them travelling along the shore of the Borphee River.]

NARRATOR: Late that afternoon...

[Pull back to see their view of the river. There's a little ferry way off in the distance.]

FROBWIT (ENTICEMENT BLURB): Wouldn't it be pleasant to go boating on such a nice day? I wonder who is on that ferry!

[View shifts to ferry, but it's still tiny and far away.]

IFJ TO SCENE 12, AFTER RYKER HAS MADE THE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CARAVAN AND JUST BEFORE THE DISSOLVE TO THE CARAVAN ON THE BOAT

[Zoom in on the ferry.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Frobwit would have been surprised to learn that Ryker, Acia, and Gurthark were on the boat!

[Dissolve to Slye and Frobwit once more on coastal road. Only now it is dark.]

NARRATOR: By nightfall, Slye and Frobwit had passed through Borphee and were once again on the coastal road. Accardi was only a half day's journey away. They would make camp for the night and be at the convention by the following afternoon.

[Once again we see the two sitting around the campfire. Frobwit is in high spirits. He is retelling the story of the events at Egreth.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped Radnor's vile essence forever in a crystal ball...

SLYE: You'd better not say that spell! You never know what might happen!

FROBWIT: Don't be absurd, Slye! There is no harm in repeating a good tale!

SCREEN: In fact, the very next day...

JUMP TO F9, SCENE 14 — FROBWIT AND SLYE AT CONVENTION

LABEL S10, FROM SCENE 6 — SLYE TRAVELING TO FROBWIT

[We see that the blip on the road is Frobwit.]

SLYE (ENTICEMENT BLURB): It's the old wizard!

IFJ TO F10, SCENE 10 — FROBWIT'S VIEWPOINT

[Close up of Frobwit.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Strangely enough, the wizard, Frobwit, had had a vision of himself and the young stranger at the convention in Accardi-by-the-Sea!

LABEL S11, SCENE 10 — FROBWIT'S VIEWPOINT

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: Yo!

SLYE (thinks): This guy looks like a pushover!

[Close up of Slye.]

SLYE: Hail, traveler! Would you like some of my lunch?

FROBWIT: Why, thank you very much.

[Frobwit and Slye sit down together to eat.]

FROBWIT: I am Frobwit the Fair, wizard of the northlands!

NARRATOR: Slye thought he had never heard anything so pretentious. He couldn't resist making a snappy reply.

SLYE: I am Slye the Stupendous, magician of the southlands.

NARRATOR: Unfortunately, the wizard caught him out, and Slye had to admit that he didn't really have much magical experience at all.

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye traveling along on Slye's horse.]

NARRATOR: But it didn't seem to matter. The old chap seemed to like him a lot. He even accepted Slye's offer of a ride to Accardi-by-the-Sea!

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye sitting around campfire.]

NARRATOR: They had a great time around the campfire that night. Frobwit had some awesome stories to tell. Moog was never this much fun!

[Close up of Slye.]

SLYE: Tell me more about the hobgoblin harem!

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: Well, they were planning a virgin sacrifice, and only needed some spider's legs for the cauldron...

[Dissolve to following day. Frobwit and Slye are once again traveling on horseback. We can see that they are enjoying each other's company.]

NARRATOR: The next morning, they were back on the road to Accardi. Slye found himself confiding in the old wizard, and Frobwit responded with stories of his own youth.

LABEL S7 FROM SCENE 4 — MOOG

[Close in on Slye.]

NARRATOR: Slye couldn't help but be impressed with all the wizard had seen and done. He'd managed to survive despite some tough times! If only Slye had had someone like Frobwit around when he was a child.

[Close up on Slye. Dissolve into his thoughts. We see his terrible, beastly parents fighting with each other.]

NARRATOR: Slye's parents had been too busy fighting each other to pay much attention to him. He had learned it was best to keep quiet and not expect much.

[Now we see Slye with Moog bossing him around.]

NARRATOR: Moog hadn't been much better. Slye had always considered her his best friend, but now he realized that he'd been little more than her slave.

[Now we see Slye riding by himself on Dobo.]

NARRATOR: Dobo was the only person who really cared about him. Everyone else made him feel stupid.

[Pull back from Slye's thoughts to show him with Frobwit.]

SLYE: I wanted to go to magic school, but Moog said...

NARRATOR: The old wizard cut him off.

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: I have just lost my apprentice. Perhaps you would consider taking his place!

[Close up of Slye, who looks genuinely excited.]

NARRATOR: Apprentice! To Frobwit the Fair! This was far better than anything Moog could offer!

SLYE: I'll be a REAL magician then!

FROBWIT: So it is agreed! You will accompany me to the convention as my apprentice!

[Now we see them travelling along the shore of the Borphee River.]

NARRATOR: Late that afternoon...

[Pull back to see their view of the river. There's a little ferry way off in the distance.]

FROBWIT (ENTICEMENT BLURB): Wouldn't it be pleasant to go boating on such a nice day? I wonder who is on that ferry!

[View shifts to ferry, but it's still tiny and far away.]

IFJ TO SCENE 12, AFTER RYKER HAS MADE THE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE FERRYMAN AND JUST BEFORE THE DISSOLVE TO THE CARAVAN ON THE BOAT

[Zoom in on the ferry.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: It was Ryker, Acia, and Gurthark, Frobwit's original companions!

[Pull back to show Slye.]

NARRATOR: Slye had bigger things on his mind than pleasant views. He was the apprentice to a great magician!

[The ghostly spectre of Moog appears beside him.]

NARRATOR: And what about Moog? She'd kill him! Maybe he just wouldn't tell her at all! He'd go back to the Northlands with Frobwit and never see her again!

[The spectre turns to glare at Slye.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Slye had the eerie feeling that Moog was watching him in her magic reflecting pool at that very moment.

IFJ TO SCENE 4, NEAR THE BOTTOM OF PG. 14, JUST BEFORE WE GO INSIDE MOOG'S HEAD TO HER FANTASY

[Close in on spectre, which changes to image of close up of Moog.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Actually, Slye was far from Moog's thoughts. She was imagining how wonderful her life would be when she formed the evil Triax!

[Dissolve to Slye and Frobwit once more on coastal road. Only now it is dark.]

NARRATOR: By nightfall, Slye and Frobwit had passed through Borphee. They were going to stop for the night, and finish their journey the next day. Slye was glad that Moog was hiding out in Pheebor, so he wouldn't risk running into her on the streets of Accardi.

[Once again we see the two sitting around the campfire. Frobwit is in high spirits. He is retelling the story of the events at Egreth.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped Radnor's vile essence forever in a crystal ball...

SLYE: You'd better not say that spell! You never know what might happen!

NARRATOR: Slye was horrified! He'd planned to trick Frobwit into reversing the spell, thus freeing the magician from the crystal ball. But now this was the last thing Slye wanted. If that happened, Moog would use the magician and himself to form the evil Triax!

[Now we see Slye and Frobwit lying in their sleeping bags. Zoom in on Slye. His eyes are shut, then they pop open.]

NARRATOR: Slye couldn't sleep a wink! He had come to trap Frobwit. Now he must do everything possible to keep them both safe from Moog's evil plans!

[We continue to see the scene of Slye and Frobwit in their sleeping bags as the sky lightens behind them.]

NARRATOR: Above all, Slye must keep Frobwit from telling the story of Egreth Castle!

SCREEN: But the very next afternoon...

JUMP TO S4, SCENE 14 — FROBWIT AND SLYE AT CONVENTION

[SCENE 14 — FROBWIT, SLYE, AND ALTHEA AT THE CONVENTION — FINAL VERSION]

LABEL F9 FROM SCENE 10 — FROBWIT

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye at the convention, surrounded by other conventioneers. Just so it's clear where they

are, a big banner on the wall reads "Annual Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, Accardi-by-the-Sea."]

NARRATOR: Frobwit and Slye were mingling with the other enchanters at CES.

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped Radnor's vile essence forever in a crystal ball!

CONVENTIONEER: Always a useful spell!

[A woman — it's Althea, but Frobwit doesn't recognize her — comes up and stands beside him.]

NARRATOR: A beautiful young woman stood beside Frobwit. She looked much like Althea, whom he had loved from afar in his youth. The old wizard felt a sudden pang in his heart. Radnor had won Althea's affection, along with the coveted apprenticeship with Thorman.

ALTHEA: Do you remember me, Frobwit? It's Althea!

NARRATOR: It was she! But... how could it be? She looked as young and lithe as she had in their student days!

ALTHEA: I grew old as you have, Frobwit... It is only today that this remarkable transformation occurred. It has also affected my granddaughter, who has aged far beyond her years! I have come here seeking to help her.

NARRATOR: Radnor was defeated. At last Frobwit had the chance to prove himself worthy of Althea's admiration. It was too late now for anything else...

FROBWIT: I...I gladly offer my assistance!

[Behind Frobwit we see the leader of the convention take the podium. We zoom towards him and focus in on him.]

LEADER: A difficult task lies ahead. The Great Danger we've heard of is now powerless to harm us. But should it join with another great evil, the depth of its dark destruction would be measureless...

[Dissolve to Frobwit with conventioneers.]

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: We must search all Quendor to find and halt this malevolent presence!

NARRATOR: Frobwit would prove to Althea just how competent he was!

FROBWIT: Let me get my hands on it! Why, I defeated the Evil Magician of Egreth! I reduced him to a puddle of goop, said "Fooblart Mugwart Buzmuz," and trapped him forever in a crystal ball!

CONVENTIONEER: Isn't that the essence-releasing spell rather than the essence-entrapping spell?

IFJ TO SCENE 15 — CRYSTAL BALL JUST BEFORE RADNOR'S ESSENCE IS RELEASED

ALTHEA: Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: Quick thinking! She returned the essence to the ball!

[Suddenly, the Convention Hall darkens. Wind. Thunder. Everyone looks about with bewilderment and fear. Frobwit doesn't notice it, but Slye dissolves out of the picture.]

CONVENTIONEER: The Great Danger!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: May Beyblort help us!

NARRATOR: Without warning, a black pall settled over the room. A thin wind whistled in through unseen cracks in the old walls, as an ominous thunderclap proclaimed the onset of a new reign of darkness.

END

LABEL S4 FROM SCENE 10 — SLYE

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye at the convention, surrounded by other conventioneers. Just so it's clear where they are, a big banner on the wall reads "Annual Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, Accardi-by-the-Sea."]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped Radnor's vile essence forever in a crystal ball!

NARRATOR: Slye could hardly believe it. There he was, mingling with the other enchanters at CES! Now if only Frobwit would stop repeating that spell...!

[Close in on Slye.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Moog would demolish him if she found out he'd become Frobwit's apprentice. Slye had the terrible feeling that somehow she already knew!

IFJ TO T12, SCENE 4 — MOOG IN THE RUINS

[We see Moog squatting by the oracle. She looks furious.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: In fact, Moog had just checked on Slye in her magic reflecting pool. She had caught him socializing with Frobwit!

[Pull back to show Slye with Frobwit. A woman — it's Althea, but Frobwit doesn't recognize her — comes up and stands beside them.]

NARRATOR: Oh, well, it was unlikely that anything bad would happen. And there was plenty to enjoy. Like that beautiful young woman!

[Pull back to show Frobwit and Althea.]

ALTHEA: Do you remember me, Frobwit? It's Althea!

NARRATOR: Frobwit knew the babe! Perhaps he'd introduce them!

LABEL S9 FROM SCENE 4 — MOOG AT RUINS

[Behind Frobwit and Slye we see the leader of the convention take the podium. We zoom towards him and focus in on him.]

LEADER: A difficult task lies ahead. The Great Danger we've heard of is now powerless to harm us. But should it join with another great evil, the depth of its dark destruction would be measureless...

[Dissolve to Frobwit and Slye with conventioneers.]

SLYE (thinks): He must be talking about the Triax! Should I tell them about Moog?

NARRATOR: But before Slye could do anything...

FROBWIT: Just let me get my hands on it! Why, I defeated the Evil Magician of Egreth! I reduced him to a puddle of goop, said "Fooblart Mugwart Buzmuz," and trapped him forever in a crystal ball!

CONVENTIONEER: Isn't that the essence-releasing spell rather than the essence-entrapping spell?

IFJ TO SCENE 15 — CRYSTAL BALL JUST BEFORE RADNOR'S ESSENCE IS RELEASED

ALTHEA: Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: Quick thinking! She returned the essence to the ball!

[Suddenly, the Convention Hall darkens. Wind. Thunder. Everyone looks about with bewilderment and fear. In the commotion, Slye slowly dissolves out of the picture.]

JUMP TO T13, SCENE 16 — GRAND FINALE

LABEL M6 FROM SCENE 13

[Dissolve to Althea walking into the convention hall. Just so it's clear where she is, a big banner on the wall reads "Annual Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers, Accardi-by-the-Sea."]

NARRATOR: It had been a long time since Althea attended the Convention of Enchanters and Sorcerers. Her youthful joy in her magical skills flooded back. Never again would she lose touch with her Zizbit ancestry!

[Close up of Althea.]

NARRATOR: Althea looked around the convention hall. So many new young faces!

[Pan across conventioneers to Frobwit and Slye. She's not too far from them.]

NARRATOR: Suddenly she saw someone she knew! It was Frobwit, one of her fellow students at magic school. He was recognizable even with his long white beard. Frobwit had been in love with her long ago. But she had chosen Radnor...

[Althea moves closer to Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: Althea moved closer to Frobwit. Yes, even his voice was the same! He seemed to have grown in confidence over the years.

[Close up of Frobwit.]

FROBWIT: ...and then I said "Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart" and entrapped his vile essence forever in a crystal ball!

[Close up of Althea.]

NARRATOR: Frobwit seemed to have had some experience with crystal balls. Perhaps he could help Acia out of her plight!

[Pull back to show Frobwit and Althea.]

ALTHEA: Do you remember me, Frobwit? It's Althea!

FROBWIT: Althea! Why...you don't look a day over twenty! You always were a good enchantress, but I hadn't heard that you found the elixir of youth!

ALTHEA: I grew old as you have, Frobwit... It is only today that this remarkable transformation occurred. It has also affected my granddaughter, who has aged far beyond her years! I have come here seeking to help her.

FROBWIT: I...I gladly offer my assistance...

[Behind Frobwit we see the leader of the convention take the podium. We zoom towards him and focus in on him.]

LEADER: A difficult task lies ahead. The Great Danger we've heard of is now powerless to harm us. But should it join with another great evil, the depth of its dark destruction would be measureless...

[Dissolve to Frobwit with conventioneers.]

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: We must search all Quendor to find and halt this malevolent presence!

NARRATOR: Frobwit seemed to have forgotten all about Althea and her problems.

FROBWIT: Just let me get my hands on it! Why, I defeated the Evil Magician of Egreth! I reduced him to a puddle of goop, said "Fooblart Mugwart Buzmuz," and trapped him forever in a crystal ball!

CONVENTIONEER: Isn't that the essence-releasing spell rather than the essence-entrapping spell?

IFJ TO SCENE 15 — CRYSTAL BALL JUST BEFORE RADNOR'S ESSENCE IS RELEASED

ALTHEA (thinks): I remember now... repeating the correct spell returns the essence to the crystal!

ALTHEA: Buzmuz Mugwart Fooblart!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: Quick thinking!

[Suddenly, the Convention Hall darkens. Wind. Thunder. Everyone looks about with bewilderment and fear. Slye dissolves out of the picture.]

CONVENTIONEER: The Great Danger!

OTHER CONVENTIONEER: May Beyblort help us!

NARRATOR: Without warning, a black pall settled over the room. A thin wind whistled in through unseen cracks in the old walls, as an ominous thunderclap proclaimed the onset of a new reign of darkness.

END

SCENE 13 — ACIA AND GRANDMUMMY AT HOME

LABEL A7 FROM SCENE 12

[We see Acia's viewpoint of the inside of Granny's house: the front hall, the stairs, Granny's bedroom. And here's Granny!]

ACIA: Grandmummy!

NARRATOR: Grandmummy looked terrible!

[Close in on Grandmummy.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Was she really as ill as she looked?

IFJ TO M4, SCENE 13 — GRANDMUMMY'S VIEWPOINT

[Close up of Grandmummy.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Acia's grandmother, Althea, was indeed in an awful state.

[Pull back to Acia, who lays the crystal ball down on the bedside table. Grandmummy looks around.]

GRAN: Who's there?

ACIA: It's Acia!

GRAN: Are you my new nurse? I haven't had one since an intruder ransacked my house three days ago. Oh, it was terrible!

ACIA: Grandmummy, it's me!

GRAN: Thank you, I would love some tea! But I feel so weak and tired now. Please have it ready when I wake up!

ACIA: But Grandmummy...!

GRAN: Yes, I am sure we will become quite chummy. But now, thank you for coming!

[Gran passes out. Acia bursts into tears.]

ACIA: She didn't even recognize me!

[Dissolve to Acia, back in Gran's room after the nap. She has a cup of tea for Grandmummy. Sweet kid, huh?]

NARRATOR: After an hour spent looking through Grandmummy's financial records, Acia returned to the sick-room.

ACIA: Grandmummy?

GRAN: Who is it?

ACIA: It's me, Acia. I have your tea.

GRAN: Acia! My little granddaughter!

[Gran feebly reaches for Acia, who takes her hand.]

ACIA (thinks): I couldn't find a will anywhere! All Grandmummy's money will go to the kingdom!

ACIA: Have you made a will, Grandmummy?

GRAN: Bill? I don't know any Bill.

ACIA: No, Grandmummy! Your money! How about your money?

GRAN: How's Grandmummy? Sweet of you to ask, but I'm not at all well.

ACIA: DO YOU HAVE A WILL, GRANDMUMMY!!!

GRAN: What?

[Acia turns away, looking disappointed.]

NARRATOR: It looked as though Acia would have to disappoint her family... ...and herself.

ACIA: Oh, shove it...

GRAN: Love you, too, darling.

[Acia turns back to Grandmummy. It's another Tender Moment as Grandmummy reaches for Acia's hands. Suddenly the crystal ball glows red. The glow spreads to Acia. She turns old.]

GRAN: Acia, my dear! What has happened to you?

[Acia rushes to look in the mirror. Shock, horror.]

NARRATOR: The mirror revealed a terrifying sight.

[Close up of Acia.]

NARRATOR: Acia's tormented wail filled the house. Her fabled beauty was now no more than a legend!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: For very different reasons, someone else was very upset about Acia's transformation.

IFJ TO LABEL T11, SCENE 4 — MOOG IN RUINS

[We see Moog squatting by the reflecting pool.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: If the crystal ball released any more of its evil, Moog would not be able to use the magician inside it to form the powerful Triax!

[Acia turns to Grandmummy.]

NARRATOR: And that was not the end of it! Grandmummy had regained all the loveliness and vigor of her youth!

[Grandmummy jumps out of bed.]

GRAN: There is sorcery behind this, Acia! And I think I know how to dispel it!

ACIA: Oh, Grandmummy, I feel so weak and tired!

GRAN: Lie down in bed, dear.

[Acia lies down. From this vantage point, we see Grandmummy on the other side of the room.

NARRATOR: Grandmummy busied herself in a corner of the room. But then...

GRAN: It's gone!!!

ACIA: What is it, Grandmummy?

GRAN: Hidden in this spot was a copy of the sacred Zizbit spellbook, which I inherited from our ancestor, Hiram Fooble. It was our only hope!

ACIA: The Enchanters and Sorcerers Convention is in town, Grandmummy. Maybe you can find help there!

GRAN: Hmm.... The intruder must have stolen the spellbook. That bodes ill for Quendor. I must give warning!

[Close in on Grandmummy, who is on her way out the door.]

GRAN: I'll be back as soon as I can, Acia. Don't worry — I'll find a way to help you!

IFJ TO LABEL M6 — GRANDMUMMY AT THE CONVENTION

[We see a picture of Grandmummy hurrying through the streets of Accardi.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Althea hurried to the convention. Her joy at her newfound youth and mobility was tempered by the gravity of her mission.

[We see Acia lying in bed.]

NARRATOR: Acia was horrified at her plight. How could this have happened?

LABEL A8 FROM SCENE 13 — GRANDMUMMY'S VIEWPOINT

[She looks at crystal.]

NARRATOR: Her gaze fell on the crystal ball by the bedside. There was something weird about it. It had turned that strange red color when she had handed it to Ryker by the caravan. Perhaps it was sending out some sort of evil rays!

[Acia looks horrified.]

NARRATOR: It was on the boat when Gurthark fell off and in the wagon when Frobwit was carried away! It had been there when she got sick and when she turned old!

[Acia struggles out of bed.]

NARRATOR: Acia struggled out of bed. She would not be in the same room with the vile thing!

[Dissolve to Acia creeping down the stairs.]

NARRATOR: She slowly made her way downstairs, feeling as though her legs would give out at each step. How could she ever have been impatient with poor Grandmummy?

[Cut to door.]

NARRATOR: There was a knock at the door!

ACIA: Coming!

[Acia opens door. Pull back to see her view of... a monster!]

ACIA: EEEEEEEEEEE!

[Slams door.]

NARRATOR: Things weren't getting any better! Then again, there was something strangely familiar about the creature.

[Acia opens door a crack, peeks outside, then opens it all the way.]

LABEL R7 FROM SCENE 12

[We see a view of both Ryker and Acia.]

ACIA: Ryker?

RYKER: Acia?

[There is a touching scene as they hug each other.]

ACIA: The crystal ball did this to us! I know it! Remember the red glow? It was sending out some kind of evil!

[The monster is mad as heck.]

RYKER: Grrrrrrrrr!!!!!!!

ACIA: I'm sure that's what made me so sick, too! But you cured me!

[Ryker reaches in pocket, pulls out mushrooms.]

RYKER: Yes, with this gumpwort fungi. I still have some!

[He breaks off piece and gives it to Acia. She eats it, becomes young again. He eats it, becomes his wonderful self.]

ACIA: Oh, Ryker!

[Ryker is already pushing past her into the house.]

RYKER: Now where is this crystal ball?

[Dissolve to Grandmummy's room. Acia and Ryker are there.]

ACIA: Grandmummy isn't here, Ryker. Wouldn't you like to...?

RYKER: I'm going to smash this ball before I do anything else!

[We see a still shot of him bounding down the stairs holding the ball.]

NARRATOR: The crystal ball would meet its end on Grandmummy's flagstone path.

JUMP TO SCENE 15 — RYKER/RADNOR SWITCH

LABEL M4 FROM SCENE 12

[Dissolve to image of youthful Althea.]

NARRATOR: Althea had once been a carefree beauty with many handsome lovers and a gift for magic inherited from a Zizbit ancestor.

[We see Althea with young Radnor and Frobwit.]

NARRATOR: She had graduated from the Borphee Magic School, where she had flirted with all the boys.

[Close in on Radnor.]

NARRATOR: Her favorite had been a bold young magician named Radnor.

[Dissolve to slightly older Althea, perhaps with her husband.]

NARRATOR: But life had swept her along on its strange and twisting path. She married a respectable merchant and settled down to raise a family.

[Dissolve to even older Althea, by herself.]

NARRATOR: Now a widow, she had not practiced magic in many years. Her strength and beauty had deteriorated along with her spirit.

[Show the shadowy figure of Moog sneaking into Althea's room. We can't even tell that Moog is a woman. She just looks threatening.]

NARRATOR: Three days ago, Althea had woken at night to find an intruder in her room. The shock had been quite a blow to her already perilous health. To make things worse, she had not seen her nurse since then!

[Dissolve back to Althea in bed with Acia standing beside her. The crystal ball is on the beside table. Grandmummy looks around.]

NARRATOR: Now she could dimly see a female figure standing by her bed. Perhaps it was a new nurse!

GRAN: Who's there?

NARRATOR: A pleasant young voice provided a name which Althea did not quite understand. But she sounded helpful and friendly.

ACIA: Ma'am, have some tea!

GRAN: Thank you, I would love some tea! But I feel so weak and tired now. Please have it ready when I wake up!

ACIA: We'll be chummy!

GRAN: Yes, I am sure we will become quite chummy. But now, thank you for coming!

[Gran passes out. Dissolve to her coming to. Acia is again by her beside. We can see that the crystal ball is still on the bedside table.]

ACIA: Grandmummy?

NARRATOR: Althea could see more clearly now. A beautiful young woman was standing at her bedside!

GRAN: Who is it?

ACIA: It's me, Acia, your granddaughter!

GRAN: My little Acia!

[Gran feebly reaches for Acia, who takes her hand.]

ACIA: Have you seen Bill, Grandmummy?

GRAN: Bill? I don't know any Bill.

ACIA: No, you, Grandmummy! How's Grandmummy?

GRAN: How's Grandmummy? Sweet of you to ask, but I'm not at all well.

ACIA: DO YOU HAVE BILL, GRANDMUMMY!!!

GRAN: What?

NARRATOR: This conversation wasn't making any sense!

[Acia turns away.]

NARRATOR: Apparently, it wasn't making much sense to Acia. But then Althea felt a sentimental pang when she heard her granddaughter say...

ACIA: I love you!

GRAN: Love you, too, darling.

[Acia turns back to Grandmummy. It's another Tender Moment as Grandmummy reaches for Acia's hands. Suddenly the crystal ball glows red. The glow spreads to Acia. She turns old.]

GRAN: Acia, my dear! What has happened to you?

[Acia rushes away to look in mirror. We see this from Grandmummy's viewpoint or from a broad view so the focus is still on Grandmummy.]

NARRATOR: Acia's anguished wail filled the house. She had become as stooped and wrinkled as a woman many times her age. And...

LABEL M5 FROM SCENE 4 — MOOG IN RUINS

[Then suddenly Grandmummy turns young.]

NARRATOR: Althea had regained all the loveliness and vigor of her youth! She had seen such things before, long ago, when she spent her days studying magic spells and prophecies.

[Grandmummy jumps out of bed.]

GRAN: There is sorcery behind this, Acia! And I think I know how to dispel it!

[Grandmummy goes to her hiding place.]

NARRATOR: A sacred Zizbit spellbook had passed down to Althea from an ancestor long dead. For many years, she had kept it hidden.

[She lifts a stone, revealing a secret cavity in the fireplace.]

NARRATOR: Althea had no wish to lose the gift of youth that had mysteriously been given her. But the Zizbit spells might save her granddaughter! However...

GRAN: It's gone!!!

[Close in on empty cavity.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: What had happened to Grandmummy's most precious possession?

IFJ TO LABEL T11, SCENE 4 — MOOG IN RUINS

[We see the spell book in Moog's hands. Pull back to show Moog.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: The spellbook Moog had stolen showed her how to form the evil Triax. But it would all be for nothing if she couldn't get the magician she needed out of the crystal ball!

[Acia can be seen in the background in bed.]

ACIA: What is it, Grandmummy?

GRAN: Hidden in this spot was a copy of the sacred Zizbit spellbook, which I inherited from our ancestor, Hiram Fooble. It was our only hope!

ACIA: The Enchanters and Sorcerers Convention is in town, Grandmummy. Maybe you can find help there!

NARRATOR: Althea realized that her intruder must have stolen the spellbook. Acia's troubles paled in comparison to the calamity that might befall all Quendor! The Enchanters must be warned!

[Close in on Grandmummy, who is on her way out the door.]

GRAN: I'll be back as soon as I can, Acia!

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Was there any hope for Acia?

IFJ TO LABEL A8, SCENE 13

[We see Acia lying in bed.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: Acia felt that unless she could figure out how this had happened, she would never be her lovely self again!

[We see a picture of Grandmummy hurrying through the streets of Accardi.]

NARRATOR: Althea hurried through the streets of Accardi. It was wonderful to be walking briskly along the familiar cobblestones. But her pleasure was diminished by the urgency of her mission.

JUMP TO LABEL M6 — GRANDMUMMY AT CONVENTION

SCENE 15 — RYKER/RADNOR SWITCH

[Now he's outside, holding the ball over his head.]

NARRATOR: But just as Ryker was about to smash the ball...

LABEL FROM END OF SCENE 14, FROBWIT'S VIEW, AFTER HE SCREWS UP SPELL

[The ball glows with a more terrible and bright light than ever before! We see the glow come out of the ball and hover in the air! Then we see Ryker's blue life-force flow out of his body and into the crystal ball. Then the red light zaps into Ryker! Close up of Ryker with the evil red Radnor glow in his eyes.]

ENTICEMENT BLURB: Something terrible had happened to Ryker!

IFJ TO T13, SCENE 15 — FINALE

[Close in on Ryker/Radnor eyes.]

INSIDE JUMP BLURB: The evil essence of Radnor had been released from the crystal ball and Ryker's essence had gone inside it! Now Radnor was inhabiting Ryker's body, and the malevolent Moog could use him to form the evil Triax!

[Pull back to include Acia standing in the doorway. She looks horrified. The evil Ryker/Radnor turns to glare at her, then suddenly dissolves into nothingness. All that is left is the crystal ball lying on the ground.]

[We see Acia run to the crystal ball. Close up of ball. It has a blue glow. Acia kneels down, picks it up.]

NARRATOR: Acia sank to her knees, cradling the crystal ball. It had changed from an object of horror to one of deep value. Her beloved Ryker was inside it!

[Pull back to show wide view of Acia cradling the ball.]

** THE END **

Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2: Gas Pump Girls Meet the Pulsating Inconvenience From Planet X

by Steve Meretzky

The "Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2" that was released by Activision in 1992 under the Infocom label is quite different than what Jeff O'Neill and Bob Bates started work on in 1987:

Date: 8 Sep 1987 1718-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Gas Pump Notes To: IMPS at FRED

If you're interested, an updated synopsis is PS:<JEFF>GAS.TXT.

Date: 11 Sep 1987 1054-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Date Talk To: DA

Do you still have the book, Date Talk. I think I could use it for Gas Pump.

Date: 21 Sep 1987 2130-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Marketing Hooks To: IMPS at FRED

Another in the ever-ending search for Gas Pump Marketing Hooks.

[Starburst sticker on front of package:]
Includes: Back-seat of a '57 Chevy Simulator.

[Back package copy (flavor of):]
There've been software simulations for everything from rockets to subs. Now, finally, the LAST word in vehicle simulations! We've all been there, in one make-and-model or another. The hushed voices, the awkward advances. The emotional pain, and the physical gain. And this one's real! The sweat will be dripping from your temples before this one's over — as in no other vehicle simulation you've ever experienced!

[In the game, one of the longish romance scenes will be in the back-seat of '57 Chevy.]

Please be prepared to discuss appropriateness of this gimmick during today's lunch meeting.

Date: 21 Sep 1987 1700-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Gas Pump Girls To: Jeff cc: jon

Since our September 11 meeting, Mike and Gayle and Joel have asked me whether you found the meeting at all useful, what (if anything) you got out of it, what you're thinking about the issues raised at the meeting, and how you're proceeding in the game.
I'm sure we'd all find it useful and instructive if you summarized your thoughts for us.

Date: 25 Sep 1987 0949-EDT From: ecalaP noJ <JON at FRED>
Subject: Gas Pump Girls To: Jeff cc: Jon, CLR

At a meeting yesterday morning (with Joel, Mike, Gayle, and Gabby), Gas Pump Girls was briefly discussed. Joel summarized his feelings by saying that the more he hears about Gas Pump, the less enthusiastic he is about it. Others agreed. I'm sure you'll agree this is disconcerting.

Everyone agreed that the most interesting and compelling concept of Gap Pump is the '50s shtick — more so than sex, more so than the LGOP tie-in. (LGOP didn't play up the '30s theme at all, really. The story supposedly took place in the '80s with a '30s perspective; in fact, the story was an '80s perspective of what a '30s perspective of the '80s was. Well, the point is that the '30s wasn't an interesting "hook.")

Everyone at the meeting felt that before you start coding (or if you've started, before you continue), you ought to seriously think about other games to write or other concepts. There was unanimous agreement that Nord and Bert is much more creative and impressive than Gas Pump. (Gabby joked "If we wait long enough, we'll know whether Nord and Bert Too makes sense.")

I pointed out that Gas Pump, like ANY sequel, won't seem as original as THE original. I also made the analogy that Gas Pump is to LGOP what Restaurant is to Hitchhiker's, and nobody felt uncertain about Restaurant. Mike replied that Zork II sold 40% as well as Zork I. If Restaurant sells 40% of Hitchhiker's, it'll sell more than 100,000 copies. If Gas Pump sells 40% of LGOP, it'll sell fewer than 50,000 copies.

Anyway, I suggest you spend the next 2 or 3 weeks thinking about new games, new concepts, etc. Then let's see where you are and everybody else is.

I can certainly understand that you might feel frustrated or angry about this. So let's talk at some mutually convenient time. Maybe this afternoon?

Date: 25 Sep 1987 1545-EDT From: ecalaP noJ <JON at FRED>
Subject: Gas Pump To: CLR cc: Jeff, Jon

Having talked with Jeff and getting my thoughts a little more in order, I want to meet again with Mike and Joel et al. to discuss Gas Pump.

I think the game can and should be viewed as (primarily) a parody of the '50s. This is THE Infocom game that will do-wop the fins off your Edsel. Additional hooks include sex and sci-fi parody. (As such, one COULD look at Gas Pump as the sequel to LGOP. But that's not the major point.)

Mike and Joel return Thursday, so maybe we can meet then or Friday.

Bob Bates starts work on LGOP2:

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1726-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Leather sequel To: swg cc: JoeY, md, challenge

Stu:

As I mentioned last week, JoeY has asked me to drop the "Oz" portion of my next game - while keeping the "Hollywood, 80's, sex, spoof" aspects - and to turn it into a sequel to LGOP.

Whether it is to be called "Leather Goddesses of Hollywood," "Gas Pump Girls Meet the Pulsating Inconvenience From Planet X," "Hollywood Hot Tubs," or something Completely Different is still up for grabs.

As technical advisor emeritus (species californius), amicus humani generis, and former purveyor of r-rated goods to under-aged innocents, can you take a look at the following Southern California (Hollywood-ish) locales and suggest others that might be fun to fool around with.

Valley (as in valley-girl)	Muscle Beach	Disneyland	Club Med
Rodeo Drive	Hollywood and Vine	Labrea Tar Pits	Hollywood Hills
Beverly Hills	Hollywood Wax Museum	Hollowood walk of fame	LAX

Playboy Mansion (Possibly re-named & otherwise suitably disguised) Freeways (On & Off ramps)
Universal Studios (Possibly re-named & otherwise suitably disguised)

*****

Incidentally, some interiors I'm thinking about are:

Mall (Upper & lower levels)	Massage parlour	Tanning salon	Punk club
Hairdresser's	Singles bar	Health-food store	Junk-food restaurant
Hot tub	Sym/health club (pool, sauna, locker rooms)		Tattoo parlour
Game Show studio	Strip Joint	Movie Studio	Ingenue's trailer
Frederick's of Hollywood	Cinemaplex Theatres (Maze opportunity)		Sushi Bar
Palm Reader's Place	Astrologer's Place	Fake Swami's Place	Leather shop
Old Actor's Home			

*****

I will be out of the office all day tomorrow (8/19), so I'll check back with you next week.
Thanks. Bob

Date: 14 Sep 1988 1234-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Leather2 To: swg cc: challenge

Stu: Please take a look at the following message. I am very concerned about Chris's comments about Leather2.
Bob

Date: 14 Sep 1988 1140-EDT From: Christopher Erhardt <ERHARDT at FRED>
Subject: Re: Your msg of this morning To: CHALLENGE

the ZIP20 error msg. happened in toe jail cell. Stu tells me it is an object recognition bug that has been fixed.

Yes, I do think the map is a good idea. We have testers to play the game through, you and I have to be worried about 'look and feel'.

Also, on that same note...I was refreshing myself with Sherlock and I was particularly impressed with the way you established a 'mood' for the period with your prose. We really need to impart that same approach to Arthur: the text as it stands now is good by itself, but I feel still needs to be fleshed out even more. I'm not concerned about your ability to handle it, however, because Sherlock was exactly the right mix of atmosphere and descriptive text.

I've been looking over the pictures and talking with Dave Lebling and all. They are looking forward to spending time with you around Oct 17-19. Reason for these dates are making sure Stu and Steve are back from vacation in time to meet with you.

With regard to Leather Goddesses 2: like I told you before I'm not going to bulllshit with you. Sorry if this is somewhat difficult sometimes, but I've found that overall honesty is the best policy. Enough editorial: I don't think Leather 2 (as it stands now) is an effective direction for you to go. I guess my biggest problem with it is that the humor feels forced: and some of my appeal for Leather was the era it was set in.

Just an idea: how about a sequel to Sherlock? The first one is doing so well that if we added the improvements (technically) of YZIP with perhaps animation (gasp...:dave tried it out and it works, sort of), it seems to be a better direction to head.

I'm running arthur on a Mac 2 with red ryder as my comm. package. So if you have any Mac2 disks you wish to send direct I can handle them.

Keep in touch, Christopher

Here's what one website has to say about Steve Meretzky's LGOP2:

It's the game that just won't stay forgotten! The worst graphic adventure of all-time, now you can own a copy, but for God's sake don't actually play it, and don't say I didn't try to warn you. ... However you must absolve me from any misfortunes you or your loved ones may suffer as a result of playing this piece of junk. Oh, and while you're at it, say hi to Steve Meretzky and ask him what the *hell* he was thinking.

Here's an excerpt from the credits section from Steve Meretzky's LGOP2:

"Steve is basically incorrigible. He always apologizes and promises never to do it again, but then he just keeps on designing these scurrilous games. We have no choice but to publish his games, because they bring in a ton of money, which we need to pay the salaries of the people who handle the complaints that come in because we publish his games. (If that sentence doesn't make any sense to you, either, then don't read it. –Ed)"

Among the people listed in the Voice Actors section are "The Infocom Staff", but exactly who they are is not specified.

Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Gas Pump
Gas Pump Girls
Leather Goddesses of Hollywood
Gas Pump Girls Meet the Pulsating Inconvenience From Planet X
Hollywood Hot Tubs
Leather 2

Quarterstaff: The Tomb of Setmoth

by Scott Schmitz, Ken Updike and Amy Briggs — catalog #IF1

A few details on Quarterstaff:

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1214-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Quarterstaff To: JON

Sometime today, I'd like to talk with you about Christopher's request that I finish the text for Quarterstaff. I'm glad to work on it, but don't think I have enough time to do that and create a new type of Infocomic (if we're sticking to the original schedule of getting it out for the holidays). What do you think?

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1315-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Quarterstaff To: JON

Christopher implied that it was a pretty big job. I'll find out exactly how much needs to be done, when the deadline is, etc.

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0947-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: schedules To: joey

I've worked a schedule for games shipping this fall. (Have I already sent you this mail?) Anyway, the schedule DOES NOT have anyone testing BattleTech or Arthur. You and I need to determine priorities and realities. Zork0, Journey and Quarterstaff are the definite shippers, right? Where does Shogun really fit in, and what of the impossible dream dates set for BattleTech? In the second place, we should be testing Arthur, but I don't know where to put that on my schedule either.

From the Fall 1988 issue of "The Status Line":

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.

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.

Unreleased Games

Animal House

by Jeff O'Neill

Date: 7 Jan 1987 1206-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Your next game To: DA cc: CLR, Jon

I know you have 1001 things to do. Here's one more:

Jot down ideas for your next game. Not the details, just the concept in a couple of sentences. (Sort of like Steve's list of ideas for his next project, though you don't have to be so compulsive, neat, and detailed.) Please feel free to write down any and all ideas you have, no matter how disgusting.

Based on your lack of proficiency with our technology, however, I'm likely to encourage you to do something relatively "easy." (I know nothing is easy, which is why I said "relatively.") Another ZIP game would obviously be less demanding than, say, a new type of game (like Submarine Wars).

"Animal House" definitely has the potential to be a big seller. If that idea turns out to be your next project, I'll try to get in touch with National Lampoon (if you're agreeable). There are, as Chris pointed out, three levels of "collaboration" with National Lampoon: the lowest level, where we just license the name ("Infocom Presents National Lampoon's Animal House"); the middle level, where NL's writer(s) help write some scenarios and/or text; and the highest level, where the game is based as much as possible on the movie.

Anyway, I'm getting ahead of my request. Please write down ANY ideas you have. Try to complete the list within a week. Thanks.

Date: 5 Mar 1987 1531-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Animal House To: DA

1. I have a synopsis from Marc Blank for his next game, and a synopsis from Mike and Muffy Berlyn for their next game. I'd like you to look at them.
2. I'd like you to write a synopsis for Animal House. Please have this ready by a week from Monday — March 16. It should be of comparable detail.
3. Whenever I talk to you about Animal House, I feel it has good possibilities. I'm hoping that by seeing your ideas written down, I will be better able to give you useful, positive feedback, as will everybody else.
4. If there are other ideas you are considering for your next project, please write them down! I am absolutely positively willing to consider ANY idea.
5. The reason I'd like you to do all this is so you can really get started on your next project, whatever it is, with as much useful input as possible.

Many thanks!

Date: 5 Mar 1987 1708-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Animal House To: DA

Good! Since you've started work, it should be easier to do a synopsis.

Date: 5 Mar 1987 1746-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Animal House To: DA cc: jon

I agree that you should be concentrating on your game. By putting your thoughts down on paper, and letting others look at your ideas, I think you increase your chances of success. It's often easier to see if you're on to something if you can write it down (just as you can see if you're on the wrong track, because you CAN'T write it down sensibly, etc.).

I don't think it's unfair of me to ask you to write a detailed synopsis. If anything, it should HELP you concentrate on your game.

Is there some reason that you DON'T want to write down your ideas? I can't imagine what they are.

Date: 6 Mar 1987 1343-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: So, anyway ... To: DA

As per our conversation, you will write down your thoughts on Animal House. The outline/synopsis will be of comparable length and detail of the Marc Blank/Mike & Muffy Berlyn proposals. You MUST have this done by the week of 3/16.

Date: 25 Mar 1987 1638-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Frat House schedule To: DA cc: jon

You gave me this schedule for Frat House:

Alpha 7/15 Beta 9/15 Gamma 10/15 Dysan 11/15 Ship 1/1

I think this is too optimistic. I believe you may be able to get a game into alpha by mid-July; but a four-month testing schedule is very tight. How comfortable are you "committing" to this schedule?

Date: 25 Mar 1987 1709-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Frat House schedule To: DA

There is no such thing as a "regular" schedule — some games need more time, some imps need more time, etc. Based on the complexity of Frat House and your experience, what do YOU think is a realistic schedule?

Date: 27 Apr 1987 1517-EDT From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: PLEDGE PIN To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Has anyone ever seen a pledge pin? What do they look like?

Date: 27 Apr 1987 1523-EDT From: A toy English blaze <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: PLEDGE PIN To: DA

Ask Gayle. Nearly everyone at her school belonged to a fraternity or sorority.

Date: 27 Apr 1987 1525-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: PLEDGE PIN To: DA cc: LIZ

It depends on the fraternity-they each have separate insignias.

Date: 13 May 1987 0921-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: 2 o'clock? To: DA, CLR

I'd like to meet with you both to discuss Frat House and its schedule. Is 2 o'clock OK?

Date: 28 May 87 1509-EDT From: Batch Compiler <COMBAT at FRED>
Subject: Your compilation To: DA at FRED

15:09 Your compilation of FRATHOUSE has met with an accident, Wastrel.
Love,
WASTE

Z

The Abyss

by Bob Bates

Date: 14 Nov 1988 0152-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: ABYSS PRELIMINARY DESIGN To: ERHARDT cc: JOEY, CHALLENGE

CHRISTOPHER: THE PRELIMINARY DESIGN-STATEMENT FOR THE ABYSS IS AWAITING YOUR PERUSAL IN THE CHALLENGE AREA UNDER THE NAME "PRELIM.TXT" PLEASE FORWARD A COPY OF IT TO JOE.

DUE TO THE BIG RUSH TO GET THIS THING GOING (JOE WANTS TO START CODING BY DECEMBER 1) I WOULD APPRECIATE GETTING EVERYONE'S REACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THANKS MUCH. BOB

Date: 19 Nov 1988 0041-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: list of ideas To: JOEY

Oops — forget to give it to you before I left on Friday. If you read this before the next time I'm in, you can find it on the lineprinter, called NEXT.PROJECT.

Date: 21 Nov 1988 1851-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Abyss Interface To: swg cc: erhardt, joey, challenge

Stu:

A random thought: It may be instructive to bring the Abyss interface design to the Imps lunch and toss it to the lions for a good chew.

Date: 22 Nov 1988 1805-EST From: Straight White Grue <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Abyss Interface To: CHALLENGE cc: erhardt, joey, SWG

Bob,

The Imps ate your interface for lunch last week, but I missed it.

Date: 29 Nov 1988 1751-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Abyss Plot To: erhardt cc: swg, joey, challenge

Christopher:

Hope you had a good Thanksgiving.

In my area is a file called Plot.txt, which contains the latest story line for the Abyss. As you will see, it still needs some work, but I hope to complete it very soon. Please call me with suggestions, comments, and worries.

Date: 6 Dec 1988 1112-EST From: Joe Ybarra <JOEY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Abyss Interface To: CHALLENGE cc: swg, erhardt, JOEY

Did we do this already, or should we block out the time today? Thanks

Date: 6 Dec 1988 1113-EST From: "Read my bits!" <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Abyss Interface To: JOEY cc: CHALLENGE, erhardt, SWG

I think we did this already. Unfortunately, I was absent.

Date: 7 Dec 1988 1431-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Abyss plot changes To: JoeY cc: erhardt, swg, challenge

Joe: Please see the file Newplot.txt in the Challenge area. It incorporates some of the ideas we talked about last night.

Date: 19 Dec 1988 0056-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Abyss outline To: erhardt cc: swg, joey, rob, challenge

Christopher:

Please see the file PLOT1219.TXT in the Challenge area on FRED.

The outline is a fleshing-out of the discussions that Joe and I had during his visit. It fills in some of the areas that we left blank, so Joe should see it before Rob talks with Pam North.

Thanks. Bob

Date: 19 Dec 1988 1158-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Abyss To: JoeY cc: erhardt, challenge

Joe —

Because of your busy schedule, I am going to try to keep the lines of communications open on a "Management By Memo" system. Don't feel you have to respond, unless there are problems you would like to address. Basically, if I don't hear from you, I'm going to figure everything is OK.

In the Challenge area on FRED is a file called PLOT1219.TXT.

It is an outline of Abyss based on our discussions of last week. Here are the highlights of the changes from the "pre-visit" version:

1) Ocean floor modeling has been removed. Instead, more MONTANA exteriors and interiors are included.
2) Crane-crash no longer at start of game.
3) Shark puzzle removed.
4) Alien presence beefed up:
    a) Alien comes into MoonPool and takes gun away from Coffey.
    b) Alien returns player to DEEPCORE when he is out of air (after Lindsey has fallen into trough.)
5) Alien logic/ethic/art puzzle being developed for the end. (Not yet detailed in plot outline.)

6) "Smart" user interface that puts up context-sensitive menus of verbs and nouns. (Not reflected in plot outline.)

In addition, you will note that I have fleshed out many areas that we left open. (Specifics of Russian intruder puzzle, for example.)

I believe that this outline reflects all the changes that we discussed, with two exceptions:

1) Other than the alternate solution to the Russian intruder puzzle, I haven't yet developed concrete situations where the player uses the other characters in the game as resources.
2) Coffey isn't as violent as we had planned, and he doesn't wreak as much havoc on DEEPCORE before lapsing into his near-catatonic state.

I am continuing to work on both these problems, and I am sure I will get them worked out.

If you have negative reactions to any of this, please let me know as soon as you can. Otherwise, this will probably be the last "design statement" you will see. We have begun coding, and are making our plans according to the schedule you laid out:

Puzzle/Interface Coding	12/1/88 - 2/24/89	Gamma Testing (3 weeks)	5/12/89 - 6/2/89
Alpha Testing (6 weeks)	2/24/89 - 4/7/89	Code Release	6/2/89
Beta Testing (5 weeks)	4/7/89 - 5/12/89	Ship	7/5/89

Thanks, Bob

Date: 22 Dec 1988 1558-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Abyss Interface To: swg cc: mikek, joey, challenge

Stu:

I just put a file called INTFACE.TXT onto FRED.

Duane and I have made a lot of progress with the interface, but we still can't choose between two basic methods of doing things. The choice is very simple, and it is outlined in the file.

I know people are starting to leave for vacations, but could you round up some reactions for us from the Imps, or simply give us your opinions?

Thanks. I hope you and your family have a great holiday.

Date: 13 Jan 1989 1243-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Visit agenda To: Mikek cc: JoeY, swg, erhardt, challenge

Mike:

I thought I'd send you some notes about some of the broad topics that I think need to be discussed during my visit next week.

I ARTHUR

Arthur seems to be floating in limbo. We have received no bug reports in over a month, yet we haven't gone into beta testing. I'd like to nail down what Infocom thinks remains to be done and get a firm idea of the schedule that will take us to release.

II THE ABYSS

The first thing I would like to do is show you our progress to date on the general interface. This will be the first fully-parser-capable game that can be played quickly and conveniently from the mouse. We have already implemented "smart" menus that put up appropriate prepositions when the player selects a verb. Over the weekend we hope to get the object menus working in a similar fashion.

The next issue is the schedule. When I spoke with Anne-Marie Stein earlier this week, she told me that although they had a lot to get done, they still think they will make the July 4 release date. I asked if there was to be a delay, would the film be pushed back to a Christmas release? She said that The Abyss is definitely a summer movie, and if it was delayed, it should only be by a few weeks.

Our schedule currently has the following milestones:

Alpha Testing	2/24 - 4/7	Gamma Testing	5/12 - 6/2	Ship	7/7
Beta Testing	4/7 - 5/12	Code Release	6/2		

We are on schedule so far, although things have been hectic and a lot of midnight and weekend oil has been burned. If we are going to fall behind, it will be evident by the Feb 24 Alpha date.

Finally on the Abyss, we need to talk about finances. We have received no advances to date, even though we reached an agreement on the figures back in November. This is a problem that must be rectified immediately.

III GENERAL

Joe has mentioned that he is interested in re-structuring our contract. I'm not sure exactly what he has in mind, but I'm certainly willing to talk about it and I think we should block out some time for the two of us to do so.

He has also mentioned that you have acquired new game-writing technologies from Mediagenic. I would like to talk about these and take a look at them if possible.

PS As you think about making up a schedule, it might be a good idea to allow some time first thing Monday morning for Stu and me to try to make up a MacIntosh version of the Abyss. I understand that the Mac interpreter has fewer bugs than the IBM, and things should go more smoothly if we have some time to look at it on the Mac.

Thanks for everything, Mike. I look forward to meeting you.

Bob

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 89 17:51:51 EST From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
Subject: Abyss To: challeng@spike Cc: mikek@spike, taa@spike

The "walk-thru version" of the Abyss is ready to run in spike's file /home/development/abyss/abyss.zip. I had no trouble compiling it. — Stu.

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 89 11:27:47 EST From: challeng@spike
Subject: Abyss To: swg Cc: challeng

In /home/usr/challenge/abyss lives the source code for the walk-thru version of the Abyss. I tried to compile it, but was unsuccessful. Would you please compile it for me, and let MikeK (or whoever else) know that it is there. The file README contains some information about the walk-thru version.

Z

Arena

by Brad Sagarin

Date: 13 Aug 1987 1659-EDT
Subject: arena
From: Rankest Evil Newt <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
To: testers at FRED

Ok, the fun is over. No more snatching of other people names. It's too nasty.
heh, heh, heh.

Date: 13 Aug 1987 1832-EDT
Subject: arena
From: Rankest Evil Newt <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
To: everybody at FRED

When arena crashes, get out right away and reset. Thank you.

Date: 14 Aug 1987 1703-EDT
Subject: Arena Version ???
From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
To: testers at FRED

Dear Arena hackers,

Unfortunately, due to a personal emergency, I was unable to come in and finish up the shops today. But fear not, Monday should introduce shops, guilds experience points (and levels), and monsters who chase as well as whomp.

If you REALLY want to play the current crufty version, simply start up a server on some terminal somewhere by issuing the command: ARENA /S Players now begin by simply typing ARENA.

Bug sheets are welcome, especially if they pertain to the bizzare server crash that happened once yesterday.

- Brad

Date: 17 Aug 1987 1856-EDT
Subject: Arena II The Monster Strikes Back
From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
To: TESTERS at FRED

Yes it's true. Monsters chase and fight you now.
Added are:

1) Experience points
2) Levels of experience
3) Weapon and armor shops
4) Adventurer's inn
5) New monsters

Also, the move timeout can be changed by hitting the spacebar on the server machine and typing in a different value (in 10ths of a second). The version you've been playing was with a 5 second timeout (50 10ths).

- Brad

P.S. Coming soon, the Orc lair.

Date: 18 Aug 1987 1614-EDT From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
Subject: Arena ... To: TESTERS at FRED, KIRSCH at FRED, DA at FRED

The next version o' Arena is ready.
Thieves can now pick pockets, and ALL the abilities matter (no more 18/3/3/18/18/6 characters).
If you haven't played, and are interested, check out the document:

<DRAGON>ARENA.TXT

Have fun. - Brad

Date: 19 Aug 1987 1653-EDT From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
Subject: Arena II, the day after To: ARENA at FRED

Bugs fixed. Being killed while moving should now work cleanly (thanks to an idea of Gary's).
Stay tuned for the orc lair, being mapped even as you read this.

- Brad

Arena
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Arena II: The Monster Strikes Back
Arena II, the day after

Z

"The Wizard of Oz" parody

by Bob Bates

Date: 17 Jun 1988 2308-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Oz proposal To: joel cc: jon, swg, challenge

Joel:

I have loaded the text of the Oz proposal onto FRED under the name OZ.TXT.

I said in the letter that I am sending a copy to Mike Dornbrook, but I don't know if he has an area on FRED that he regularly consults, so perhaps you can make sure he gets a copy.

I will be on vacation all next week (and Monday the 27th as well). I'll give you a call when I return.

June 17, 1988

Joel Berez
President
Infocom, Inc.
125 Cambridge Park Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Joel:

Enclosed is the proposed outline of our third game. The game currently has no title, but it is to be a parody of the movie "The Wizard of Oz." The goal is to produce a hilarious and wacky, off-the-wall comedy.

The underpinnings of the game rely on the same principle as the other games in the "Immortal Legends" series. It deals with a character who is already firmly established in the popular mind, who comes complete with an already-identified supporting cast, and whose actions take place in an evocative environment.

The subject matter is delicate in that the treatment must be wacky enough to be genuinely enjoyable, but not so satirical or biting that it creates a negative reaction. I think that your people have good radar in this area, and that our relationship with them is close enough to keep the game on the right track.

I look forward to hearing your reactions as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Bates
President

cc: Jon Palace
Mike Dornbrook
Stu Galley

Program Description - Program III
OZ

Plot Notes

The game opens with the player, Dorothy, on her farm in Kansas. Dorothy's daily routine is dull, tedious and degrading. Every five moves or so, the game hauls her away from whatever she is doing to muck out the horse stall, shovel the droppings out of the goat pen, scrub the floor of the chicken coop, or clean out the privy.

Needless to say, Dorothy is eager to get away from all this. So eager, in fact, that for the rest of the game, a "jigs-up" results not in death, but a fate worse than death - a return to her odiferous duties at the farm.

Dorothy leaves the farm and comes across Professor Marvel. He offers her various snake-oil products, and one in particular catches her eye. He sees this and touts it to her, saying, "What do you do when you've got to go to school but there's a test you haven't studied for? It's no use hoping for a snow storm. Why, what you need is 'Tornado-in-a-Bottle.' Just open up this little fella and you'll have a Texas twister faster than you can say atmospheric disturbance. But when you open the bottle, be careful where you stand. I guarantee that as soon as you release it, that tornado will head right for the nearest mobile home park."

Dorothy buys the bottle, Toto bites Marvel on the ankle, and the enraged professor chases them back to her house where she opens the bottle. The ensuing tornado whisks her and Toto off to Oz. Dorothy has to steer the house as it falls so that it lands on the Wicked Witch of the East. But the Oz they land in is different from the one we are used to. It is more like Southern California - sort of Oz-gone-commercial. You can buy Oz-burgers and Oz-dogs at fast-food stands; bumper stickers say "I (heart) Oz" and "Honk if you like Glinda." The Munchkins talk in Valley-girl-speak, fer sure.

Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, floats in on a bubble and says, "Now that you have killed the Wicked Witch of the East, the only evil person left in Oz is the Wicked Witch of the West. Of course, there is the Fairly Bad Witch of the North-by-northwest, but she's getting old and doesn't amount to much."

Glinda keeps the ruby slippers for herself, giving Dorothy instead the striped socks that the dead witch was wearing. "Don't take them off," Glinda says. "The longer you wear them, the more powerful they will become."

Then Glinda says that although Dorothy has done everyone a good service by dropping a house on the wicked witch, still, she did break the law in doing so. She's guilty not only of witch-slaughter, but of flying without a pilot's license, littering, and re-locating a residential structure without filing an environ-mental impact study.

Glinda thinks about a punishment for Dorothy. She considers making her play a year in the Munchkin NBA, or locking her in a small room with an Oz-way distributor. But she finally decides that only the Wizard of Oz can choose the appropriate punishment, so she selects a "trial date" and says that Dorothy must appear before Oz by then. If Dorothy fails to get to the Emerald City by the appointed time, she gets sent back to Kansas.

Once Glinda has pronounced sentence she says, "I'm sorry, I have to go now. The next bubble is coming, and if I miss it there won't be another one along for 2 hours. Service has gotten so poor since the budget cuts." She floats out of sight.

When Dorothy starts off down the yellow brick road, she quickly comes to a crossroads. The direction she chooses determines which of her companions she will meet first. (This should help reduce some of the linearity of the game)

Each of the people she comes to decides to join her in her journey. Each of them wants something from the wizard. The possibilities for the scarecrow include:

1) He's tired of being unable to do his job because he has no brains, and so what he wants is a new job that doesn't require brains - such as politician, clerk at the department of motor vehicles, or senior executive at a large corporation.

2) He's afraid the farmers will get mad at him for not being able to scare away the crows, and so what he wants is liability insurance (which, being a con man, Oz will be only too happy to sell him).

When Dorothy finds the tin man, she also has to find the oil can and oil him down. Once she does this she discovers that either:

1) He thinks of himself as a walking lightning rod, and what he really wants are rubber galoshes for insulation.

2) He wants to be Ziebarted (rust-proofed).

The lion could

1) Be an effeminate character whose burning desire in life is to get a species-change operation. "Inside me there is a gentle lamb just waiting to get out. A few hours on the table, and a couple weeks in the Bahamas, and I'll be a new creature."
2) Be a hypochondriac who is afraid that eating raw meat every day is too unhealthy. What he wants from the wizard is either a barbecue grill, 10 hours of psycho-analysis to get over his fears, or a good diet program.

The four of them (five, counting Toto) start off for Oz. Along the way, they have to survive the poppy field, deal with the flying monkeys, gain entrance to the castle of the Wicked Witch of the West, and kill her.

Once they have killed the witch, they gain entrance to Emerald City and have their audience with Oz. They discover the wizard is a fraud. The wizard gives each of Dorothy's companions some totally useless object that he claims will solve each of their problems. He then sneaks off without helping Dorothy at all. Glinda floats in on the 7:28 bubble and says that Dorothy could have used her socks all along to get what she wanted. (How, I'm not yet sure, because I'm not yet sure what will represent success for Dorothy.) Dorothy follows Glinda's instructions and wins the game.

Alternative Possibilities

The following are a couple of even more off-the-wall ideas, which may be worth incorporating into the above story, or developing on their own.

LEATHER GODDESS OF OZ

Essentially the same story as above, but with more suggestive language, racier insinuations, and a sub-stratum of sex running throughout. We could substitute a whip for the striped socks and dress Dorothy in leather.

ASSAULT ON OZ

Dorothy arrives in Oz and learns either that

1) The wicked witch is holding the wizard captive or,
2) The wizard is a drug kingpin (he controls the poppy fields) who is a tyrannical despot and who has enslaved the inhabitants of Emerald City.

In either case, Dorothy assembles her swat team. The tin man is a hopeless-romantic ex-mercenary, like Rick in Casablanca. He handles infiltration and reconnaissance. The scarecrow is a Marxist radical intellectual who is also an expert in communications. The lion is a wild-eyed extremist who specializes in explosives & demolitions.

In the course of this action-packed adventure game, they collect the various items they need to assault the fortress, including plastic explosives, blasting caps, a grappling hook, gun, radio, etc. The game culminates with the storming of the fortress and either the release of the wizard, (scenario 1) or his downfall (scenario 2).

MOVIE WITHIN A GAME

The game would as described in the main proposal. But at some point soon after Dorothy gets to Oz, the player learns that the people in the game - including Dorothy - have a dual reality. They are not only characters within the story, but also actors playing those characters.

This could be used sparingly - just a few scattered complaints about how hot the make-up is under the lights, for example - or we could make the whole game a dual-level experience, with separate puzzles for each level and a final victory that cannot be achieved unless all the puzzles in both levels have been completed.

This approach has some very practical uses.

1) Default winner handlers:

   Wicked Witch of the West: "Forget it, kid. I just get paid to laugh maniacally and give you a hard time."
   Auntie Em and Uncle Henry: "I'm sorry, honey. We do love you, but they made us such bland, boring characters that we can't do anything but say we love you."

2) Responding to reasonable inputs that the author doesn't want to handle:

   The Director yells, "Cut! Dorry...Baby. We can't have you doing that, OK honey? I know the script calls for you to improvise, but L.B. would go nuts over the figures if we tried to include everything in the budget. So be a doll, OK? Stick to what's reasonable."

3) Limiting the amount of "game damage" that can be done with certain objects. If a player acquires a certain object in the game and decides to return to a previous location to try to use it, then the Director can yell,

   "Cut! Look, honey. We've already struck that set. I know no one told you, but we're trying to save a few bucks, OK? Look at it this way: on the one hand, you can't go back. But on the other hand, you don't need to. So whaddya say. Let's go with the flow. Roll 'em!"

4) The Director can also be used as the hint giver.

   "Well, kid. We really want you to improvise. But we are over budget and behind schedule, so I guess it wouldn't hurt to give you a little push in the right direction."

If we pursue this option, the Director would inform Dorothy at the beginning that he wants her to improvise the script as she goes along. We need to have him encourage improvisation so that the player doesn't get the sense that there is only one way to do things.

If the two-level game is rejected as too complicated, it still might be interesting at the end of a one-level game to have a Director yell, "Cut! That's a wrap. Good job, people. The movie will hit the theaters in six months."

Date: 21 Jun 1988 1625-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Wizard of Bob To: JON cc: LIZ, Joel

In general, the idea of an interactive fiction game based on America's movie Utopia "Wizard of Oz" strikes me as somewhat tasteless - like colorization. This I feel regardless of who is attempting the project.

But after reading Bob's plot descriptions, the idea doesn't seem as "tasteless". Within the proposal there are parts that have "funny" potential: the scarecrow who lacks a brain therefore wants a job in politics, the Wizard of Oz as a drug kingpin. Where the parody is in upbeat '80s subjects, the plots are most successful. I also thought the movie within the game was an interesting twist on IF (I thought it was successful when Jeff did it in Nord & Bert).

The beginning part of the proposal that has Dorothy shoveling shit doesn't strike me as funny and definitely needs work.

Though I believe some parts have this funny potential, I'm not sure of Bob's ability to implement it. Granted Sherlock and Arthur are non-comedies, but I haven't appreciated the few elements of humor Bob has introduced. It could be an interesting project providing the parody keeps an upbeat type of humor and a respectful distance from the real story. I'd like to reserve further criticism/comment until Bob's had a chance to rework the current proposal.

Date: 21 Jun 1988 1130-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Wizard of Bob To: JON

The game proposal per se really has only a few puzzle ideas in it. It mostly deals with the tone, which reminds me of the sort of skit Carol Burnett (or better [worse?] Saturday Night Live) used to do. It's kind of a one-joke thing, sort of like "let's do Romeo and Juliet in Valley-speak."

I don't feel that the idea of an Oz game, even a parody, is a bad idea, but like the skits above it could easily not be funny or if it is, run on too long.

I like the movie-within-the-game idea; it's a cute way of spicing up the boring default responses. The other two alternatives are pretty awful.

All in all, I think it depends much too strongly on how funny a writer you the author is. If it were Steve

proposing it, I'd still be worried. Bob doesn't strike me as a funny enough guy to pull it off.

Date: 22 Jun 1988 0943-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Wizard of Bob To: JON

It might not fall flat in the right hands, though the likelihood is high. Bob's dry style of humor seems ill-matched for such a project. What happened to Robin Hood?

Mr. Joel Berez
President
Infocom, Inc.
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

July 15, 1988

Dear Joel:

This is a revised proposal for a game based on the Wizard of Oz.

When I first suggested a Oz parody, the idea was enthusiastically received by many Infopeople. Although my first proposal failed to fulfill the promise of that initial excitement, it still seems that there is a great idea lurking in here somewhere, and that it is worth it to find that idea and convert it into a game.

I believe Infocom's initial enthusiastic reaction is one that will be repeated in stores across the country. People will see the game and say, "Oh! A Wizard of Oz Parody. What a neat idea!" Our problem is not how to get people interested in the idea, the problem is delivering a product that lives up to those initial expectations.

With that in mind, I have put together the proposal that follows, and I look forward to receiving your reaction to it.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Bates
President

OZ PARODY

1) This is not an Immortal Legend game. It is not an attempt to create a story that would fit into the existing body of literature on the subject.

2) The game is a spoof, and it needs a title that presents it as such. Although the following titles could not be used for the game, they convey the flavor that I'm looking for:

Godzilla meets the Wizard of Oz	Attack of the Killer Oz-moids
Fast Times at Oz High	Invasion of the Oz-snatchers
Dorothy Does Oz	Ozzie Dearest

3) The game's action takes place in the Oz that we remember from the movie; but there are incongruous features in the landscape. Somewhat as the Wiz used New York City as its Oz, this game will draw on elements of the Southern California landscape and 80's life-style for humor.

4) The cover art needs to support this comedic and possibly racy theme. One possibility is to show Dorothy and the Lion in a hot tub, with the Tin Man and the Scarecrow standing by, and the Yellow Brick Road winding off into the distance. Depending on how racy or suggestive we want to get, we can clothe Dorothy in anything from a gingham bathing suit to virtually nothing.

5) With the right title and cover art, I don't believe the "sacredness" of Oz is going to be too much of a problem. The people who buy the game will certainly not be expecting a tame re-telling of the Oz story. (And those who want such a treatment should surely be able to figure out that this isn't the place to look for it.) Nevertheless, I realize that the boundaries are somewhat tighter than they might be with other parodies and I intend to respect them. For example, I wouldn't require Dorothy to perform scatological activities as the solution to a puzzle. (What the player wants to try on his own, however, is a different story).

6) The player should not believe that he is in Southern California. He should truly believe that he is in Oz, but that Oz and its inhabitants are slightly skewed from the way they were in the movie. Consequently, I envision the taking the geography primarily from the movie, rather than from California. For example, the letters EMERALD CITY might appear high on a hillside overlooking the town; and although there will not be a beach or an ocean (because there were none in Oz), there might be a lifeguard sitting on a chair overlooking a field of sunbathers.

7) Dorothy will still have the basic goals that she had in the movie. She will land in Oz and need to go see the Wizard. However, some of the humor and puzzles will come from Oz being a more practical place than it is in the film. For example:

   a) The Yellow Brick Road is a toll-road. She has to pay to travel on it.

   b) She has to eat, and the only place that food is available is from fast-food joints that sell things like Baumburgers and L. Frankfurters.

   c) When she has to buy things, she uses a credit card that Glinda gave her. She starts off with 50 Ozmids credit (for dropping a house on the Wicked Witch of the East), and she has to accumulate more in the course of the game to get everything done. (100 Ozmids, of course, equals one Wizbuck.)

   d) The bubble that Glinda travels on is actually a sort of inter-city bus that is a lot more glamorous on the outside than on the inside. Dorothy and her companions can travel on it, but they do have to pay the tired, bored driver.

   e) When the Tin Man gets banged up, Dorothy has to take him to a body shop. The mechanic says, "Well lemme see. I'm kinda backed up right now. I got a bronzed goddess who's gotta be back at the tanning booth by noon, and a man of steel who needs some structural work. But I think I can fit you in. Lemme put him up on the lift and give you an estimate."

8) The plot follows the movie in its broadest details, but varies from it in the particulars.

   Dorothy gets caught up in the tornado, and her house lands on the Wicked Witch of the East. Glinda comes in on the 2:15 bubble and tells Dorothy that the only person who can help her return home is the Wizard.

   When Dorothy starts off down the yellow brick road, she does not simply happen upon her companions. She must do something to "acquire" them. She may have to buy some straw, for example, and build her own scarecrow. Or she may have to find a way to free the Lion from a zoo or circus.

   In the course of the game, it will be necessary for her to have "activated" each of the companions, as here will be tasks to perform that only they can do. For example, they may come upon a cute and lovable - but dangerous - furry little creature (like a Tribble from Star Trek). The animal may have to be killed for them to advance (or survive), but Dorothy can't kill it because it is too cute, the scarecrow can't figure out

how to kill it, and the Lion is afraid of it. Only the Tin Man - because he has no heart - can perform the nasty but necessary deed.

In the same way, there will be a task that only a person with no brain can do, and one that cannot be performed by anyone with courage.

Once they arrive in Emerald City, they discover that getting in to see Oz is a series of puzzles in itself. When they finally get through, they find that the Wizard lives in a mansion, is constantly surrounded by beautiful women, smokes a pipe, and usually wears pajamas. Oz tells them that he will grant their wishes if they will bring him the mascara stick of the Wicked Witch of the West. She turns out to be a make-up laden televangelist who is constantly denouncing the Wizard's life-style. When they solve the puzzle and get her mascara stick, she cries such volumes of tears that she melts herself.

Upon their return to the Wizard, he tells the scarecrow that he doesn't need a brain, what he needs is a job he can do without one. He offers to make him a Network TV executive in charge of prime-time scheduling. Because the Tin Man has no heart, Oz offers him a job as an agent. Because the Lion has no courage, Oz tells him he could get work as a yes-man for a producer. Each of the characters has the dignity to turn down these jobs.

Oz gives Dorothy the option of returning home to Kansas, or moving into the mansion with him and becoming next month's centerspread. Perhaps we will leave it up to the player to choose.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1601-EDT From: Gluey salt rat <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: New Oz Proposal To: CHALLENGE cc: JOEL, JOEY, JON, LIZ, ELIZ, SWG

Dear Bob:

I think what you have here is a potentially Viable Idea. The more I think about it, the more it turns into a cross between "The Wiz" and "Star 80" (without the tragic ending).

As I see it, the High Concept is: a parody of "The Wiz" that spoofs L.A. lifestyles. Sort of a humorous "Less Than Oz".

Here are some random suggestions:

The Wizard lives a reclusive life in his mansion and estate, surrounded by sycophants and starlets. Born Oliver Oswald, he is called "Oz" by all his friends. He can help Dorothy get home by flying her there on his private jet aircraft, if she does him a favor first. Or she may decide to be a starlet herself.

The companions could be real people whose lacks are only metaphorical. The Scarecrow is a Valley Girl (built like a scarecrow because of anorexia) who never uses her brain; her use is to watch TV and discover some clue about Oz's lifestyle that helps them get to the mansion. The Lion is an aging hippie (with a mane of long bushy hair) who no longer does any drugs but is totally paranoid because of bad trips in his youth; he could serve as lookout when the Wicked Witch's minions are out to get them; or his task is to convince someone that their worst fears will come true if they don't help Dorothy. The Tin Man is an aluminum-siding salesman (as in "Tin Men") who heartlessly gouges his customers.

A pointer on authentic L.A.: The Yellow Brick Road would have to be a freeway, there being no toll roads in L.A. Dorothy would still need a credit card, in order to rent a car.

Date: 12 Aug 1988 1420-EDT From: Sultry Gelata <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Oz? To: JoeY cc: Joel, Challenge

I just talked on the phone with Bob Bates of Challenge, Inc.

I told him that "the check is in the mail" for the next advance on Arthur, but that you wanted to talk with him about his Oz proposal. If you can't accept the current proposal, he is willing to change the concept, or to postpone

it in favor of "Sherlock II". Please let him know your thoughts.

He is also concerned about Joel resigning and the survival of oral commitments between Challenge and Infocom.

Finally, he wonders whether and how he can contribute to our presence at the SPA meeting in Washington D.C.

Excerpt from a message regarding the sequel to Leather Goddesses of Phobos:

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1726-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Leather sequel To: swg cc: JoeY, md, challenge

As I mentioned last week, JoeY has asked me to drop the "Oz" portion of my next game - while keeping the "Hollywood, 80's, sex, spoof" aspects - and to turn it into a sequel to LGOP.

The Wizard of Oz parody
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Leather Goddesses of Oz
Assault on Oz
Wizard of Bob
Godzilla meets the Wizard of Oz
Attack of the Killer Oz-moids
Fast Times at Oz High
Invasion of the Oz-snatchers
Dorothy Does Oz
Ozzie Dearest

Z

Chameleon

by Michael Berlyn and Muffy McClung Berlyn

Excerpt from a message about the Hitchhiker's sequel:

Date: 29 Jul 1987 1136-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Restaurant To: CLR cc: TAA, SWG

I have been acting as a "producer" (using the Activision term) for Confetti, and Stu has been for Sherlock. Is anybody acting as producer for Restaurant.

Date: 23 Sep 1987 0934-EDT From: ecalaP noJ <JON at FRED>
Subject: Confetti To: CLR cc: jon

I asked Mike Berlyn, "What is the actual mechanism by which one gets into a particular plot?" The answer is that it's partially random, partially determined by what object the player first manipulates, and partially by what the player has done before manipulating the first object.

For instance, the player may start in the hallway. If the player immediately goes into the kitchen and manipulates object A (say a coffeepot), then the player will randomly enter plot N or plot M. On a restart, again the player starts in the hallway. If the player first goes into the living room and THEN goes into the kitchen and manipulates object A (the coffeepot), the player may randomly enter plot X or plot Y.

In other words, the player can do a few things (move around the apartment, for instance) which don't automatically cause a flashback. These things that the player does, combined with the first object manipulated, define a subset of plots, one of which the player will randomly enter.

Mike said you should feel free to call him if you have any questions. I THINK I understand the answer, so you can ask me too.

Information on Confetti and Dr. Dumont:

Newsgroups: rec.arts.int-fiction, rec.games.int-fiction
Subject: Re: On behalf of Mike Berlyn... (LONG ANSWER)
From: Michael Berlyn <mberlyn@cascadepublishing.com>
Date: Tue, 09 May 2000 08:22:35 -0700

Steve Evans wrote:

> Firstly, I must say that the demise of CMP *[Cascade Mountain Publishing]*
> is very sad, but I was heartened by Mike's comment that the much anticipated
> "Chameleon" will still be released.

Thanks. I am working at it.

> Given the amount of interest in IF there should still be a place for a commercial
> IF enterprise, and I hope that sometime soon the time will be right for a new venture.

I am not giving up. I am closing CMP. CMP was a Hydra: print books, eBooks, and IF. Next time, it'll be just IF. And there will be a next time.

> Secondly, on the subject of Dr Dumont's Wild PARTI, I read some time ago in Hans
> Perrson's Adventureland pages that this game was originally intended for Infocom.
>
> About it, Hans says:
> "This was originally written for Infocom but when they were taken over by Activision,
> all outside projects were cancelled, and although the alpha version had been delivered,
> they returned the rights to the game to the authors."
>
> I had no reason to question this until I recently read (somewhat belatedly) Stephen
> Granade's 1999 interview with Mike which suggested that Confetti/Chameleon was
> the cancelled Infocom game, with Dr Dumont being a later work always intended for
> First Row Software.
>
> Mike, to save me having sleepless nights over this, can you shed some light on the
> situation regarding the history of "Dr Dumont"?

Sure, Steve. Here's the story as well as my synapses can remember:

I left Infocom so Muffy and I could start a company called "Brainwave Creations." This company was supposed to create ideas and designs for games — design only. At the time (the mid 1980s), there were more coders than designers, and we figured we could get out of the coding business. Be in the architecture business rather than the construction business.

Broderbund agreed to put us on retainer so I could quit Infocom, and flew me out to Karlofornia to meet with the Synapse people. Everything was fine, but when the first check was to appear and did not, I called and found out that they had fired their VP of Product Development and the new VP was not at all interested in a design firm. Sigh. So we put on our creative hats, came up with a frightening concept, and went out to sell it...

We had an idea for a game, *Confetti*, which we pitched and sold to Infocom. It was such a different approach, they signed it on the spot with just a proposal, came out to meet with us, etc. They were very excited/shocked about the whole thing. It was a networked story, character driven, with no puzzles. We started work on it and quickly realized we were in well over our heads. It was impossible for Muff and I to wrap our minds around the whole project, and any attempt to organize it failed. It was like trying to hold a gallon of water in our bare hands. We had charts covering the walls, story line charts, character charts, spread sheets, etc., but no matter how we looked at it, we eventually ended up with a glazed look, staring off into space, wondering how the hell we could ever get this done. Well, we gave up and eventually offered to return the money to Infocom, which they magnanimously refused, and told them that we couldn't figure out how to design it, never mind code it.

Through the entire Brainwave time period, I was also working on a ZIL-like language I called IVY whose source code resembled ZIL. I was planning on using it to write adventures for Broderbund and others, so by the time we gave up on Confetti, IVY was mostly done.

A few days later, Muff was reading about the search for particle X, and the thought of making a search for particle X in metaphor seemed like a cool idea. Particle physics was a big thing at the time. So we planned out how it might work. We called the project "Rager," with was an acronym for the device used (the isolation tank linked to the particle accelerator) to put the character in the sub-atomic world (later renamed P.A.R.T.I.).

We were approached by Origin Systems, and the *Rager* concept was pretty well developed by that time. They signed a three game deal with us for text adventures, and I started work coding *Rager*. About two months into the project, Activision bought Infocom, and Origin figured it would be nuts to go into the adventure game market when Infocom had failed. (BTW, Infocom's failure had nothing to do with adventures and everything to do with their business product, Tombst... er... Cornerstone.)

So, I finished coding *Rager*, thinking we could sell it somewhere.

When the dust settled at Infocom, we approached them with *Rager*, now a playable game. We offered it to make up for blowing the *Confetti* deal, and they were thrilled with the idea. They played it, liked it, and asked me to recode it in ZIL so they could use their interpreter for it. So I recoded it in ZIL and, the day of delivery, Activision, who had bought Infocom, canceled all outside projects. Sigh.

A few weeks later I got a call from First Row Software. I should never have answered the phone. They needed

a product. We needed the money. We already had *Rager* coded in IVY. Since there were so many Marx Bros. references in the game, we renamed it *Dr. Dumont's Wild PARTI* due to Margaret Dumont, Groucho's "straight man" in so many of their movies.

We didn't know it at the time, but First Row was a tax shelter for some wealthy people in Phillie, and they had no intentions of marketing the product. The company went under a few weeks after Dr. D shipped.

Oh, and BTW, *Confetti* is *Chameleon*. *Rager* is *Dumont.* And my brain hurts. :)

Excerpts from Stephen Granade's interview with Michael Berlyn:

Stephen: I noticed that you're selling a text adventure of your own, *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.* What was the origin of that game?

Mike: *Dr. Dumont's* started as a game Muffy and I wanted to do, way back in the 1980's. (Sigh. Dinosaur time.) Anyway, we were intrigued by particle physics and the elusive search for smaller and odder particles. It seemed to be a natural to us, so we started figuring out how someone could view particles, etc.

Stephen: Didn't you originally write a lot of it in the 80's as well?

Mike: Yes. Most of the design was done in the 80's. But because I had to write the code and the development environment (there was no TADS or Inform then) I didn't pay attention to the details in the game. Muffy had to leave the project to work on something else — some design work for *Tass Times in Tonetown*, I think — so I had to finish it up as best I could in a rush. We were being pressured by First Row Software (now out of business) to finish it quickly. It had essentially no testing and we ended up shipping it not even having played it through more than once ourselves. When we thought of the game in our new publishing venture, we thought of how nice it would be to fix all the bugs, fix all the typos, and flesh out the game the way it should have been. Thanks to Mark Musante porting it to Inform, we could then do the revisions and additions we'd always wanted to.

Stephen: How long did it take the three of you to code and revise *Dr. Dumont's*?

Mike: If I remember correctly (which I seldom do), Mark had the code done in a few months. Then Muff and I had at the code, fixing some porting issues, adding a lot of conversation topics, some new areas, rewriting some puzzles. I think we spent another 2 months on it, full time (10 or more hours a day).

Stephen: What did you do in between your time at Infocom and when you formed CMP? You mentioned large team games.

Mike: I left Infocom to work with Muffy. She was not allowed to be an employee as we were married. Go figure. (As I said, some of the best **and** the worst of times...) Anyway, we formed a small company called Brain-wave Creations. We did a game for Infocom (*Confetti*), for First Row (*Dr. Dumont*) and for Activision (*Tass Times*). We also worked on an early draft of a writer's tool called *WriteIdea*. We were also teaching Creative Writing at Harvard at the time. Very stressful times. Anyway, it was getting harder and harder to sign up interesting projects on the east coast. By then, Infocom had pretty much gone away, as had most other east coast game companies.

Stephen: Since it seems we're back to CMP, what new products are you working on or releasing soon? Earlier you said that you thought it was time for eBooks.

Mike: We are currently in negotiations with several big-name SF authors for their ebooks. Can't name names yet. But our products in the eBook area should jump up exponentially soon. We're also working on a Win9X reader and a Mac reader. The handheld readers are coming along slowly.

We're about to ship *Dakota Dreamin'* by Hugo Award Winner Bill Johnson in trade paperback. Going to print soon is Gregory Frost's *Lyrec* and Stefan Petrucha's *Making God.* Petrucha, by the way, wrote the X-Files comic book and *Making God* is an absolute killer book.

And I continue to work on *Chameleon* (aka *Confetti*) with Muffy when we have the time. Also,

WriteIdea should be seeing the light of day in a few months.

Stephen: What is *Chameleon* about?

Mike: *Chameleon* is puzzle-less IF. In it, you receive a letter from an old friend, Remmy, who asks you for your help. He's in New York City, and you haven't seen him in years. When you arrive there, things are not the way they should be.

When someone plays the game, Remmy's reason for calling you, your past relationship with him, and all the secondary characters' relationships and roles in the story will change. So playing it the same way twice will be next to impossible.

You can see why we named it Chameleon. (Grins)

Stephen: Quite. When do you expect your book about your time at Infocom to be done, and do you have a publisher?

Mike: Now why wouldn't I have CMP publish it?

Stephen: (Laughs) Good point. When should we start looking for it?

Mike: It's a good year away is my guess. I have chatted with Eileen Mullen at XYZZY News about her publishing some excerpts from the book. But it is a back-burner project. Right now, as far as my creative energies go, nothing is more important than finishing *Chameleon*.

Michael closed down Cascade Mountain Publishing early in 2000 . But he did promise to be back with a new company with a more focused goal: *"I am not giving up. I am closing CMP. CMP was a Hydra: print books, eBooks, and IF. Next time, it'll be just IF. And there will be a next time."*

Chameleon
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Confetti

Z

Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.

by Michael Berlyn

Inception of Doctor Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.:

Date: 5 Oct 1987 1642-EDT
Subject: Rager
From: nJo celPaa <JON at FRED>
To: Amy, Veldran cc: SWG, JDArnold, liz, clr, jon

It looks like we're going to publish Rager.

Please write down your thoughts about the game. (Pretend you're a beta tester.) What did you like? What didn't you like? (For instance, I think Amy said the player should either wake up in the Lab, or the Bedroom should be the central location.) Specific bugs aren't that important at this stage; giving the Berlyns general/conceptual feedback would be most useful.

I'll probably ask a few more people to play the game soon so we can give the Berlyns yet more feedback early on. (I don't think we'll have time to have a "full" round of alpha, beta, and gamma testing.)

Date: 22 Oct 1987 1834-EDT
Subject: Re: enRAGERed
cc: TAA, JON, CLR, SWG
From: Truly Gas Tale <SWG at FRED>
To: MSB

Well, I used RMODE and then ZILCH to check and correct your flies. Take them back for a while and do these things:

* Variables always need period or comma in front, except when you SET or SETG them. Look for PUT, GET, FSET? uses.
* <VERB? FOO> and ,V?FOO must be in upper case.
* Look at RAGER.ERRORS for things that weren't compiled right.

Overall, I think what you've sent so far is in pretty good shape! When it's my turn again with the flies, I'll integrate them better with the Info-substrate (tm).

Date: 23 Oct 1987 0752-EDT
Subject: Re: enRAGERed
From: Michael S. Berlyn <MSB at FRED>
To: SWG

Mega Thanks. As we discussed over the phone, I am taking the torch (read FILES) back for more massaging today, FRI. I might as well keep them o'er the weekend, attempting to include the I-RTNS in as well. As I think of it, I will include them in a seperate file called IRTNS.ZIL. Clever, Trevor?

I may also semicolon-out the (DO-VERB MUMBLE "any string") prop for now... if the RAGER.ERRORS file looks like it didn't like them.

More via voice if, and when, progress is made.

Hasta Luigi,

Mike

Date: 27 Oct 1987 1216-EST From: Homebody Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: New New Zork Times To: da

When are the next crop of articles due? Really due, I mean, since I may have trouble with the Rager article (since the game still has no name, a barely finalized plot and a nebulous concept).

Date: 28 Oct 1987 1856-EST From: Michael S. Berlyn <MSB at FRED>
Subject: Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I. To: SWG

How's DAT for a name?

Date: 31 Oct 1987 1403-EST From: Michael S. Berlyn <MSB at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC

Well, thanks, amio migo. We are both doing so-so, after some major diseases (hypothyroidism, post-herpetic neuralgia,slipped disc, etc...) BUT our spirits remain up!

The game is about 95% there, at last. And it is me logged in. Muff & programming are still like from different planets. How are YOU doing? WHAT are you doing?

And can you believe that we're here, years later? Coding in this development system again?

AY-YI-YI!!!!
Michael

Date: 31 Oct 1987 1422-EST From: Michael S. Berlyn <MSB at FRED>
Subject: Re: Etc… To: MARC

I'm really glad to hear from you and see you're doing well. Muff & I are doing RAGER (which will be renamed something like Dr. Pimento's Wild P.A.R.T.I. (if you can believe THAT!) to cover our asses for a badly-slipped deadline. We also wanted to get away from the "standard" way of doing things, so we proposed something a wee-bit-ODD...

and InfrobozzCo (TM) bought it. FOUR MONTHS LATER... we hadn't even started to code it. Thanks to overreaching in design. So we ran so far amuck, we sold InfroBomb our "standard" Tim-Leary-type adventure, RAGER.

This development system makes me want to pull what little of my hair is left right out of my scalp. *sigh*

I wrote my own system in "C" and it works because there aren't 15 people improving the system, without documenting changes... etc. A good 50% of my time has been spend learning what the universe looks like now, according to who's theory, etc. *sigh*

Talked to Margot the other day. She's testing a product of ours and I just know she'd want me to say hi. She asks after you, and if you should ever feel like chatting with her, she's in OCEANO, about 3.5 hrs north of you! her num: 805-489-6371.

Listen, I gotta get back to this *thrilling* game here, but I'll drop you some MM-type mail soon, to keep in touch.

Hasta Pasta, as always, I remain, confused as ever,
Michael

Newsgroups: rec.arts.int-fiction, rec.games.int-fiction
Subject: Re: On behalf of Mike Berlyn... (LONG ANSWER)
From: Michael Berlyn <mberlyn@cascadepublishing.com>
Date: Tue, 09 May 2000 08:22:35 -0700

Steve Evans wrote:

> Firstly, I must say that the demise of CMP *[Cascade Mountain Publishing]*
> is very sad, but I was heartened by Mike's comment that the much anticipated
> "Chameleon" will still be released.

Thanks. I am working at it.

> Given the amount of interest in IF there should still be a place for a commercial
> IF enterprise, and I hope that sometime soon the time will be right for a new venture.

I am not giving up. I am closing CMP. CMP was a Hydra: print books, eBooks, and IF. Next time, it'll be just IF. And there will be a next time.

> Secondly, on the subject of Dr Dumont's Wild PARTI, I read some time ago in Hans
> Perrson's Adventureland pages that this game was originally intended for Infocom.
>
> About it, Hans says:
> "This was originally written for Infocom but when they were taken over by Activision,
> all outside projects were cancelled, and although the alpha version had been delivered,
> they returned the rights to the game to the authors."
>
> I had no reason to question this until I recently read (somewhat belatedly) Stephen
> Granade's 1999 interview with Mike which suggested that Confetti/Chameleon was
> the cancelled Infocom game, with Dr Dumont being a later work always intended for
> First Row Software.
>
> Mike, to save me having sleepless nights over this, can you shed some light on the
> situation regarding the history of "Dr Dumont"?

Sure, Steve. Here's the story as well as my synapses can remember:

I left Infocom so Muffy and I could start a company called "Brainwave Creations." This company was supposed to create ideas and designs for games — design only. At the time (the mid 1980s), there were more coders than designers, and we figured we could get out of the coding business. Be in the architecture business rather than the construction business.

Broderbund agreed to put us on retainer so I could quit Infocom, and flew me out to Karlofornia to meet with the Synapse people. Everything was fine, but when the first check was to appear and did not, I called and found out that they had fired their VP of Product Development and the new VP was not at all interested in a design firm. Sigh. So we put on our creative hats, came up with a frightening concept, and went out to sell it...

We had an idea for a game, *Confetti*, which we pitched and sold to Infocom. It was such a different approach, they signed it on the spot with just a proposal, came out to meet with us, etc. They were very excited/shocked about the whole thing. It was a networked story, character driven, with no puzzles. We started work on it and quickly realized we were in well over our heads. It was impossible for Muff and I to wrap our minds around the whole project, and any attempt to organize it failed. It was like trying to hold a gallon of water in our bare hands. We had charts covering the walls, story line charts, character charts, spread sheets, etc., but no matter how we looked at it, we eventually ended up with a glazed look, staring off into space, wondering how the hell we could ever get this done. Well, we gave up and eventually offered to return the money to Infocom, which they magnanimously refused, and told them that we couldn't figure out how to design it, never mind code it.

Through the entire Brainwave time period, I was also working on a ZIL-like language I called IVY whose source code resembled ZIL. I was planning on using it to write adventures for Broderbund and others, so by the

time we gave up on Confetti, IVY was mostly done.

A few days later, Muff was reading about the search for particle X, and the thought of making a search for particle X in metaphor seemed like a cool idea. Particle physics was a big thing at the time. So we planned out how it might work. We called the project "Rager," with was an acronym for the device used (the isolation tank linked to the particle accelerator) to put the character in the sub-atomic world (later renamed P.A.R.T.I.).

We were approached by Origin Systems, and the *Rager* concept was pretty well developed by that time. They signed a three game deal with us for text adventures, and I started work coding *Rager*. About two months into the project, Activision bought Infocom, and Origin figured it would be nuts to go into the adventure game market when Infocom had failed. (BTW, Infocom's failure had nothing to do with adventures and everything to do with their business product, Tombst... er... Cornerstone.)

So, I finished coding Rager, thinking we could sell it somewhere.

When the dust settled at Infocom, we approached them with *Rager*, now a playable game. We offered it to make up for blowing the *Confetti* deal, and they were thrilled with the idea. They played it, liked it, and asked me to recode it in ZIL so they could use their interpreter for it. So I recoded it in ZIL and, the day of delivery, Activision, who had bought Infocom, canceled all outside projects. Sigh.

A few weeks later I got a call from First Row Software. I should never have answered the phone. They needed a product. We needed the money. We already had *Rager* coded in IVY. Since there were so many Marx Bros. references in the game, we renamed it *Dr. Dumont's Wild PARTI* due to Margaret Dumont, Groucho's "straight man" in so many of their movies.

We didn't know it at the time, but First Row was a tax shelter for some wealthy people in Phillie, and they had no intentions of marketing the product. The company went under a few weeks after Dr. D shipped.

Oh, and BTW, Confetti is Chameleon. Rager is Dumont. And my brain hurts. :)

Newsgroups: rec.arts.int-fiction,rec.games.int-fiction
Subject: Re: On behalf of Mike Berlyn... (NOT SO LONG NOW)
From: Steve Evans <baskingshark@my-deja.com>
Date: Tue, 09 May 2000 23:31:48 GMT

Michael Berlyn <mberlyn@cascadepublishing.com> wrote:

> Broderbund agreed to put us on retainer so I could quit Infocom, and flew me out
> to Karlofornia to meet with the Synapse people. Everything was fine, but when
> the first check was to appear and did not, I called and found out that they had fired
> their VP of Product Development and the new VP was not at all interested in a
> design firm. Sigh. So we put on our creative hats, came up with a frightening
> concept, and went out to sell it...

The Synapse connection (excuse the pun) was something I hadn't known before, and the timing of this would have been unfortunate. This was about the time that Broderbund cancelled the final three of Synapse's own interactive novels (Ronin, House of Change and Deadly Summer) as being too racy for the family market.

> Through the entire Brainwave time period, I was also working on a ZIL-like
> language I called IVY whose source code resembled ZIL. I was planning on
> using it to write adventures for Broderbund and others, so by the time we gave
> up on Confetti, IVY was mostly done.

I've seen the IVY version of Dr. Dumont. The parser was pretty good. :-)

All the best,
Steve

From the Adventureland web page:

First Row Software's *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.*

Written 1987 by Michael Berlyn and Muffy Berlyn.

Notes: This was originally written for Infocom but when they were taken over by Activision, all outside projects were cancelled, and although the alpha version had been delivered, they returned the rights to the game to the authors. First Row Software folded a few months after the release of *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.* due to lack of funding.

Cascade Mountain Publishing's *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.*
Written by Michael Berlyn and Muffy McClung Berlyn.

Notes: This is a new version of the game originally released by First Row Software. This version is about twice the size of the original *Dumont.* Mark Musante ported the original game to Inform, then the original authors revised and expanded it. It has a built-in hint system.

Package blurb:
In the surreal tradition of Tass Times In Tonetown...

Failing physics—again—would be traumatic enough. But now, you're trapped inside a Particle Accelerator and Reality Translation Integrator, the product of mad genius meeting mixed metaphors. Originally designed to help the human mind understand particle physics, the sub-atomic world inside is a strange blend of mysticism and science, of Zen contemplation and Marx Brothers movies. Dr. Gregory Dumont has sucked you into his P.A.R.T.I., but it's no picnic in there.

Cascade Mountain Publishing is proud to announce the release of *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.*, their latest full-length interactive fiction adventure. CMP broke onto the scene last year with the long-awaited release of *Once and Future*, the epic adventure tale that re-established top-quality interactive fiction in the gaming marketplace.

This special release of *P.A.R.T.I.* revives Dr. Dumont and his bizarre particle accelerator from a decade-long slumber. The new version includes an expanded *P.A.R.T.I.* world, a built-in hint system, and all of the important contents of Dr. Dumont's desk and cork board!

The new version of *P.A.R.T.I.* is available for the first time in the popular cross-platform Inform format, making it compatible for systems ranging from palmtops to workstations (and, of course, PCs and Macs for the more conventional gameplayer.)

Explore the wonders of the Science Art Museum (open 24 hours) on your PalmPilot! Visit the UnFair in Linux! Thrill to the Kite Races on your Psion 5! The mysteries of Particle X are in there somewhere, and without your wits and a Diploma of Thought, jealously guarded by the mysterious Professor Parti, it's going to be a long day.

Although Dr. Dumont's input was invaluable, *P.A.R.T.I.* is the brainchild of the First Couple of interactive fiction, Muffy McClung Berlyn and Michael Berlyn. The Berlyns are behind a number of breakthrough games, including *Suspended, Cutthroats, Tass Times In Tonetown, Infidel,* and *Oo-Topos*.

"We're excited about introducing *Dr. Dumont* to a whole new class of undergrads," says Michael Berlyn, co-author and publisher. "We're dedicated to changing the way people think about text adventures, and I can't think of a better way to change one's perspective than to step inside Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I."

This special release of *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.* is an electronic-only product. For $24.00, you can download the game package from Cascade Mountain's eCommerce server, including an Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file containing important documentation and "props" from Dr. Dumont's office.

Newsgroups: rec.arts.int-fiction,rec.games.int-fiction
Subject: Re: On behalf of Mike Berlyn... (LONG ANSWER)
From: Andrew Plotkin <erkyrath@eblong.com>
Date: 9 May 2000 17:18:52 GMT

In rec.arts.int-fiction Matthew Murray <mmurray@cc.wwu.edu> wrote:
> Also, if you're making Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I freeware, can it be
> downloaded from GMD, or did you make it available elsewhere? (I think you may
> may have said something about that earlier, but I couldn't find it in the thread.)

First message, posted by Gunther.
It's at /if-archive/games/zcode/dumont.z5 on gmd.de; the manual and other documentation are in the same directory.

Excerpts from Stephen Granade's interview with Michael Berlyn:

Stephen: I noticed that you're selling a text adventure of your own, *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.* What was the origin of that game?

Mike: *Dr. Dumont's* started as a game Muffy and I wanted to do, way back in the 1980's. (Sigh. Dinosaur time.) Anyway, we were intrigued by particle physics and the elusive search for smaller and odder particles. It seemed to be a natural to us, so we started figuring out how someone could view particles, etc.

Stephen: Didn't you originally write a lot of it in the 80's as well?

Mike: Yes. Most of the design was done in the 80's. But because I had to write the code and the development environment (there was no TADS or Inform then) I didn't pay attention to the details in the game. Muffy had to leave the project to work on something else — some design work for *Tass Times in Tonetown*, I think — so I had to finish it up as best I could in a rush. We were being pressured by First Row Software (now out of business) to finish it quickly. It had essentially no testing and we ended up shipping it not even having played it through more than once ourselves. When we thought of the game in our new publishing venture, we thought of how nice it would be to fix all the bugs, fix all the typos, and flesh out the game the way it should have been. Thanks to Mark Musante porting it to Inform, we could then do the revisions and additions we'd always wanted to.

Stephen: How long did it take the three of you to code and revise *Dr. Dumont's*?

Mike: If I remember correctly (which I seldom do), Mark had the code done in a few months. Then Muff and I had at the code, fixing some porting issues, adding a lot of conversation topics, some new areas, rewriting some puzzles. I think we spent another 2 months on it, full time (10 or more hours a day).

Stephen: What did you do in between your time at Infocom and when you formed CMP? You mentioned large team games.

Mike: I left Infocom to work with Muffy. She was not allowed to be an employee as we were married. Go figure. (As I said, some of the best **and** the worst of times...) Anyway, we formed a small company called Brainwave Creations. We did a game for Infocom (*Confetti*), for First Row (*Dr. Dumont*) and for Activision (*Tass Times*). We also worked on an early draft of a writer's tool called *WriteIdea*. We were also teaching Creative Writing at Harvard at the time. Very stressful times. Anyway, it was getting harder and harder to sign up interesting projects on the east coast. By then, Infocom had pretty much gone away, as had most other east coast game companies.

Stephen: Since it seems we're back to CMP, what new products are you working on or releasing soon? Earlier you said that you thought it was time for eBooks.

Mike: We are currently in negotiations with several big-name SF authors for their ebooks. Can't name names yet. But our products in the eBook area should jump up exponentially soon. We're also working on a Win9X reader and a Mac reader. The handheld readers are coming along slowly.

We're about to ship *Dakota Dreamin'* by Hugo Award Winner Bill Johnson in trade paperback. Going to print soon is Gregory Frost's *Lyrec* and Stefan Petrucha's *Making God.* Petrucha, by the way, wrote the X-Files comic book and *Making God* is an absolute killer book.

And I continue to work on *Chameleon* (aka *Confetti*) with Muffy when we have the time. Also, WriteIdea should be seeing the light of day in a few months.

Stephen: What is *Chameleon* about?

Mike: *Chameleon* is puzzle-less IF. In it, you receive a letter from an old friend, Remmy, who asks you for your help. He's in New York City, and you haven't seen him in years. When you arrive there, things are not the way they should be.

When someone plays the game, Remmy's reason for calling you, your past relationship with him, and all the secondary characters' relationships and roles in the story will change. So playing it the same way twice will be next to impossible.

You can see why we named it Chameleon. (Grins)

Stephen: Quite. When do you expect your book about your time at Infocom to be done, and do you have a publisher?

Mike: Now why wouldn't I have CMP publish it?

Stephen: (Laughs) Good point. When should we start looking for it?

Mike: It's a good year away is my guess. I have chatted with Eileen Mullen at XYZZY News about her publishing some excerpts from the book. But it is a back-burner project. Right now, as far as my creative energies go, nothing is more important than finishing *Chameleon*.

Michael closed down Cascade Mountain Publishing early in 2000 . But he did promise to be back with a new company with a more focused goal: "*I am not giving up. I am closing CMP. CMP was a Hydra: print books, eBooks, and IF. Next time, it'll be just IF. And there will be a next time*."

Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.
Working Titles & Nicknames List

Rager
enRAGERed
Dr. Pimento's Wild P.A.R.T.I.

Z

The Restaurant at the End of the Universe

by Stu Galley

Restaurant's inception:

Game idea: MILLIWAYS or **RESTAURANT AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE:**
Takes up where "Hitchhiker's" left off. Manufactured planets, Deep Thought, white mice, time travel, 1001 verb tenses, digital watches, the Frogstar, Total Perspective Vortex, the End of History! [Does Douglas really want to work on this at this time? Does it matter?]

Date: 29 Jul 1987 1136-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Restaurant To: CLR cc: TAA, SWG

I have been acting as a "producer" (using the Activision term) for Confetti, and Stu has been for Sherlock. Is anybody acting as producer for Restaurant? I get the impression that Bywater has been making design notes (in <BYWATER>DESIGN.TXT and perhaps on the Mac II) but has not taken advantage of the technical and creative resources here at Infocom. In other words, the work he's doing could be done anywhere, so I'm not sure why he's here. But given that he NEEDS to do what he's doing, I guess there's nothing else to be done. I suppose we could "insist" he attend a design session (with the people of his choice?), but would that accomplish anything?

I guess that, like Stu, I feel he came here ill-prepared, and we're paying his rent in Belmont for no good reason. He may as well be doing this work in London, running up his own phone bills.

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1426-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: BYWATER To: EVERYBODY at FRED

A team of crack private investigators (actually, Carol) reports that Michael
1) has not been killed in a plane crash
2) can be reached on Nantucket at 228-6597

Excerpt of a message on various topics that explains Anita's and Michael's involvement with Infocom:

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1441-EDT From: Chaaa on Planet J <JON at FRED>
Subject: Mostly boring stuff To: Imps at FRED

Below are the notes I took at this morning's meeting. (Joel et al. wasn't here last Thursday, which is why we had the meeting today.)

Will Infocom market Anita Sinclair's games starting Fall 1988? Anita has to give British Telecom 5 more products, then her contractual obligation to them is done. Joel isn't confident that we'll be able to strike a deal with Magnetic Strolls, but says we should and will try. Bywater is to write a game for her; it may be an interactive Bible. (Unknown where he/she got the idea, but let's remember that she IS a competitor so we should be discreet talking with Bywater and Sinclair.)

Bywater likely to do no programming while he's here; he'll just leave a script. We assumed he was going to do the bulk of the programming, though we would do a lot of the debugging. Have to figure out how to train Bywater so he can do the bulk of programming, and figure out when he's going to do it.

Date: 25 Jan 1988 1603-EST From: Babberley Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Restaurant at the End of the Universe To: jon cc: joel, amy

I just wanted to clarify in writing what we discussed about "Restaurant" last Tuesday — what I will and will not agree to.

A. Pretty much merely what we discussed.

I said I will not sign a blank sheet of paper: I refuse to take responsibility for "Restaurant" in the state it presently is in — not knowing who is creatively in charge, how much thinking has actually been done, or how much of a script is written.

On the other hand, I would volunteer to be the Imp in charge of it for the next three or so weeks, if you merely want someone to be there holding the strings together. Those three or so weeks, however, I will not permit to stretch into several months and ultimate responsibility for the game.

What I'd like to see is a piece of paper, on which is an exact, REALISTIC schedule of how much creative input the programmer is to receive, and when, that Bywater and/or Adams has/have signed. Then I'll tell you whether I agree to take the project or not. (It would probably be a good idea to include me in on the meetings to determine the numbers in the first place.)

B. Further thoughts, and attempts to clarify further.

I'll be frank — If you want me to code "Restaurant":

1) There is absolutely no possibility that I could have a finished product of "Restaurant" by October, 1988, even assuming I had a complete script of the game to work from before the end of January. It is doubtful I could make it by November, either.

2) The longer it takes to get a complete script to this side of the Atlantic, the less likely the game will come out in 1988 at all. If the rumor I have heard of a script in early March is true, then the game is right out.

3) The less script I get, meaning the more creative input I offer, would add time. Working with no script (so I develop the whole game, with a lot of Steve's input) would, I estimate, add 6-9 weeks to the length of the project (and that's a conservative estimate). If I am going to design the thing, I have to know by mid-February that the British contingent are out of the equation.

4) The more people designing the project, the more uneasy I get about the whole thing. A game cannot be written by a committee. If Anita or Bywater or Adams is writing it, fine, but not all three.

5) In any case, whether the game were designed by me or by them/him, I would be open to comments and criticisms. I will not, however, hold up the project waiting on these, nor change things once their window of opportunity has closed. I am trying to avoid the last-minute re-write of "Bureaucracy." This is something that I would like made totally clear to Adams or whichever collaborator is decided on, since I suppose you'd like to avoid lawsuits.

1+2+3+4+5 = I will not agree to this project if you want a product before October, nor if the other time-consuming factors come into play and you want it in 1988. I will not code for some nebulous quantity that may or may not offer comments and suggestions at some indeterminate time during the course of the project.

C. A couple of last minute considerations.

Since I have not written an XZIP game before, and am still somewhat of a neophyte at ZIL in general, and since we are now adding the bells and whistles of sound and graphics to our games, I should fairly warn you that I will probably need the assistance of another imp at times. Especially given the cramped nature of the schedule.

I must have some sort of "puzzle-veto" on the design, if they write it, for the obvious reason that some ideas are just not codable.

Date: 5 Feb 1988 1324-EST From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: SIGH II To: PDL cc: SWG, TAA, CLR

Well, I tried using more than 16 parts of speech in the skeleton Restaurant game (H2), and it partly worked. Some of the parser tables that XXZILCH generated had too-big numbers in them, even though the source code seems to be trying to do the right thing.

Surprisingly, the ZIP file became slightly smaller!

Dave Lebling expresses his opinion on Restaurant's development:

Date: 24 Feb 1988 2131-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Flame Alert To: jon

(Flame on)

As you might have guessed, I was pretty depressed by today's events regarding Restaurant. It seems to me that we have been played for fools by Bywater, Anita, et al.

Anita's theory has always been that MS do H2. She presented this theory to Douglas and me when I was in London last Spring. Douglas was clearly unimpressed. We paid Bywater a big chunk of money to design H2 last year, and he (to be charitable) did not come up with a compelling design. He did, of course, cash our check.

We now "have to" have H2 out in fiscal '89. This is understandable, since we have had to have it out in each of the previous four fiscal years. So as usual, we try to pressure an imp into volunteering. Amy, being the only imp not currently working on something, semi-volunteers, contingent on a design existing by right about now. Surprise, surprise: there's no design! Gosh, guess Anita and Michael will have to do it, Batman!

Okay, maybe this is a good idea. One person I talked to said, "When it sells 20,000 copies we'll finally be rid of Douglas Adams." That may be a little cynical. However, let's look at the alternatives.

If MS does it, we have no creative control. I cannot believe that after all this time and effort, we would not publish whatever they come up with, as long as it's reasonably bug-free. Look at how much trouble we are having getting TSP to do what we want, when we are officially collaborating with them, and they are a local phone call away. Anita is no fool; she knows this and will come up with exactly the game she wants. As it will be written in their development system, we won't even have the minimal control we had over Challenge.

Let's suppose for a moment that the game is a big success, sells Dorn's projected 100K copies. Does that benefit us? Sure, some; we get more money than if the game isn't done. It seems to me that it benefits MS much more than it benefits us. It is an official acknowledgment that we think they are as good as we are, that we think they can do this game better than we can, that our vaunted new technology is not needed for a good game, and so on ad nauseum. It sends every possible wrong message I can think of in the PR realm is problematic enough to think of publishing any MS game under our banner, but one which we "own" is really wrong.

Now, that's the optimistic scenario. Let's suppose the game is a bomb. Let's face it, Bureaucracy was a bomb. Jinxter is reputed to be a bomb. Bywater wrote both of them. There's Dornbrook's sure 100k seller converted into a $14.95 delisted product. If it's a bomb we get exactly the same bad PR as before, but in addition they say we can't even tell a bomb when we see one. "Infocom couldn't do it themselves, so they had this junk written instead. Boy are they going downhill."

This game is another camel. It's now Bywater, Sinclair, Paul X., and Douglas. If we bludgeon Steve or me into taking it over at alpha from a demoralized Amy, it's even more of a dromedary.

I don't know what the right solution is. I wish I did. The only way this game is going to get written and be a success is if we find someone on this side of the Atlantic who really wants to do it, and an absolute minimum of actual collaborators (preferably consisting only of Douglas [dream on...]) on that side. Until that situation exists, we should not consider doing it. Each solution, as for Bureaucracy before, is more makeshift than the last, more expensive, and more damaging to our reputation.

If we continue on the present path, it's going to be an abortion that will at best damage our reputation and at worst our pocketbook as well.

(Flame off)

Date: 25 Feb 1988 1659-EST From: Amaranthine Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: restaurant flame To: PDL

Yes, that's a flame, all right!

I tend to agree with Jon, however (or at least, with what you said Jon said) — I agree whole-heartedly with all your premises, but not your conclusion. Or rather, I agree with your conclusion, but do not feel it can happen ("it" being a shelved Restaurant until there's local interest). We can't put the game off much longer and still have it be timely (the "do-Stationfall-now-or-never" theory of sequels), and we've already spent so much on it that we can't not do it (in the short-term accounting books of those upstairs). I also don't have a better idea.

I do feel bad about stirring this whole thing up again. I just can't see what good doing Restaurant will do, good for Infocom or me (mostly me).

Date: 25 Feb 1988 1915-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: PDL cc: JOEL, JON

I thank you for your opinions, but you obviously appreciate the dilemma that we face. In a time when we are struggling to reach revenue levels that we allow us to maintain some semblance of a reasonable place to work, a sequel to a product that has brought us $5 million so far is extremely tempting.

For better or worse we have brought Bywater into the loop as primary writer because no viable internal alternative presented itself. So far we have failed to get useful work out of him, but Magnetic Scrolls has demonstrated some success. The choice here seems to be to use MS as best we can or to give up on Bywater and start from scratch. The latter option would of course put us back where we were a year ago, having to draft some imp.

Which brings us to the present decision point... It would have been nice if you or Steve had enthusiastically volunteered to take over from Amy. However, this project is getting fragile enough without having some conscript do the final implementation.

While I am not thrilled about having MS implement the game, it is certainly an available option. I may be naive about this, but I do feel that we can have a significant impact on the game without actually implementing it ourselves. For your information, it currently has the most relaxed schedule of any product we have in development.

I would tend to discount the conspiracy theory somewhat. For one thing Anita has put very little effort into convincing me to let MS implement the game. For another, Amy's decision to leave was presumably not influenced by Anita.

At this point we need to get past the "life is unfair" stage of the problem and select the best solution, even if that solution is not as wonderful as we might like. I would welcome any input on which solution to choose.

Date: 26 Feb 1988 1005-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: JOEL

Thanks for your response. I agree that it would be nice to have Restaurant for "business" reasons. I'm just afraid that it will be both a business and artistic failure. Sigh.

While I agree that Amy's decision to leave wasn't part of a conspiracy (I certainly didn't mean to imply that), the longer things were delayed in England, the more uncertain things got here, and the more desperate. I get the impression that the Restaurant situation precipitated a move she had been thinking about for some time.

Are we going to try to recruit more Imps? We are now down to two in-house ZIP-using game writers. We had seven a year ago.

I wish I could make you happy and say, "Yes, Joel, I will do Restaurant!" At least I assume that would make you happy. It certainly weakens my critical position vis a vis letting M.S. write it that I don't want to. Sigh, again.

If I were to do R. I would want to be in on it from scratch, and would want a minimal number of people from over there involved, preferably just Douglas as stated before. I don't see how either of those situations is likely to arise.

So I guess we are stuck with Magnetic Scrolls. Sigh, yet again.

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1224-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Restaurant To: sem, pdl

Joel tells me that the current theory is that Magnetic Screws create the game. Isn't this a big loss for us with lots of bad messages sent to the industry? Not that it's my business, but isn't there some way to get it done in-house, even taking Michael, Anita, and maybe even Douglas out of the loop?

Marc attempts to smooth things out with Dave and Steve:

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1322-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: PDL

My reading of Joel's comments (he was here visiting this weekend, by the way; please do likewise if you're ever nearby!) was that he'd be willing to drop all the others out of the picture if one of you or Steve were willing to do the whole thing.

He also gave me the impression that Amy was leaving; n'est-ce pas vrai?

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1345-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: PDL

Joel pretty much said flat out that he'd be willing to have an in-house imp do it "alone" (presumably with Douglas in a minor if any role), but he felt nobody would take it on. I got the distinct impression that he feels forced to go the Bywater/Anita route out of frustration.

I specifically said "Maybe they just don't want to work with cretins like Bywater and Anita; who would?", and he seemed surprised; I don't think it crossed his mind.

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1408-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Flame To: PDL

By the way, who did you sent that flame to and did you get any reasonable response?

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1702-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Flame To: PDL

It's hard to argue with that; on the other hand, Bureaucracy, by Douglas Adams, has sold diddly-squat. Who knows how well Restaurant would do?

Stevo said to me that he'd do the game, if freed from collaborators like Bywater and Anita. Joel said that was acceptable (at least, I think he said that.) Perhaps there's some chance of having that happen (which might be the best solution, under the circumstances...)

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1725-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Flame To: PDL

I agree completely; I really hope we can get this one back from the Brits.

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1304-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: MARC

The only way (apparently) that Joel will change his mind is if either Steve or I volunteer to do it, with Amy doing the initial up-to-Alpha implementation of M.S.'s design.

I agree that it is an awful idea, in terms of bad messages second only to having some outsider do a Zork. On the other hand, given how it has been set up (the Imp at this end not actually being a collaborator, but just a programmer, etc.) the deck is stacked against anyone local volunteering.

The following is the flame I sent Joel on the subject last week:

(See the "Flame Alert" message on page 507.)

Marc's attempt to smooth things out with Dave and Steve pays off, part 1:
Dave Lebling volunteers to work on Restaurant under certain conditions…

Date: 29 Feb 1988 1817-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Restaurant To: JOEL cc: jon

I am sufficiently convinced that having Magnetic Scrolls do Restaurant will be a disaster that I will volunteer to do it, under the following conditions:

1) That I needn't start on it until after Shogun is finished.
2) That I would be an actual collaborator, not a "programmer."
3) That only Douglas Adams and/or Michael Bywater be involved on the English side.
4) That a relatively complete outline of Adams/Bywater's ideas for the game exist by the time I start work. I would be willing give opinions/advice on this design as it is written, to avoid a totally losing design.
5) That there be no "waiting for Godot" after I start work. Contributions from the English collaborator would be solicited, but that if he doesn't do any work after his initial design, so be it.

In short, I would want the setup to be as much like an ordinary in-house collaboration as possible, such as Marc and I did on the Zorks and Enchanter.

I would expect Anita's involvement to be zero if Bywater is not the English collaborator, and extend no further than prodding Bywater if he is.

Marc's attempt to smooth things out with Dave and Steve pays off, part 2:
Steve Meretzky volunteers to work on Restaurant under certain conditions...

Date: 1 Mar 1988 0005-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Restaurant To: JOEL cc: JON, CLR, PDL

I recently heard (via Ye Olde Rumour Mill) that Restaurant may no longer be a Mandatory Product for Fiscal '89. If that's true, and if there's a consensus that it's worth delaying Restaurant just a bit more in order to do it in-house, let me list the circumstances under which I'd be interested in doing Restaurant:

a. If I can complete Zork Zero before beginning Restaurant.
b. If I'd be doing Restaurant as a full collaborator. (That is, as a co-designer/co-author/programmer, not just as a programmer.)
c. If the number of collaborators on Their Side was finite. The fewer the better, although I realize that 1 (or

zero) collaborators is probably an unrealistic goal.

d. If I don't have to spend any time cooped up with a smoker.

If you substitute "Shogun" for "Zork Zero" in the first item, I surmise that this approximates Dave's position also.

Doing Restaurant is not my Dream Come True, but I do have paternal feelings about the Hitchhiker's IF series, and I agree with those who think that letting Magnetic Scrolls do Restaurant would be, overall, a Big Mistake. I think we'd do a significantly better job, and that's good economically for Infocom and good aesthetically for the Hitchhiker's series.

As seen on the previous page, Steve's guess about Dave working on Restaurant was about right.

Date: 1 Mar 1988 1655-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: PDL

My interest is that Infocom not get screwed, and my sense is that having one of our best potential titles taken over by the MS people is an admission of defeat, both creatively and technologically.

I can, of course, understand Joel's point that an MS Restaurant is better than none at all, though I don't entirely agree with his reasoning. However, given the circumstances, he may feel as pressured to use MS as you may feel pressured to volunteer.

It seems that the only win-win situation would be to get Restaurant done in-house without hindering the current games and retaining creative and technical control. I only got involved because I thought it was possible that there was an option that might want to be re-explored before being discarded as unworkable.

Date: 1 Mar 1988 1701-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Restaurant To: PDL

The option may NOT be available; it's possible that Joel has spent enough time convincing himself that MS is the way to go that he will become unreasonable. My sense, though, was that he just hadn't heard any viable alternative.

Marc's attempt to smooth things out with Dave and Steve pays off, part 3:

Date: 5 Mar 1988 1729-EST From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: JOEL

Thanks for the offer to help with Tim. You might try talking to him when he gets back in a few days. Thanks also for your help concerning Restaurant. I don't know what you said to Steve and Dave, but they've both volunteered to do it (under perfectly reasonable conditions).

You might be interested in my overall impressions from the CD-ROM conference. I now feel that there will be opportunities for CD-ROM based multimedia software over the next couple of years, which may be the right place for much of the CDI software currently under consideration or development. CD-ROM drives connected to computers will soak up much of the initial demand for CDI.

I also think that DVI will begin to spread in computers and will, in three years or so, begin to strangle CDI in the living room market. Therefore while CDI may very will exist and even represent a sizable market, I don't see it having the mass success that Philips hopes for.

Further comments available on request...

Date: 8 Mar 1988 1701-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: RESTAURANT To: JON, JOEL, PDL, AMY

Anyone have a copy of the wodge that Bywater did when he was here?

Date: 26 Jul 1988 1718-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: You're Welcome To: Imps at FRED

I found a lengthy outline from Bywater for Restaurant as I tidied my office this afternoon. I wondered who to give it to ... Rob Sears now has it.

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 89 13:10:34 EST From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
Subject: Turbo Parser! To: taa@spike, pdl@spike, sem@spike Cc: swg@spike

... is now installed in Zork Zero, as of the next time it's compiled.

Turbo Parser Mark II (with improved adjective reductions) is now installed in Shogun and Restaurant (~dev/old/h2).

Timesink

by "Professor" Brian Moriarty

Very little is known about this unreleased game, but the best indication is that it was the next "Time Police" story, after Trinity.

Date: 7 Mar 1988 0851-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi! To: MARC

"Hello yourself, and see how you like it."

Yup, enthusiasm here for Journey is high. I've watched people playing it, and look forward to a real Alpha version.

My project (code-named Timesink) is also chugging along. Cardinal Toolbox is proving to be much more flexible than I'd been led to believe; and the C development system I'm using is spoiling me rotten. These machines are EVIL, Marc.

Laurel's fine (did you know we got engaged?).

Joel announced that CD-I was dead at our last company meeting. He brought back a fat folder full of DVI literature. Comments?

Excerpt from a message about Journey:

Date: 8 May 1988 1645-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Journeying To: MARC

I finally found a few minutes to sit down and play with Journey. Okay, I admit it. I'm impressed. If I weren't working on a Mac, I'd even be envious.

Once you turn off the useless graphics (which make the text box MUCH too narrow), the game is wonderfully easy to play. I figured out how to navigate the choices and lists without a glance at your docs. You seem to have struck a very useable balance between interaction and simplicity, and resasserted the expressiveness of our traditional all-text presentation. If I weren't deep into Timesink, I'd probably steal (er, adopt) some of your ideas in another title.

Date: 21 Jun 1988 0925-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Hello To: MARC

Hi again. My project is now in the Writing stage, in which I avoid tinkering with the user interface and concentrate on plotting and organizing my thoughts.

I think PDL likes your project; he's beginning to act envious.

Game Ideas

Miscellaneous ideas for unreleased games

Date: 9 Apr 1984 0929-EST From: PROF
Subject: Infocom Classics To: swg

Spent a few hours this weekend leafing through my dog-eared textbooks. Here's a list of likely candidates for the "Educational" games we were discussing (under the influence of Green Punch) last Friday:

In the royalty-free category (e.g.; cheap), we have

Dodgson's "Alice In Wonderland"

Who can resist the second most quoted book in the English language (second only to the Bible; and the author of that book probably stuffed the ballot box). Dozens of weird characters, interesting locations. Why aren't they doing this instead of Hitchhiker?

(NOTE: There's already a TRS-80 text adventure based on "Alice.")

Dickens' "Great Expectations"

The high school teachers would squirm in their panties over it.

Hawthorne's "House of the Seven Gables"

Secret passages. Magical mirrors. A poisonous well. The family curse. All the makings of a good game. And it's Literature, too!

Wells' "The Time Machine"

One of the few science fiction books (actually a Scientific Romance) deemed acceptable for use by educators. A lot could be done with this one.

Clemens' "Adventures of Tom Sawyer"

More action than "Huck Finn," and much less controversial. "Connecticut Yankee" is another good possibility by this author.

Stevenson's "Treasure Island"

We could put Scott Adams' "pirate Adventure" to shame.

Poe's "The Gold Bug"

Adventures in cryptography! Widely taught in high schools. And let's not forget "Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Fall of the House Of Usher." Or how about a compendium of his shorter tales ("Black Cat," "Pit and the Pendulum," "Tell-Tale Heart," etc.). I happen to know this Poe expert ...

Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes"

Pick a mystery out of the dozens available. Or do "The Hound of the Baskervilles", etc, etc. Doyle is widely used in high school English, believe it or not.

Washington Irving

Who can ignore "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" or "Rip Van Winkle?" The old biddies running our English departments certainly don't.

These products wouldn't have to be just for educators, either. With clever design, they could be made interesting enough to stand on their own along with Zork. Think of the fabulous accessories you could dream up for the packaging!

Let me know what you think.

Date: 18 Apr 1984 1109-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Smyrnablanca To: md

New movie idea: "Smyrnablanca". Sample dialogue
Capt. Poh C. Renault: "You may find it a trifle warm in Smyrnablanca."
Major Strasserbrook: "We Russians must get used to a variety of climates, from Scandinavia to the Sahara."
Rick Moriarty: "Are my eyes really blue?"

Date: 16 Jun 1985 2032-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at ZORK>
Subject: IDEA To: JON cc: BLANK

"New Products?" you ask?

How 'bout the idea for an Interactive First Aid program. Scenarios include:

Entering a room, finding a victim on the floor. Administering CPR. But first determining that he needs it by the usually steps in such determination. Then through the step-by-step process of life-saving.

A victim of electrocution. Must first move offending wire away with an object as non-conductor of electricity. Take pulse, check for shock — all that stuff: You're the doctor, Marc.

A fire in the house: Feel your door for heat. Lie on floor to avoid smoke, make a rope from your sheets and out the window with them — whatever you're supposed to do in this situation.

Baby choking on morsel of beef. Okay, what do you want to do now?

There are some other classic Safety Situations, which I can't now recall from my a film shown at an assembly in my junior high school days.

Would it sell? Offhand, I doubt that it would except to, perhaps, public institutions, which would pirate it widely — the same problem Mr. Vezza points out with all software of educational uses.

A potential game based on the Firesign Theater comedy group:

Date: 22 Jul 1987 1639-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi etc. To: MARC

We (Joel, Mike, Jon, Gab, Gayle & I) discussed Firesign Theater at this mornings staff meeting. The consensus is that the name does not appeal to a wide enough audience to consider a "normal" collaboration. If you'd be interested in working with one or more of the people on a game based on talent rather than name recognition, we can talk about that. However, in that case we would probably not want to adjust advance/royalties. So from your perspective it may not make sense.

Next year's schedule seems to lack fantasy games. Do you have any ideas in that genre? I believe you mentioned a fantasy/comedy at one time. Is that still a possibility? Any other ideas?

A game submission entitled "TombWorld":

Date: 23 Mar 1988 1522-EST From: Joseph Prosser <TESTER.JOE at FRED>
Subject: Re: TombWorld To: JON cc: TESTER.JOE

I enjoyed Tombworld for as long as the gimmicky aspects of it lasted. The graphics are amateur, they are 3-D

but do nothing to orient player. My impression was that some of the puzzles were based on items that had to be seen in the pictures. Despite the fact that it is Sierra-ish, it is limiting in that the player doesn't have to be that astute, It's obvious what items solve what puzzles too.

I don't think Infocom should publish it.

Although I'd hate myself if it turned out to be the game of the century, I doubt it will. It's a little better than the trashy ones so don't bother looking at it.

Date: 24 Mar 1988 1544-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: TombWorld To: IMPS at FRED

Hints from the manual:

"... 8. Be kind to strangers.
9. Be polite.
10. Kill anything that gets in your way.
…"

Potential collaboration with the University of Delaware:

Date: 1 Jun 1987 1713-EDT From: Surly teat gal <SWG at FRED>
Subject: junket to U.Del. To: pdl cc: jon, clr, swg

Remember the group at Univ. of Delaware who invited us to evaluate their adventure game(s) that teach foreign language(s)? They sent a packet of background material that I find interesting by itself. You're welcome to borrow it from my office.

Remember how you said that you might be willing to go instead of me? Well, the date of visitation is June 9, next Tuesday, and it turns out that my brother-in-law will be visiting from Australia that week. It's not clear yet whether I have a conflict, but if you become more interested in going there, feel free to take my place.

Date: 1 May 1988 1221-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: amazing offer! To: Forum cc: SWG

I was planning to visit the University of Delaware on Tuesday, since they need a consultant from our industry to help evaluate an "intelligent adventure game for foreign language instruction."

But Fritzi is out of town, visiting her father, who is very ill. So my logistics are too complicated now. Wouldn't someone like to substitute for me? They pay all expenses, plus $300 honorarium. I went a year ago and found it very instructive.

They will have two other visiting consultants, experts in foreign-language instruction. An Infocommie's purpose is to evaluate whether their prototype works as a game, whether it is enough fun, and whether it can be adapted by college language teachers. NO TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE IS REQUIRED. Besides playing with and talking about their game, there may be demos of other instructional technology: last year we saw their Laserdisk lab.

Since the meetings last all day, you would probably have to travel there (Newark, Del.) Monday night. Please talk to me by Monday noon if you are interested in going. How can you resist?

—Stu. (ext. 233)

A suspense thriller:

Date: 29 Jul 1988 1908-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: The week after next To: JOEY

We came up with a good suspense thriller plot yesterday and will have it ready to present (with illustrations and synopsis) sometime late in the week of August 8.

Also, Ron Wartow will be here on Wednesday, August 10 at 1:00 to show us his Hypercard FRP and talk about a job as either Producer or Game Designer. I mentioned this to Christopher and he's keeping that time free on his calendar. I also let Carol know he's coming.

I'll be on vacation through August 8. See you on the 9th!

Various game ideas:

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Even the highly publicized Racter can't parse English as well as we can. This game would involve exploring a character's mind (obviously an interesting character: most likely a terrorist) to find the key to converting/curing him. Could be done in straight interactive form, where you are always conversing with him, or as a more conventional adventure (like Zelazny's "Dream Master") where you can literally explore his mind via some clever SF gimmick.

SABOTEUR (similar to *Border Zone)*

This is a puzzle-oriented ToA with a James Bond theme. You parachute into the Amazonian jungle to destroy the deadly MacGuffin Ray being built by a mad scientist for an evil South American dictator. Little does the dictator know that the scientist plans to RULE THE WORLD! Cackle, chortle. Treacherous guides, nubile young ladies, pits full of crocodiles, great gadgetry, and all that yummy stuff.

D&D ASSISTANT

Would use graphics and stuff to do all the tedious junk associated with D&D. Could work with TSR, I guess. (Though if we didn't, we could make versions for other D&D systems than theirs, as well).

HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT SIMULATOR

A realistic fencing and other hand-to-hand combat simulator, where you see what happens, where practice improves your ability, and so on. There might even be a fantasy mode where you take on a dragon with an Uzi machine gun.

SUPER-ROGUE

Make a version of Rogue (i.e., exploration/combat/visual oriented type adventure game) with better graphics (using DIP) and real puzzles (like I.F. games) instead of continual monster hacking. Make it ego-centric like Maze (and Wizardry). Have better monster animation. etc. etc. Could be a big Graphics Group project.

SOFTWARE OBSERVATORY

This would be a program for examining the heavens. It would display constellations, planets, etc. It would allow you to play with the time setting to see the future/past of planet positions, and with space to see constellations and such from other parts of the earth. Not sure how much lack of decent floating point number support hampers this? Gerry Sussman at MIT is doing this on a custom designed computer...

(Sky Travel *and* Distant Suns *are two programs by other companies for viewing the stars.)*

MINUTE MYSTERIES
Genre: Mystery Rating: probably Standard or mixed System: definitely Extended
Estimated Development Time: 12 months

Four mini-mysteries, each set in the same locale, but during different periods of time. I can see one set during the 1910's, one during WWII, one during the present, and one at some point in the next century. For the location, I'm leaning toward a small cruise ship. (Naturally, I'd have to spend several weeks on cruise ships doing research). Some ideas for the individual mysteries: In one of them, it turns out that you were actually the killer, but are suffering amnesia because of a blow received during a struggle with the victim -- you first think that the blow was inflicted by the murderer! In another, you would be the descendant of a character in one of the previous stories, attempting to prove the innocence of your relative, and getting mixed up in a new murder, and having to solve both. The last story, set in the future, would also have some sci-fi elements.

ATTACK OF THE FREONS (and other stories)
Genre: Science Fiction Rating: probably Advanced System: could go either way
Estimated Development Time: 10 months

This is based on a fairly long short story I wrote a few years ago. It would be a game with a good blend of story and puzzle elements. There would be 3 story lines, each one based on a science fiction cliche — time travel, a mad scientist, and invasion from outer space. However, all three stories, which at first seem totally independent, end up tying together. I won't say how; even the fact that they do at all should be kept top secret.

BLAZING PARSERS
Genre: Tales of Adventure Rating: probably Standard System: probably Classic
Estimated Development Time: 8-9 months

The western comedy that Jerry [Wolper] started. A lot of the basic design and a little bit of the implementation is already done. If you don't recall, the basic story line is a spaghetti western with all the usual characters and situations, and the basic gag is that there are several parsers with different personalities and degrees of competency that are constantly wandering "in" and "out" of the game. Another gag revolves around Mr. Smith, who can imitate nearly anything: "There is a bowling ball here." `TAKE BOWLING BALL.` "Oops! It's only Mr. Smith, doing his famous bowling ball imitation." Or... "President Rutherford B. Hayes is at the bar." `PRESIDENT HAYES, HOWDY.` "As you begin speaking, you realize that it isn't President Rutherford B. Hayes after all, but merely Mr. Smith, doing his rather awesome President Rutherford B. Hayes imitation."

INTERACTIVE BIBLE
Genre: Fantasy? TOA? Rating: probably Standard System: could go either way
Estimated Development Time: 8-10 months

Imagine the ad campaign: "Have you always thought that God screwed it up? Try it yourself!" The opening room: VOID. Suggested first moves LET THERE BE LIGHT, CREATE WORLD. Imagine the response to EXAMINE LIGHT: You see that it is good. As the "story" progresses, you would become other characters. As Adam, you might decide to shun the serpent's apple, stay in Eden and die of boredom; as Noah, you could refuse to build the ark and drown in the Flood, or forget to bring along two horses, changing the entire shape of human history. The writing would naturally all be in shalts and begats and haths.

("The Creation" is as close as this idea got to becoming a real game.)

"THE VIABLE IDEA"
Genre: Mixed/Experimental Rating: probably Standard or Mixed System: could go either way
Estimated Development Time: 6 months

An idea I originally came up with as a way to produce a game in much less time than could normally be expected, but which I think is an interesting idea even without that need. Basically, one person (the Editor) designs a tiny "piece" of a game — a couple of rooms, a few objects with action routines, maybe even a character. Working from this, in complete isolation, five (or so) imps would write a small mini-game (a couple of puzzles, ten to twenty rooms) around that original core. The Editor would be responsible for integrating the five ideas together,

blending the code, making sure that there wasn't any gross repetition in the stories, and, of course, fixing bugs. I think that seeing how different people went in different directions from the same starting point would make for an interesting interactive fiction experience.

Stu Galley's **MIDNIGHT RIDER** or **ESCAPE FROM BOSTO**N:

This is interactive historical fiction in the form of a spy story: the main character is Paul Revere the artisan, and his goals are both to obtain secret plans from the bad guys and to foil those plans by warning the good guys before it's too late. The setting is real, historical Boston in 1775 (crooked streets, shops, pubs, sea on all sides, and British bad guys on the prowl) and roads to the west. The puzzles involve sneaking about after curfew, meeting fellow rebels secretly, and making your way toward Concord, ending with a chase scene when a British patrol spots you. No historical knowledge is required, but you can learn plenty by participating in the story. (Possible gimmick: the story is told in third person, from multiple viewpoints, like some traditional fiction.) (Other possible gimmick: the story can be inter-cut with a similar story set in modern Boston, where you have to ride the "T" to Concord before the buses shut down for the night!)

Stu Galley's **THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS**

Fantasy sells big, right? The "Alice" books are a fantasy that I feel expert about. I pick the second title because the chessboard geography gives better feedback about the player's progress. And for its more adaptable features, such as the maze in the garden of live flowers. But, like movie adaptations, elements of both books would appear.

Stu Galley's **SCIENTERRIFIC AMERICAN**

There are several possible directions to take this: humorous, fantastical, serious, etc. How about an interactive version of the magazine, where the "Amateur Scientist" needs a list of items for experiments, the main articles become separate research labs, and the "Computer Recreations" are real and playable? [Is this project still viable?]

Truffles

How about a video style game about Truffles? You control pigs and dogs which sniff out truffles. They dig when they find them and you have to stop them from eating the truffles they dig up. Also, the dogs can be attracted away by cats, and the truffles you collect can be eaten by wild boars.

The "Blank" game:

How about a game where the geography and objects are created by the player? Everything starts out blank, and the player has a bunch of labels, like "exit", "sword", etc., which can be used to identify things. I wonder if this can be done using current zork technology? Note that the vocabulary is already there, it's just the changing of the various tables for objects that's new. This could also just be a problem in some other game; a blank area that you have to fill in "properly" (perhaps with magic?) to solve a particular problem.

One way to actually work this would be to have an object called FORMLESS-OBJECT, and then swap in the real object associated with the name given it by the player.

("Adventure Construction Set" by Electronic Arts operated on this premise, but used a graphical editor for placing rooms, monsters, etc. Once finished, the adventure could be played and shared with other ACS owners.)

The monkey game:

Here's an idea for a problem in a mystery with a monkey. The monkey has witnessed the crime, and at some point, or at several points, or if you lure him into the Scene Of The Crime Room with a Banana, he mimics some important action from the crime sequence that gives you an important clue as to what happened.

It seems as though a monkey would be an interesting "character" in a game with or without this problem.

The amnesia game

An idea that I know has been mildly kicked around:

The game opens with the player awakening in an unknown location and finding that he/she/it (henceforth "he"

for brevity's sake) is suffering from amnesia. The game would presumably involve finding various objects that provide clues as to exactly who the player is and why he was hit over the head, presumably culminating in the player finding out that he had the knowledge to prevent some sort of dastardly event and then racing the clock to prevent it. (Perhaps it takes place in one building that our hero finally leaves, and ends with him going to a payphone to alert the appropriate people to prevent the dastardly deed.)

One neat hack that probably gets thrown in somewhere (or even several places) is something that sets off memories that turn out to be wrong. (The obvious example here is finding a wallet that isn't yours and thinking, for whatever reason, that it is actually yours and that you're an insurance salesman from Belvedere, MD.)

A pitfall will be developing the proper amount of identity for the player; he's gonna have to be able to figure who he is (the bank officer who had the vault combinations or whatever) without overlaying too much detail like a name or a gender.

Another small problem is that it's not too easy to imagine what kind of swell stuff you can put in the package when the only information one has access to is what's in front of one upon awakening; it seems that whoever left the player lying is unlikely to leave lots of fascinating stuff in the room. This is hopefully not an important consideration in INTERLOGIC game design, but it's there somewhere.

-JW

NOTE: There is a movie I've never seen called Mirage (starring Gregory Peck, if memory serves) that I think deals with a similar sort of situation. One big advantage that a movie character would have, of course, is the ability to get to lots of far-apart places without worrying about what's in between or what happens if he makes a wrong turn.

I think the game package could have lots of things — a picture of the tattoo on your arm, the scrap of newspaper lying nearby, the pawn shop ticket in your pocket, etc.

All I remember about Mirage, which I saw on TV when I was around 10, was that a watermelon kept falling out a window repeatedly. The watermelon turned out to be a body.

Collaboration discussions

Date: 4 Jul 1983 1036-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Asimov To: SWG

I am going tomorrow afternoon to see Ike and I realized that I had made plans with Michael to go with me. This now seems a bit absurd since you are now him. If it isn't too late for you, these are the plans: 1PM shuttle to NYC, 2:30 - 5:30 meeting with them, followed by ??. I may have personal plans in the city after the meeting, but they have indicated that dinner is reasonable. Perhaps you might stay and continue talking and dinnerify and go back later. Flights back are: Shuttle 7, 8, 9 PM. Continental/Delta have flights at about 10:25 and Delta at 12:05.

Date: 11 Jul 1983 1026-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Asimov To: Blank cc: swg, msb

Doug Stumpf called just now, couldn't reach you and so talked to me. (But he sends greetings to you.)

Last week he took Asimov to Macy's (!) to try out Zork in an air-conditioned space. Ike was interested, and Doug wanted us to send him more info on what he would do in a joint project with us. I said I would find a draft of Michael's "info for authors" and send it to Doug for forwarding. I also asked Doug to find out what model of TRS-80 Ike has, so we can send him a copy of a newer game (Witless? Pratfall?) for him to get more familiar with what is feasible in 1983.

Doug said Asimov would select one of his stories for us to chew on as a candidate for adaptation. I said that's fine, but it might be easier to make a new story rather than adapt an existing one.

Doug said he'd be in touch next week.

Date: 11 Jul 1983 1058-EDT From: Michael Berlyn <MSB at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Asimov To: SWG

First, I have no outline for authors.

Second, I think adapting an existing story could prove to be a mistake in general terms.

Date: 22 Jun 1988 1500-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Asimov's To: JON, SEM cc: erhardt

I, too, got a call from Charles Ardai asking my opinion of an Asimov's collaboration. (I guess his theory is that if calls enough people he'll eventually find a sucker?)

He asked about two possibilities: first, working with an Asimov's author other than Isaac (he mentioned Silverberg, Harrison*, Lucius Shepard and Lisa Goldstein — the latter two are hot names if you're an sf freak, but pretty unknown otherwise); and second, slapping the Asimov's name on a game written entirely in-house ("by you or Steve or Jeff O'Neill," sigh).

He claims that he keeps asking Isaac about the idea (mostly recently he mentioned that we've worked with Adams and Clavell successfully), but he still thinks Isaac is somewhat scared of computers.

* He now says Harrison is interested in doing a computer game; didn't he say just a day or two ago that Harrison was turned off by computers due to his Stainless Steel Rat game not happening?

I told him I personally would enjoy working with some non-Asimov Asimov's writers, but that the powers-that-be were skeptical that anyone but Isaac brought anything to the party name-recognition-wise. I told him the second idea was stupid (not QUITE in so many words).

My considered opinion:

I DIDN'T say that if we were going to work with (say) Silverberg, he would make more money and we would spend less if we approached him directly. Basically, the only thing the magazine gives us is its conduit to Isaac, if we want to try to exploit it. I think Asimov's name without Asimov is pretty worthless.

Date: 29 Jun 1988 1328-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Magazines To: Imps at FRED

Your good fiend and mine Charles Ardai sent me a bunch of Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction magazines. He marked some stories, possibly thinking that the stories would make good IFs, or thinking that the authors were collaborator material.

("col*lab*o*rat*or ma*te*ri*al \ke-'lab-e-rate'-er me-'tir-ee-el\ noun [ME moneta luba -- more at 'used-car salesman']

1 [archaic] a person who gets paid to do something.

2 a person who gets paid to do nothing")

I'll put the magazines in the library if you're interested.

Date: 18 Jun 1985 1721-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Collaborations To: Imps at ZORK

Mike and John want to have a meeting with us to discuss collaborations: with whom do you WANT to collaborate, etc. It's tentatively scheduled for 2p.m on Wednesday, June 26 (a week from tomorrow).

-The Meeting Monster

Date: 18 Jul 1985 0918-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: More on Collaborators To: MD

I think that Stu is capable of doing it, but he needs a lot of management time. Jon may know enough now to help out. I think that with the proper prodding and supervision, he could be effective doing a collaboration. Let's see how Moonmist goes.

Brian has told me he would collaborate with authors on numerous occasions. I wonder which of us is wrong???

Jeff is a reasonable candidate, but as you say it would have to wait until early '86. On the other hand, my guess is that it would take MONTHS to get something going with an author and that early '86 is NOT unreasonable as a time frame.

Hollywood is also possible, since within a few months he will know the system pretty well.

I guess it depends on whether you see half-filled glasses as half-empty or half-full. Looking at the same people, I see lots of possibilities, although I'll admit there are potential problems. I think that if there were a lot of support and enthusiasm for a collaboration that there would be no trouble finding someone willing and capable of doing it.

Date: 23 Jul 1985 1921-EDT From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Re: More on Collaborators To: BLANK cc: md

It appears that the only people we may be disagreeing on are Stu and Brian. Maybe I'm wrong about Stu, but much of my information comes from you. You felt that he didn't manage Jim well while doing Seastalker, and didn't seem to think he would be good to work on Bureaucracy. I'd certainly consider him, but unless he were pulled off of Moonmist he wouldn't be available until next summer at the earliest.

As for Brian, he has stated in no uncertain terms to me that he doesn't work well with other people and that he doesn't want to do a collaboration because of that and because he has game ideas to keep him busy for the next two years.

The way I look at it we have two collaborations in the works which will need imps during the next 18 months: Bureaucracy and Restaurant at the End of the Universe. I'm currently assuming that Dave will end up doing Bureaucracy and that possibly Jeff could do RATEOTU.

I view the process of putting together a collaboration as mostly a selling process from our end. We have to find great candidates and convince them that 1) we'll do the best job, 2) it will be a great experience for them, and 3) they will be awarded monetarily. The better we sell ourselves, the better the deal we can strike with them. I think we need to go into any meeting we set up with a very positive attitude about doing a collaboration with the attendee and with a fair amount of flexibility. For instance, I don't want to get Jerry Pournelle and Larry Niven all the way out here if we only have one or two people who are marginally interested and aren't sure when they would be available.

Since it appears that the earliest we could begin a non-Adams collaboration is at least 6 months from now, I don't think any time has been lost yet. I think what we need before we begin to invest any significant time in pursuing collaborations is to develop and agree on a product development strategy. Once we have a strategy it should be far easier to concentrate our efforts on the appropriate collaborations to pursue and far less difficult to come to internal agreement on the ones to go with. Right now, there are a lot of possibilities I could investigate, but most of them I know would be a waste of time. I could prioritize them, but my ranking (without a strategy) would most likely be different from anyone else's.

Date: 24 Jul 1985 1133-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: More on Collaborators To: MD

Well, if Brian said that stuff to you, he's obviously either changed his mind or his statements. He said that he'd collaborate with Stephen King in a minute. Maybe that was just his way of saying he thought it would be a good collaboration, but I don't know....

Stu is ok IF he is tightly managed and has enough time. Otherwise, it will be a problem. I thought we were going to see how Moonmist went before deciding on others for him. If it goes well, I would be optimistic.

I agree that the strategy is the most important thing. When are we going to get some decisions/meetings on this?

Date: 25 Jul 1985 1518-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: More on Collaborators To: MD

I've given some more thought to collaborations, and what it comes down to, I think, is that it's YOUR responsibility to sell the idea to the Imps by initiating contacts, inviting Imps to speak to the authors, etc. YOU are the marketing people; you can't expect ANY Imp to agree to do a collaboration without knowing who/when/how, etc. YOU've got to sell them on the idea. I would say NO to a collaboration without details too.

I know for a FACT that Brian WOULD do a collaboration under the right circumstances, and that he has, in fact, toyed with a few ideas for a collaboration. So I believe that ALL of the imps would take part IF there were enough push.

Mike, I really believe that you're making a TERRIBLE mistake if you expect the Imps to take the lead on this.

It just won't happen. If you're convince that collaborations are the thing to do, and the rest of the marketing people agree (I guess I mean John O, mostly), then MAKE IT HAPPEN. Don't wait for other people to make it happen, 'cause it won't. Get on the offensive. Make a contact, make it real rather than just a concept. Make someone commit.

I also think you're wrong about waiting. If you expect anything in 1986 now is almost TOO LATE to start. It could take a good six months to go from first contact to finished contract, and there would clearly be people available then. If we procrastinate now, if we don't move NOW, then not only will we not have a collaboration in 1986, but you lose the offensive in getting the Imps to believe you're serious. Hell, if YOU don't push, why should they? What's in it for them, if they have ideas of their own? USE SOME PSYCHOLOGY. By not moving quickly, you lose almost ALL of your ammunition; they can always hold things up by being wishy-washy and then complain that it's YOU that are being wishy-washy.

Wake up and do something!

Date: 20 Feb 1986 0939-EST
Subject: ELVIRA

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: IMPS at FRED

Chris says that the agent for Elvira called him; they want to do a game based on her. Not a collaboration with her, but ABOUT her. The agent is sending Chris an Elvira press kit, or something.

I'm not sure, but I think that Elvira is either a person who hosts horror movies or a small town in upstate New York.

By the way, I almost certainly won't be in at all today. I have an energy audit of our house, and then I have to take the car in to have the windshield replaced. Please keep me abreast of any late breaking rumours.

Date: 10 Sep 1987 1442-EDT
Subject: Two things

From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

1. Is anybody interested in collaborating with Tom Clancy, author of Hunt for Red October, Red Storm Rising, etc.? In his most recent book, he again mentions Zork; and Mike heard from someone that he (Clancy) has played our games and likes them. We could try to get in touch with him if there's any interest.
2. Joel has asked me to inform you that based upon the opinion of counsel, it's a bad idea to include the phone numbers of unaffiliated organizations in our games. (Stationfall had the phone number of "the Tech" — some MIT organization, I presume — which has been a pain for both the Tech and for Infocom.)

CD-I, Videodisk and VCR games

Date: 1 Aug 1986 1349-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: CD-I "spec" To: imps at FRED

I summarized the technical info in "An outline of CD-I" in the file ZD:CD-I.CAPS. It's incomplete, but it does give ballpark figures.

Date: 23 Sep 1988 1501-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: I-VCR Game From Mark Day To: joey cc: mikek

Mark Day called today and said that all rights for the I-VCR game that he has been working on have reverted back to him. I'm sure we're interested, but I'm not sure if we have the resources to build this product.

How do you feel about it? Should we keep Mark warm, or should we pass on it?

Date: 27 Sep 1988 1432-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: VCR Game from Mark To: joey

Mark Day called me today. He still has the game ready to go. Also, he passed on some interesting recon: Kodak had contracted EON Software to create a murder mystery VCR game that is now (or will soon be) in distribution. Kodak would like to expand it's presence in the market and is looking for more developers.

Sounds like it's worth calling Mark. He'll be at home this afternoon, though he is going to lunch right now.

Interactive Videodisk Notes
DRAFT

Overview

This document explains the essence of an idea, a series of arcade games which will utilize videodisk and computer graphic technology as outlined by Videomagic, Inc.

The idea encompasses the "adventure" concept, and is based on internally generated design sessions. The idea also includes the series of games which could be developed from this framework.

The game/idea is meant to be an arcade game and not a home game.

The Game Controls

Essentially, the person playing the game (the player) will control a camera-eye view of an enclosed environment. In the example given here, that environment would be a house with three floors.

The Joystick:

- By pressing forward on the joystick, the "camera" or the player would move forward. In the starting scene, the player could most likely be inside the front hallway of the house. Pushing the joystick forward slightly would cause the point of view of the scene to shift forward, giving the impression of walking down the hallway. Pushing

the joystick forward all the way would speed up the action, giving the player the impression of speed, of actually running down the hall.

- By pressing the joystick to the left, the player would move to the left, though the direction of the camera would not be changed. (To change the direction of the camera, see the following section on the buttons.)

The Buttons:

- VIEW - The button nearest the joystick would allow for the player to change the direction in which the camera is pointed. This could be done by utilizing a diamond configuration (the topmost button giving the forward view, the left button the left view, etc.) if four buttons seem superior. If a single button design is deemed superior, pressing the single button would rotate through the four available views.

- PICK UP / ACTION - A second button would be utilized for "Picking up" objects which the player may come across. The objects the player has already taken would be graphically displayed in the status area of the screen. Picking up objects can be accomplished by pressing the PICK UP / ACTION button. Once this button has been pressed, a crosshair will appear on the screen. Moving the joystick will move the computer-generated crosshair until it centers over the object in question. Releasing the button will complete the sequence: if the crosshair was properly centered, the object will be taken. If the crosshair was not centered, the object will remain where it was on the screen.

- MAP - A third button would enable the player to get an overhead view of his environment. If he were in a house, for example, he might get a simplified floor plan of the floor he is on. If he were in an outdoor maze, we might provide him with a "tighter" but still overhead shot of the maze.

Play of the Game — First Level

The player will be given a set amount of time in which to find something, hereafter referred to as a McGuffin. The McGuffin for the first round of play in this scenario could be a ticking bomb. The bomb will be in the bedroom closet on the second floor.

The idea, then, is for the player to find the staircase (possibly using the MAP button), run up the stairs, find the correct bedroom, open the closet door, pick up the bomb (PICK UP / ACTION button), and (possibly) throw the bomb out the window. Defusing the bomb, dumping it into a pail of water, etc. are all possible solutions to the general problem of what to do with the bomb once the player has picked it up.

While the action is taking place, the bottom third or quarter of the display screen will provide computer-generated update information. Some examples of this status area follow:

- A real-time clock, ticking off the seconds left until the bomb goes off.

- A computer graphic area indicating what the player is currently carrying.

- A level and score indicator.

- A compass, with the direction the player is facing bold-faced.

- A graphical representation of what the goal (McGuffin) for this level is.

There will be obstacles the player would have to overcome. Without physical obstacles, there would be no problem in getting to the McGuffin. Some simple examples of obstacles follow:

- Debris on the floor. This would require the player to move in other than a straight line, and so slow down his "walking speed."

- Items may be rolling down the staircase, which would require the player to move to one side or perhaps retreat and try another avenue.

- A staircase may have a weak/broken step, which would be obvious if the player were progressing slowly and cautiously, but difficult to avoid if the player were rushing up the steps.

- A chasm/opening in the floor. An easy way for the player to deal with this would be to back up, push the joystick forward all the way, and effectively leap over the missing floor section. Walking slowly forward would

mean the loss of a man.

- If the bomb were a ticking bomb, clocks and other ticking things could be added to other rooms to distract the player. The sounds would get louder when approached.

- Doors. Doors could be opened by using the PICK UP / ACTION button by centering the crosshairs over the doorknob. The door may be locked. Perhaps it's best for the player to simply fling himself at them. They may or may not break down. They may break down and fling the player into the "outside" and plunging to his death.

- In the higher game levels, people to fight. Sword fights could be easily accomplished by using the joystick.

Play of the Game — Subsequent levels

The play can advance from this simple "find the one McGuffin" sequence to find several McGuffins within a fixed length of time. Success could be rewarded in terms of points, with each second left on the clock being used as a bonus multiplier.

The amount of time given to accomplish a similar task on higher levels could be less than what was granted on the first level. If, for example, the player had two real-time minutes to accomplish the first-level task, he may be given only 50 seconds to accomplish the second-level task, a task which could be made harder.

Incrementing levels and difficulty should be an easy task if obstacles are added (even possibly randomized to a degree), and if time is cut back. An extra player could be given once a high enough level has been reached.

On the higher levels, people wandering about (superimposed computer graphics?) might provide some realistic obstacles. Consider the following complications:

- The bomb on level 3 is on the second floor, sitting in the middle of the bed.

- The player is virtually unhindered in reaching the bedroom.

- As soon as the player enters the bedroom, however, a masked figure steps from the closet, complete with a sharp foil, and starts to fence with the player.

- The player would have no sword, and would die quickly.

- There is a sword downstairs, in the living room, waiting for him.

Adding difficulty is simply a matter of varying the elements of difficulty: time, obstacles, and numbers of McGuffins.

The Series of Games

The type of action sequences and self-contained environments proposed will make a series of these arcade games possible. Changing from one scenario to another could be as simple as replacing the disks in the machine cabinet and changing the outer graphics on the cabinet itself. Listed below are some preliminary ideas for scenarios (different plots & settings) which would all fit into this class of games.

Although the above example relates to a "spy/thriller" genre, the basic elements and method of play could apply to any of the classifications listed below. There is little point in fleshing out these scenarios at this point — suffice it to say that some genre listed below may be more appealing, and may deserve a fuller development should things progress. The "spy/bomb" scenario was outlined due to its accessibility and its illustrative examples.

McGuffins (those things the player is trying to get) would be developed out of the following scenarios naturally, with little design problem.

- An Outdoor Maze	- Haunted House	- Deserted House	- Western Town/Shootout
- Carnival	- Submarine	- Scuba/Underwater	- Space Station

The familiarity of the type of game should be considered a positive effect on players. The different visuals and problems the games would present would also be a positive effect. And since all genres would share technology, a series seems a natural.

Z

A multi-player game

Date: 4 Jun 1987 1139-EDT
Subject: Multi-player Brainstorm
From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
To: imps at FRED

Place : The conference room
Time : 1:00 PM on Monday, June 8th

Date: 4 Jun 1987 1150-EDT
Subject: Oops
From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
To: imps at FRED

Please excuse the incomplete message you just received, I'll get used to this mailer someday.

Anyway, at the meeting (1:00 on Monday) I'll be presenting some of my ideas and thoughts concerning multi-player games (hopefully, in a more organized, coherent fashion). Following this presentation will be open discussion and brainstorming.

If you have an interest, please attend. New ideas, comments, thoughts, and criticisms are always welcome.

- Brad

Date: 10 Jun 1987 1817-EDT
Subject: A Multi-player adventure
From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
To: testers at FRED

The file <dragon>multi.txt contains a short discussion of multi-player adventures in general, and a long rambling concerning the dynamic world system I've been designing.

If you have an interest in multi-player adventures, please peruse the file, comment, criticize, send your ideas and flames, etc. If there is a general interest, I'll be happy set up another meeting to discuss and brainstorm.

Date: 19 Jun 1987 1159-EDT
Subject: Reminder
From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

Please read <DRAGON>MULTI.TXT and give Brad some feedback by Tuesday.

Z

Stu Galley's visit to Plimoth Plantation

Date: 14 Jul 1987 1058-EDT From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Plimoth Plantation To: clr cc: taa, swg

I just talked with Cliff Knight there, told him a little about our development system, said their scenario was too simple for us.

But, said I, if they were interested in a commercial product based on an expanded, more game-like scenario, then we should talk. He was enthusiastic and said yes, indeed, they're thinking commercial.

Either Fritzi or I have to go to Plymouth tomorrow anyway, so I volunteered to do our errand and also meet these folks and talk. So I'll be gone tomorrow afternoon, if that's okay.

Date: 29 Jul 1987 1437-EDT From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Plimoth Plantation To: imps at FRED cc: eliz at FRED

FYI: a report on my visit there is in <SWG>PLIMOTH.TXT.

Date: 29 Jul 1987 1531-EDT From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Plimoth Plantation To: SWG

Sounds like this Jim Baker's head is on straight and he knows what he's doing. He doesn't run any religious theme parks in the South, does he?

This sounds like 1) a great opportunity for us to get a foot in the educational door and 2) a great opportunity for us to milk rich foundations that throw away millions of dollars before breakfast.

REPORT OF VISIT TO PLIMOTH PLANTATION - July 15, 1987 - Stu Galley

Executive Summary: They plan to produce a computerized interactive historical experience, and, if it meets their high standards for quality, to sell it to visitors and school teachers. If they were to use our development system, then it could be treated as a joint product, giving us not only a new kind of product but also an entry into the educational market.

I met for about an hour with Jim Baker (Director of Research), who is the moving force behind this idea, and Cliff Knight (Systems Specialist), who will develop whatever Jim decides on. Details follow the next paragraph.

Then we took a tour of the Pilgrim Village, where I learned what Jim means by a "first-person" museum: instead of showing how "those pilgrims" lived, the interpreters (who are museum personnel) take on the roles of actual settlers and talk about how "we" lived. The effect is very much like a living Infocom story: a visitor learns about life in early Plymouth by looking around, examining objects, and interacting with characters. Jim is a real stickler about accurate details, right down to the binding on the settlers' books. For instance, he complains that certain houses need to be rebuilt, because they portray not 1627 but a whole generation later.

This is how Jim's idea began: visitors can see life inside the village palisade, but they can learn about the colony "beyond the pale" only by asking questions of the interpreters. Interpreters, in turn, can learn their roles in the village partly by first-hand experience, but in order to give proper answers to questions about things beyond the pale, they currently must study and memorize facts about the external environment. Jim is a big Infocom fan, so

he decided that an interactive historical fiction would be an ideal way for interpreters to "experience" life beyond the pale. In fact, he thought further, it would also be a good experience for visitors in their brand-new Visitor Center. And then his final thought: why not package and sell the experience to anyone with access to a personal computer?

Jim says that he will somehow make his idea a reality. If the best resource he can get for the project is Computer Novel Construction Set (which I loaned them a copy of), then so be it. But he would like the product to have the same high quality and attention to detail that he sees in both the Pilgrim Village and Infocom products. To him, development money is no object: he can surely get a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities as long as he can tell them that he has "expert advice" to help him. He has a staff of experts and a large research library to help get the details right. He has plenty of ideas for puzzles: load a musket, sail a boat with the tide, find and identify objects, and so on. He envisions several editions: a training edition for interpreters, which is heavy on description and background; an on-site edition for visitors to use; an educational edition, complete with teacher's manual, where the object is for the student to read and then answer questions; and an entertainment edition, where the object is to solve puzzles and have fun.

Now, what's in it for us? I see it as an excellent opportunity for us to "test the waters" in the education market. Plimoth Plantation is already a respected name to virtually every teacher in the country, not only because everyone knows the pilgrim story but also because they already publish and distribute both printed and pictorial educational material for schools. They have a cachet as educators, and they have experience in developing both teacher materials and student materials.

And there's a secondary benefit: in 1986 about 350 thousand visitors went through their Gift Shop and spent about $1 million. Granted, many of those visitors were school children; but many others were school teachers and other potential software buyers. (The Gift Shop already has some pricey items, such as hand-made reproductions and a $30 "video postcard" of the Plantation; and I saw several video cameras used by visitors in the Village.)

I have their 1986 Annual Report and about 20 pages of Jim's notes about the game. Plimoth Plantation, Inc. is a not-for-profit educational foundation, with 1986 revenue of $4 million. They claim that their budget will grow dramatically in the next few years, as they intend to become a major force in the education/museum biz.

Z

Joe Prosser's adult Infocomic — 7/21/88

Characters:

Husband
Gets more and more paranoid as film progresses.

Wife

Butcher
Intelligent man, handsome (this could drive the husband crazy), will give the viewer the impression that he's the protagonist.

Friend
It becomes more and more apparent that he's a psychopath.

Opening scene:
In rich house. Husband has been drinking. He and wife are arguing. Maybe it gets violent; he slaps her. He threatens to kill her. Cut to credits.

Plot from husband's viewpoint:
He goes into butcher shop [hungover], butcher realizes he's upset, asks what's wrong. Butcher is a trustworthy guy; he confides wife is missing. He shows typewritten note which threatens death of wife if disappearance is revealed to cops. Butcher looks strangely overly-distressed. Why??? [I think the first note should be typed, the rest in her handwriting.]

Husband goes to work; confides in co-worker who's also a friend. Friend is sympathetic, urges husband not to call police at risk of harm to wife.

Some woman has been putting the moves on the husband. He doesn't tell her wife has disappeared, and resists her advances. But they still get kind of cosy. As they leave together (or whatever), friend walks by in background. Jump to friend here, and learn that his suspicions are confirmed — husband and woman are involved.

Husband arrives home to find wife sitting watching tv. At first he only sees her through the window, from the back, or whatever. Coming closer, he sees there's a knife in her chest! But there's no blood; it's a mannequin that looks exactly like her!!! There's a typed ransom note clenched between her teeth.

The mannequins continue to arrive [2 or 3 more, perhaps one is found hanging by the neck at the top of some stairs; long shadows slowly swaying down the steps. there's a light behind it, all you see is the silhouette.], each with some violence done to it. [Perhaps the mannequins are made to look dead now. The mannequin looks like its been hung.] He pays half the ransom. After the second dummy, the friend suggests that she's engineering it so she can get money to run off with her lover. Points out rationale for this. Suggests she can't leave without her full share of money; He said "why not? It's cheaper for you than divorce and quicker for her too!" Husband gets really mad at wife for doing this to him.

Friends seems to know more and more about the situation, [husband is really starting to get paranoid now. He starts to feel that he being followed by, of all people, the butcher. more on that later.] even what wife was wearing on evening of disappearance. This is very subtle. Husband: "Her clothes aren't even missing! What would she have worn?" Friend: "Oh, if she is running off to her lover, no doubt something sexy like a negligee." [more detail about the negligee would be too obvious.] Husband thinks: "Gasp. Francine has a nightgown like that!" He goes home, checks, finds that one is missing. Husband suspects the friend is the wife's lover, her innocent victim!

He decides to follow the friend. They go to warehouse in seedy part of town. Inside are mannequins, and the wife! He shoots her. The end.

OR

He decides to set trap with rest of ransom money, insist on leaving it in certain place, follow whoever goes to pick it up. The friend picks up the money. The husband follows the friend to the warehouse, etc. as above.

Butcher's viewpoint:

The butcher is a close friend of the wife who has helped him out in some delicate situation. The situation is still not resolved; he can't resolve it without her help, and now she is gone! Perhaps the wife is a social worker who has been helping his daughter recover from a drug addiction, or whatever. He is devastated that the wife is missing.

Butcher believes that husband killed wife and wrote the note himself. [that's why only the first one needs to be typed. I think!] "but", the butcher asks himself, "why doesn't he just go to the cops since nothing can actually happen to her?" He decides "he really wants to play the whole thing out" [perhaps some 'Rear Window' innocent bystander speculation here. More on that later.]

Butcher starts to follow husband. He also sees him getting cosy with bimbo. This confirms his theory about hubby's motive. Following further, he watches as hubby carries a stiff looking female body [mannequin] to an incinerator and stuffs it in; perhaps breaking off an arm to fit it in! Later there is a scene where hubby and friend are in a bar; butcher is there also, at a different table with his back turned, but within earshot. [put camera at perimeter of bar. Have it slowly pan around until all three are seen.] What he hears makes him speculate even more wildly.

This leads to a new ending. Butcher follows husband to warehouse but doesn't see friend. Shoots husband after husband shoots wife.

Steve Meretzky's suburban comedy role-playing game

Date: 27 Aug 1987 0015-EDT
Subject: PROOF

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: JON

Here's something in the Proof-that-I-am-constantly-percolating-new-ideas-but-I-never-know-when-it-will-happen Department. This is based on some joking around at Tuesday's imps "lunch" when we were discussing Office: A suburban comedy role playing game.

The character of Winnie J. Codworth III has been created for you:

Patience	24	Balance	32
Serenity	11	Satisfaction	8
Wakefulness	20	Handiness	5

```
>DRINK COFFEE
Ahhh. It's perfectly brewed. You feel the caffeine begin to course through
    your veins.
[Your Wakefulness has just gone up.]
Suddenly and without warning, the Doctor Coffee machine attacks!
You are spewed in the face with burning coffee!
[Your Serenity has just gone down.]

>ATTACK THE LAWN MOWER WITH THE WRENCH
Your wrench barely adjusts the mower.
The lawn mower whirrs angrily toward you, just missing your toes!

>PUT LAUNDRY IN DRYER
The dryer immediately begins eating all your socks.

>CALL THE DRYER REPAIRMAN
The repairman arrives and quickly fixes the dryer.
[Your Serenity has just gone up!]
The repairman waits impatiently as you write him an amazingly large check.
[Your Balance has just gone down.]

>SOUTH
Front Porch
Your front stoop is slippery with ice from last night's unexpected frost.
There is a welcome mat here.
There is no newspaper here yet, of course.
[Your Patience has just gone down!]
Without warning, the newsboy bicycles into the room and attacks! A sharply
    folded newspaper thuds off your forehead and lands in your roof gutter!
[Your Serenity has just gone down!]

>PUT THE FERTILIZER ON THE LAWN
The lawn instantly turns a deep and healthy-looking shade of green. The
    Jones' lawn, next door, no longer seems so deserving of envy.
[Your Satisfaction has just gone up!]
A bill arrives for the fertilizer.
```

```
[Your Balance has just gone down!]
The newly-fertilized grass suddenly shoots up and additional four inches,
    and is now badly in need of mowing.
[Your Serenity has just gone down!]
```

What do you think? A potential game? A potential short story? A potential Status Line humor article? Or a potential for saving disk space by using the DELETE command on it?

Z

Star Trek

Overview of an Infocom Star Trek Game (hereinafter referred to as "Star Trek")

"Star Trek" will be a strategy game based upon the television series of the same name. "Star Trek" will include space exploration and combat with hostile aliens (though players may be on "peaceful missions," as on the TV show, and be penalized for indiscriminate warfare).

Graphics will be used both to facilitate strategic gameplay (e.g., seeing where your starship is relative to a starbase) and to make the game more attractive and visually appealing. Music and/or sound effects will also be used to make the game appealing and to give players an authentic "Star Trek" experience.

"Star Trek" can be played either by one person (playing "against" the computer) or by multiple players on separate computers (playing against each other, or teamed up against the computer). The player will be Captain James T. Kirk of the starship Enterprise (or, in a multiplayer game, the commanding officer of a similar vessel).

Game commands will be issued by interacting with the officers and men of the starship's crew. This will naturally include the well-known crew members: Mr. Spock, Uhura, Sulu, "Scotty," Chekov, etc. The player will "talk" to these characters by typing natural-English-like sentences on the computer keyboard ("Mr. Sulu, set a course for star system 30," "Uhura, get me starfleet command," "Chekov, fire the torpedo," etc.), and the crew members will respond appropriately and in character. It will be possible to relieve the player of "strategic tedium" by giving the crewmembers standing orders ("Chekov, shields to configuration alpha"). In the multiplayer mode, the player may also send messages to other (human) players.

Successful game play, including battle sequences, will not require hand/eye coordination, but rather strategically commanding the crew to use limited resources. The play of the game will be nearly identical from computer to computer, though the graphics presentation may vary from machine to machine.

"Star Trek" will be available initially for the IBM PC.

The following issues remain unresolved relative to "Star Trek":

1) Can we license the "Star Trek" name under reasonable terms?
2) Can we sufficiently differentiate ourselves from any present and future S & S "Star Trek" games?
3) What is the real market for multiplayer games?
4) How important is "real" graphics to the potential success of the game? There are a number of approaches to graphics and each requires some tradeoffs.

   APPROACH 1: Use "character" graphics

   APPROACH 2: Write a machine specific game that is a great graphics game.

   APPROACH 3: Modify EZIP and the development system to incorporate machine specific graphics as part of a generally machine independent game.

   APPROACH 4: Reinvent DIP but do it right this time.

The advantage of approach 1 is that we could write the game without a large amount of development system/ EZIP modification. The disadvantage approach 1 is that the game would be less sexy especially on machines like the ST and the Amiga. Approach 2 would definitely result in a sexy game but it would not exploit the strengths of Infocom. Approaches 3 and 4 both have the advantage of producing a sexy game with the Infocom flavor of interaction. The disadvantage of these approaches is the time and resources required to develop the product. Out of approaches 3 and 4, 3 is more attractive in that it would not require solving some difficult fundamental research problems.

Z

Various & Sundry Game Information

Development system and parser milestones

Was Infocom the first company to come up with the idea of Expansion Packs for their games?

Date: 7 Oct 1983 1047-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: add-ons To: consumers at ZORK cc: taa at ZORK

I put a couple ideas for add-on features for (new) Interlogic games in <IDEAS>ADD-ONS.MSS. Comments welcome.

ADD-ONS FOR INTERLOGIC GAMES
Stu Galley

This is a list of modules that could be added on to almost any Interlogic game, if there is enough room of course.

Spelling Correction
==========

I think it will be more important to try to correct players' spelling errors in the Juvenile series of games than in others. If we expect to hold an eight-year-old's attention long enough to get him or her into the action of the story, the program will have to be as helpful and "user-friendly" as feasible.

I envision two levels of spelling correction: "OOPS" and "Do you mean?". In the original Zork, OOPS was a useful verb that allowed a player to try again if the parser didn't recognize a word in the input; a command like "OOPS HOUSE" meant AGAIN but with HOUSE substituted for the unrecognized word.

A higher level of correction requires a module to compare the unrecognized word with the vocabulary table to see whether the word would be recognized if a simple change were made, like changing, adding or removing one letter or reversing the order of two letters. If so, then what happens next? I think the program should not in fact make the correction without checking with the player first. It could display "Do you mean 'house'? (Answer YES or NO.)"; then YES means the same as OOPS HOUSE (but without re-parsing), and NO means to let the parser fail as usual.

I think that a spelling-correction module was implemented in MDL for the "Morse decoder" project at MIT. I'm sure there are no technical obstacles to prevent implementation, but I'm not sure yet how the user interface should work, nor how big the module would turn out.

Conversation - Eliza
==========

Players can get very frustrated trying to interact with characters in games where that is important, e.g. mysteries. No matter how many times the documentation or the program itself says that you can ask only WHAT or WHERE or ABOUT something, it is very tempting for you to talk to characters in a more free-form manner; after all, they talk to you that way!

Deadline and The Witness try to be helpful about this problem: for example, the parser ignores HAVE and YOU and IS, and it treats SEEN the same as WHERE or FIND, so "Have you seen George?" is the same as "Where is George?" or "Find George!" The parser also notices other question words — such as WHY, HOW, WHEN, and DID — and displays a special message intended to guide the player to more fruitful questioning, instead of just saying "I don't understand."

But wouldn't it be better for characters themselves to respond to ill-formed questions or statements, even if they aren't helpful or even particularly relevant? All the program needs, I think, is a module like Eliza — the famous demonstration by Weizenbaum that even a simple program can give the illusion of understanding you —

and a “hook” in the parser that invokes Eliza whenever the player is talking to a character and the parser can’t handle the input.

I envision this Eliza module as rather small and simple. It would use the vocabulary tables and probably a special property added to significant objects to determine whether the player is referring to something important or not. If so, it could re-form the question and then PERFORM it; if not, it could generate a plausible response such as, “What makes you think I know anything about (the noun)?”

I know that Eliza was implemented in MDL about ten years ago; I even have a copy of the program somewhere. I’m sure there are no technical obstacles to prevent implementation, but I’m not sure whether there are “conceptual bugs” in the way, nor how big the module would turn out.

Date: 7 Oct 1983 1105-EDT From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Add-ons To: swg

Having just looked at the file, it seems to me that if the code already exists in such a way that adapting it to INTERLOGIC stuff isn’t terribly hard, then it would certainly be reasonable to at least try it and see what it does. In the worst case, we will KNOW that these approaches won’t solve the problems they address, and if they work, we’ll have added a couple of significant features.

Date: 4 Mar 1985 1128-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: useful tasks To: jon cc: swg

I was thinking about useful tasks for Jerry to do, and I remembered writing up a couple ideas when I was managing and PDL was too idle. The ideas are still in <IDEAS>ADD-ONS.MSS. See what you think.

(I think spelling correction and OOPS will be even more useful with 9-letter words in the Plus series.)

VERBOSE is updated:

Date: 30 Mar 1984 1355-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: VEBOSE To: TESTERS at ZORK

Opinion. Should VERBOSE do a LOOK? Jennifer says many people expect it to, and think it’s a bug when it doesn’t. It would look something like...

```
>VERBOSE
Verbose descriptions.

Boring Room
This is a room with four white walls. Or maybe they're slightly off-white.
   I'm not sure. I'm never sure about anything.
```

Date: 30 Mar 1984 1710-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: VERBOSE To: imps at ZORK

The consensus seems to be that V-VERBOSE should do a LOOK (5 yes, 2 doesn’t matter, 0 no). Therefore, I’m going to put this on the retro-fit list.

Date: 10 Apr 1984 1714-EST
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: SECRET REVEALED!!!
To: IMPS at ZORK

Having a few hours to kill, I decided to answer the age-old question, "How big is a game before you start?" I took Hitchhiker and stripped away anything game-related, leaving the vanilla substrate. I then compiled this. The stunning results:

SIZE: 26,502 bytes (25,536 bytes with frequency table)
PRE-LOAD: 8,340 bytes (9,024 bytes with frequency table)
OBJECTS: 16 (protagonist, it, hands, ground, stairs, etc. plus 1 room)
GLOBALS: 88
VOCABULARY: 439 words

To play the exciting game resulting from this compilation, look in the subdirectory called <INTERLOGIC. GENERIC>.

Date: 25 Apr 1984 0912-EST
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Methodology
To: imps at ZORK cc: da at ZORK

To avoid misunderstanding, I want to clarify my ideas about style. (The word "style" may be imprecise, but it's shorter than "tradition" or "methodology.") Style already exists. It was not made consciously; it evolved. Style has been and should be broken whenever it is inappropriate, interfering, or otherwise undesirable.

Style can be useful to end-users, giving our regular customers a slight edge. Paradoxically, it's advantageous to define style so that every time we break it, we better distinguish a product. That distinction can be used as a marketing tool.

At any rate, I certainly don't want to homogenize our products or legislate do's and don'ts. Style will continue to evolve whether or not we monitor or review it. I'd like to know what style elements you think are worth discussing, or are worth ignoring, or whatever. Some ideas from Steve and Hollywood:

Should grues act consistently from game to game? (No, we decided; grues are unpredictable and do whatever authors want them to do.)

Should opening an object tell you what's in the object? Or must you also use the command "look in (object)"? (Author's discretion?)

Similarly, must you "unlock door with key" then "open door"? Or can you "open door with key"?

Does the status line show score/move or move/score? Are room names capitalized?

Should "again" and "all" be in every game?

Will a noun always be assumed if you supply a restrictive adjective? (Will "press green" be interpreted as "press green button" if no other green object is around?)

Date: 3 May 1984 1017-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: SAVES
To: TESTERS at ZORK

All the time, I want to get to the Winding Stair section of Enchanter or the microbe section of Planetfall or whatever, and if I don't have a useful save from a current version (which is rare) then I have to play for twenty minutes before getting to the useful section.

Yesterday, I was trying to get to the Coal Mine section of Sorcerer, and was raiding Jennifer's and Betsy's directories looking for a useful save file, when suddenly I was struck by an idea so stunning in scope, and so elegant in concept, that I actually didn't dismiss it forthright.

Why don't we have a directory, called <SAVES> or something, which would contain 4 or 5 standard useful saves from each game. They could be named with the game code as the first part of the file name, and the description of the save as the second part...

A1.BARGE Z1.CYCLOPS S3.BIOLOCK

...and so on. No more mussing or fussing trying to play through a game to the section you want to look at. Product Verification could create a new set of saves for a new version while they're checking/testing it. And finally, people would no longer have to clutter up their directories with dozens of saves, which tend to be pretty large files, thus saving tons of space on PS:!

I'd be willing to make a list of the "important" saves for each game, although someone would have to do Seastalker. Feedback?

Date: 3 May 1984 1040-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: SAVES To: SEM cc: SWG

Sounds like a good idea. I would also try to give each file a generation number equal to the game's release number.

You could carry it a step further: I have a "script" (as opposed to a "transcript") for Seastalker that contains the commands for playing the game so as to get all the points. I use it to test a new release before telling the testers that it's ready to play. Authors could create similar scripts for each game that create these standard SAVE files. Then one could also refer to the script to see exactly what was done before the SAVE, if that is important in testing. (By the way, the script is in the form of a Batch CTL file.)

Date: 14 May 1984 1045-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: VERSION To: jon at ZORK cc: imps at ZORK

Here's a style inconsistency we ought to iron out. In the opening copyright paragraph, some games say "Release N" and some games say "Revision N". In fact, Customer Support people were just complaining about this while commenting on the Zork manual. Dornbrook thinks we should use "Release" because "it's consistent with what the rest of the industry calls them" even though, he admits, "it's not completely accurate."

REVISION: Zork I, Zork II, The Witness, Seastalker

RELEASE: Zork III, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Starcross, Suspended, Planetfall, Deadline, Infidel, Cutthroats, Hitchhiker's

— The Style Police

Date: 17 May 1984 1749-EDT From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: NEW GAME VERSIONS To: IMPS at ZORK
cc: DAN at ZORK, PROF at ZORK, DUNCAN at ZORK, TOM at ZORK, MD at ZORK, ERNIE at ZORK

***
*
*
*

***F YOU TRULY ARE THE ONE BRAVE ENOUGH TO FACE UNSPEAKABLE PERIL, LET YOUR WIZARDLY POWERS REVEAL THESE WORDS.

The Elders have portended of evil days much like our own. A time when the software guild of Cambridge,

known as Infocom would out-grow it's simple down-home ways. A time when games would be sent for duplication without testing because the guild was so large the right hand didn't know what the left hand was releasing.

Now after 100 years of constant incanting, a new way has be found:
>From this day forth, when a Imp creates a new version he should send mail to Hollywood <DA> informing him of the new version and that it needs to be tested. I will then put the last approved version of the game in a subdirectory called <GAMENAME.Rnn>. The game that comes up on the system will be the version which is in testing.

As for Dan, his people and Ernie and Tom, there is now a directory called <RELEASE>. This directory will contain the latest approved version of a game. Use this directory for all game transfers. (This would apply to anyone making a game.)

HDA

P.S. Comments, questions? Can everyone live with this?

Date: 18 May 1984 0045-EDT From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Special Offer To: everybody at ZORK

Now available for a limited time, the run-away best seller:

RMODE: A Real-Time Edit Facility

You'll laugh, you'll cry — you'll never look at your terminal the same again.

"When I read chapter 13, Text Manipulation — I wept, I wept like some grandmother. It was the most moving experience of this or any previous life."

—Shirley Maclaine

"And to think, I used to write out my code in long-hand on legal-size stationary. If I would have discovered RMODE sooner, I would be writing Zork 57 right now!"

—Marc Blank

"The manual is great. The only thing better is having it on a chip, implanted in your head, which I had done 3 years ago."

—Spike Berkowitz

"Best damn purple I've ever seen." —Dave Lebling

"If I were to combine RMODE with my Brogmus 1-2-3, I could win the battle of the sexes single-handedly."

—Burnin' Ernie Brogmus

"Better than 5 bowls of Friday punch!!!"

—Hollywood Dave Anderson

You can own a copy of this code inspiring manifesto simply by dropping in to Product Testing and saying "Hey you in the loud Hawaiian shirt, I heard you screwed-up and made too many copies of the RMODE manual and while reading your mail I was swept away in a wave of sympathy for you and decided to take one off your hands. How 'bout it?"

AVAILABLE AT FINE PRODUCT TESTING DEPARTMENTS NEAR YOU

An early example of a company making a change that creates an incompatibility with another program. Was this deliberate?

Date: 23 May 1984 1007-EDT From: JENNIFER
To: MD Subject: Kaypro Status Line

Kaypro has put a new chip in their machines that messes up the status line of our games. We knew they were doing this, but they were starting the change with the Kaypro 10 and working backwards to the Kaypro 2. Well, it seems that they've completed the change. We've had a couple of calls from end-users who have had problems with the status line on the K2.

Dan just sent me mail about this. He says that whether or not we make a change in the Kaypro version is up to you, and that if you want it changed, it is up to you to provide him with a machine. I have been led to believe that procuring machines was Dan's job. Anyhow, it is an interesting problem. As far as I can see, the current versions will work on older machines, but not on new ones. If we make the necessary changes, our games will work only on new machines. Whose job is it to contact Kaypro to find out what changes they made in their machines? (Dan implied that it was yours or mine.) I certainly think it's worth our while to find out if we can fix the interpreter to work with both old and new Kaypros.

A similar problem appears 3 years later:

Date: 20 Feb 1987 1027-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: amstrad To: swg

And we have the answer! It's not us, it's them. Isn't that reassuring? They discovered that by using the IBM sources to create the Amstrad disks, they were creating the problem. (Funny, we mentioned it to them initially, and they said, "no, no, that's not the problem." Anyway, they requested Kaypro II masters and say they'll be able to get it together within a couple days.

(One of the computers from this time period had a problem formatting its own disks. But, you could use a Commodore 1571 drive to format the disks. Perhaps the above message is about the same computer.)

Date: 20 Jun 1984 1636-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: CLOCK To: TESTERS at ZORK

My opinion:

SHOULD RUN CLOCK:	SHOULDN'T RUN CLOCK:	WHO CARES?:
DIAGNOSE	VERSION	$VERIFY
	QUIT/RESTART	
	SAVE/RESTORE	
	SCRIPT/UNSCRIPT	
	BRIEF/VERBOSE	
	TIME	
	SCORE	

Date: 18 Jul 1984 1647-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Running The Clock To: imps at ZORK

I just noticed a snag with verbs that don't run the clock but do set L-PRSA (for AGAIN). If you type the verb, and then type AGAIN, the clock will run on the second move. For example:

```
>SCORE
Your score is still zero you incompetent jerk you.

>AGAIN
Your score is still zero you incompetent jerk you.
You may not have noticed, but a three-month-old baby just crawled through
the room and relieved you of all your possessions, all your clothes, all
your valuable jewelry, and also peed on your foot.
```

I guess the fix would be for the "Run the Clock?" predicate to check if the verb is AGAIN and L-PRSA is a non-clock-runner.

Date: 22 Jun 1984 0918-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Important PARSER Retrofixes To: IMPS at ZORK

There are two new PARSER retrofixes which you should be aware of. The first solves the following:

```
>SCRUB DECK
What do you want to scrub the deck with?

>BRUSH
What do you want to brush?
```

Basically, you can answer questions in which the answer is a verb in addition to noun or adjective.

The second solves the following:

```
>TAKE LAMP,SWORD,DOOR
Which lamp sword door do you mean, the wooden door or the trap door?
```

These retrofixes are documented in <INTERLOGIC.DOCUMENTATION>RETROFIX.RNO. The fixes themselves can be found in the file WHICH-TRAP.RETROFIX.

For the future, I suggest that each retrofix be given a name (e.g. WHICH, TRAP, ROOM-DESC, etc.) by which it can be uniquely identified. Then, we can put comments in sample files called "<name> retrofix" which can be searched for. That is what I have done for these retrofixes.

By the way, the first retrofix (TRAP) is potentially dangerous. It should be thoroughly tested by the Imp prior to release to testing. Check on all of the cases which used to cause the bug and then check normal ORPHAN cases.

Date: 28 Jun 1984 1158-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: VERSION BOX To: SEM cc: SWG

I don't feel strongly about putting the difficulty level on the disk, but there are these points against it:

* If the level is revised thru experience, then we have to change the disk as well as the package.

* The level describes the "game" more than the "story". So what do other games have? I'm sure that a board game may have "ages 9 to 90" on the outside of the package, but not on the game board itself. (Probably the publisher recognizes the first point above.)

Date: 11 Jul 1984 1349-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: WALK.AGAIN To: IMPS at ZORK

The most exciting thing you will ever be told in your entire life:

```
>[DIRECTION].AGAIN
```

-works in Starcross, Enchanter, Sorcerer, and Planetfall.

-does not work in Zork, Deadline, Infidel, Cutthroats, Suspect, and Hitchhiker's.

(Suspended, Witness, and Seastalker don't know the word AGAIN)

Date: 11 Jul 1984 1351-EDT From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: WALK.AGAIN To: SEM at ZORK cc: IMPS at ZORK

I believe the documentation currently claims that AGAIN ignores WALK.

Date: 11 Jul 1984 1815-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: ODD SYNTAX To: IMPS at ZORK

Any suggestions on how to make

```
>CHARACTER, MY NAME IS ARTHUR DENT
```

parse? You can currently

```
>SAY "ARTHUR DENT"
```

but I think that people will try the other way also. Can you think of any other ways that people might try to do word this input?

Date: 12 Jul 1984 0922-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: ODD SYNTAX To: SEM cc: SWG

I can't see any way to make that parseable, but I have two comments:

1. You can lead players to use the right syntax by the way you arrange the words in the cue. E.g. instead of "What is your name?" the program/character can say "Tell me your name."
2. You may be opening a cognitive can of worms even if you manage to parse that input. Will success with that sentence lead players to type

```
>MY QUEST IS THE HOLY GRAIL
>MY GOAL IS TO BE HAPPY
>YOUR PROBLEM IS TOO MUCH BEER
```

etc.? Will you describe this syntax in the manual?

In Seastalker I even eliminated WHAT & WHERE in favor of DESCRIBE & FIND, so that the rule was very simple: use commands = imperative verbs.

Date: 29 Jul 1984 1426-EDT From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Re: [Bug Reports] To: MD

I agreed to Jon giving his own bug reports to Jeff and Suzanne. Why he wanted to do this isn't exactly clear to me, but I agreed rather than argue.

Next thing I knew TESTERS at ZORK received Jon's mail telling everyone to give their reports to Jeff and Suzanne. A few millichrons latter I was asking Jon the same questions you asked. He said since I had agreed to let him turn in his bugs to Jeff and Suzanne that he would just extend that a bit to include all testers. I told him I had not agreed to that at all. And further more I didn't think he should be sending mail dealing with testing procedures. Jon, along with Jerry who had joined in, argued that this would eliminate duplicate bug reports and there would be one tester who would know all the bugs. Basically this was the plan they had proposed a couple of weeks ago — having one tester as sort of a "captain" for that game. A person who would filter the bugs.

At that time I discussed this idea at lunch with the testers and it really didn't go over. (We did initiate a new procedure to eliminate constant re-reports.) Personally, at this point in time, considering the morale and stick-to-itiveness of the testers, the only one I would trust to "captain" a game is Tomas. He's the only one who would take it all the way.

I also don't think duplicate bugs are a very big problem. Any obvious bugs are going to be reported in the early stages of a game when only one person is on it. Occasionally in Beta or Gamma a very bad version will come out with several major things not working and these things may get reported by everyone, but who's fault is that. And besides, I'd rather we reported the same bug twice than for one tester not to report it because he assumes one of the others will report it since it is so obvious.

As for having one tester who knows all the bugs — I don't see how that helps anything. The Imp is the one who needs to know that. The only benefit I can see from the "captain" idea is it might make the testers feel like their jobs are more important — and that may very well be worth a lot. Of course how a "captain" is selected may open up a can of worms we don't need opened. Wouldn't we always want our best person as "captain"? Making one person a "captain" may make them feel more important, but it won't do much for the others. I don't know, it sounds like an idea whose time hasn't come.

Anyway, I had no time to argue with Jon and Jerry about something that should have never happened in the first place. I spent a few minutes displaying veiled anger, just enough to let them know that this should be the last time for this end run tactic, then went back to work. I was tempted to argue the point until he would withdraw his mail, but why make an enemy or waves, or waste that much time. I think he understands he over stepped a bit.

As for the routing of bugs — since I have not finished Suspect or Hitchhiker, I don't want to see any reports. As it stands now, Jeff and Suzanne give their bugs directly to the Imps. So this really doesn't change things all that much. I'd rather let it go now, I'm sure Jeff and Suzanne feel a little boost with this. So I say let it go until a couple of us have finished the games and then go back to the way it was. I have no doubt that this system will have eroded anyway by then.

How was your weekend? Hollywood Dave

REMOVE is updated:

Date: 10 Aug 1984 1052-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: REMOVE To: IMPS at ZORK

I've been ruminating about the handling of

```
>REMOVE object
```

with respect to trying to figure out what the player means when he/she types that.

Most of our games, even some with wearable items, just use REMOVE as a synonym for TAKE: the Zorks, Deadline, The Witness, Enchanter, Infidel, and Seastalker.

In Sorcerer, REMOVE only has the meaning TAKE OFF (DOFF, SHED).

In Starcross, REMOVE performs TAKE OFF if the object is wearable, otherwise it performs TAKE.

In Planetfall, REMOVE performs TAKE OFF if the object is worn, otherwise it performs TAKE.

It seems to me that for REMOVE OBJECT to equal TAKE OBJECT, the object ought to be in a container, not just on the ground. But then, what would the default response be for REMOVE OBJECT when that object is just lying on the ground? "You're not wearing that."??? "It's not in anything."???

Date: 10 Aug 1984 1110-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: REMOVE To: SEM cc: SWG

I like Planetfall's interpretation, i.e. test if object is worn, not just wearable.
If object is not worn, but in container or on surface, REMOVE = TAKE.
Else, "You're not wearing that."

Date: 10 Aug 1984 1657-EDT From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: REMOVE To: SEM at ZORK cc: IMPS at ZORK

1. Maybe it's time that REMOVE was its own verb.
2. The default can be "I can't tell what to remove it from."

Date: 14 Aug 1984 0917-EDT From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Royal Interpreter To: md

John and I agreed to give it the once over. When the 20 was down last week Joanne played Zork 1 about 2/3rds of the way through. Everything seemed okay. There was only one problem: Royal got the games on 5 1/4 inch by down loading them from 8 inch CP/M. The games they down loaded were very old. They didn't know some of the new commands like "Z" and "G". Plus had all the old bugs. I threw it back to Dan and the story goes something like this: We need the 11 up and working to be able to make new 8 inch CP/M disks so we can down load to the 5 1/4. Basically a mess but at least it was caught — I could imagine Royal selling Zork 1 release 15.

Date: 20 Sep 1984 1541-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Parser Ideas To: IMPS at ZORK

I was musing on the sorts of "real-life" conditions in which one might use a limited vocabulary in an interesting setting. Such a setting might be reasonable to simulate:
Example: Air-traffic controller (TURN RIGHT TO HEADING OF 185, DESCEND TO 1500, CLEARED FOR ILS APPROACH TO RWY 6L, CONTACT TOWER ON 119.6)

Can people think of others?

Date: 21 Sep 1984 1116-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Parser Ideas To: BLANK cc: SWG

Your ATC example can be generalized to other situations where a noisy environment demands stereotyped communication:

* fast-food counter ("Two cheeseburgers, hold the mayo." - "Adam and Eve on a raft.")
* voice comm. between ground and space ("Ground Control to Major Tom" - "You are go for TLI [trans-lunar injection].")
* auctions or trading ("I have 500; who'll go six?" "Bid [five and] 3/8 for INF!")
* casino ("Place your bets!" "Seventeen, black.")
* football huddle ("Deep pattern with right-end dogleg, on four!")

and so on: disco, combat, sailing, etc.

Marc's idea was eventually used in Nord and Bert.

Date: 3 Oct 1984 1552-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: The Bird's-Eye Low-Down on Size Limits To: IMPS at ZORK

It seems that many of the size limits previously announced for certain micros are not valid. Reasons vary, and blame is hard to pin (volunteers?). So let's skip the blarney and get down to FACTS.

In order of annoyance:

ATARI
Absolute maximum "pure" size is 92,160 bytes. This has not and cannot be changed.
Absolute maximum "preload" size is now 37,632 bytes. This assumes a 48K machine (we no longer support 32K Ataris). When the new, unapproved ZIP goes into effect, the limit will be 38,400 bytes.

TRS-80 COLOR COMPUTER
Maximum "pure" size is unlimited (e.g.; >128K).
Maximum "preload" is only 23,040 bytes. Be careful!

COMMODORE 64 & PLUS/4
Maximum "pure" size (and total game size) must not exceed 118,784 bytes for both machines. It used to be larger, but now we have to leave room for 2 interpreters on the disk.
Maximum "preload" is 41,984 bytes on the 64, and 35,584 on the Plus/4.

Please note that the above preload limits leave room for only ONE swapping page. The performance of an Atari or Commodore with only one swapping page is too awful to contemplate. The smaller you make the preload, the faster the game will run. Best to keep them around 20-25K if you can.
Bother Dan Horn if you're curious about the other micros. I guarantee these figures are correct, because I wrote the ZIPs.

-PROF

PS: Apple II is unlimited "pure," about 36K "pre."

Date: 11 Oct 1984 1043-EDT From: Dan Horn <DAN at ZORK>
Subject: Machine Limits Final To: implementors at ZORK

Microcomputer specifications for Imps and others.

	Preload*	Pure	Maximum Game Size
48K Atari	37K	92K	128K
48K Apple II	36K	128K	124K
Macintosh	60K	128K	128K
CBM 64	41K	118K	118K
CBM Plus/4	35K	118K	118K
TRS-80 CoCo 2	22K	128K	128K
TI-99/4-A	22K	111K	111K
32K BBC Acorn	17K	128K	128K
CP/M-80	RAM - 9K	128K	128K

* The preload sizes shown leave room for just ONE swapping page. Allow at least 4K for swapping, preferably a lot more.

**** Also the Impure Load (the area SAVEd by Save Games should NOT be larger than 16k. This should not present much of a problem since Suspect (Largest Game) uses on 12k, but you should watch out for problem if is going to be large ****

Questions, Answers? Drop me a line.... [Dan]
A copy of this will be placed in <MICROS> under MaximumSize.Doc the old one will read MaxOldSize.Doc.

Date: 11 Oct 1984 1104-EDT From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Machine Limits Final To: DAN at ZORK cc: imps at ZORK, md at ZORK

It's a start, but your chart will be no help next time I have a large game. Should I read the footnote to mean that the TI99 shouldn't have more than 18K preload? (The last number I saw on that account was 20K.) Does the Acorn have anything to do with anything? How much RAM does the smallest CP/M machine we care about have?

The problem at my end tends to be too much irrelevent information and not enough that's obviously relevant. Please keep the chart in <micros> maximumsize.doc up to date, and please let us when changes have been made. But much more important, please let's have marketing and development get together and figure out exactly what the real limits are, so that I don't have to guess next time I've got a game pushing 115K.

Date: 11 Oct 1984 1257-EDT From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: NZAP knows how small micros are To: IMPS at ZORK cc: DAN at ZORK

There is a new Zap, Nzap for now, which has in it the information compiled by Dan Horn and the Micro-gurus on the sizes of the various micros. It will tell you in disgusting detail when your game is too big for any of the little beasts. There is a file Z:MACHINES.MID which contains this info in MIDASable form. It should be updated whenever the details change.

This Zap also will tell you if you breach an arbitrary impure size limit of 16K. Suspect's is only 12K, so this limit is probably not too likely to be serious to anyone.

Date: 11 Oct 1984 1639-EDT
From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: NZIP20
To: IMPS at ZORK

NZIP20 makes a reasonable effort to simulate the actual stack usage of the micros, keeping track of the maximum stack used. It tells you if you have overpushed the "Atari" stack, which is the smallest (224 words).

I have also reorganized the error printing a little. Let me know what you think of it (if you notice it at all).

Date: 29 Nov 1984 1040-EST
From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: New Interpreters
To: MD, ERNIE, JENNIFER, TOM, DAN, SCF

Just to keep you all up-to-date:

Version "B" of the Color Computer ZIP is now available for testing. I've given Tom revised copy for the reference card.

Improved ZIPs are also in the works for the Commodore 64, Plus/4, Atari and Apple II. The 64 and Plus/4 ZIPs probably won't need new cards. The Atari and Apple probably will.

We may want to hold off on 64 ZIP "C" until Commodore shows us their new 128K version of the machine. I can probably make the revised ZIP work equally badly on both. The reference card would have to change to announce compatibility, though. The same holds true for Atari; they are also threatening the world with a 128K XL.

Dan will be getting info on the new machines within the next few weeks.

Date: 30 Nov 1984 1044-EST
From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: ZIP Internal Error Codes
To: IMPS at ZORK, TESTERS at ZORK, MICROS at ZORK

You may have noticed that the notorious "Internal Error" codes produced with annoying frequency by certain micros don't look the same anymore. Instead of showing you the address where the interpreter failed in decimal (so useful!), you now get a coded number that you can identify without running upstairs and throttling a hacker.

Here's an official, up-to-date list of the Internal Errors that can pop up on the new Apple-family micros. Which micros are those, you ask? They include the Commodore 64 and Plus/4, Tandy Color Computer and (soon) the Atari and Apple II.

ERROR #	OBSCURE MEANING
00	Insufficient RAM (or Preload Too Big, if you prefer)
01	Illegal X-OP
02	Illegal 0-OP
03	Illegal 1-OP
04	Illegal 2-OP (the 3rd most common error)
05	Z-Stack Underflow
06	Z-Stack Overflow
07	Illegal Property Length (GETP)
08	Division By Zero
09	Illegal Argument Count (EQUAL?)
10	Illegal Property ID (PUTP)
11	Illegal Property Length (PUTP)
12	Disk Address Out Of Range (the 2nd most common error)
13	Parser Overflow (too many words typed)
14	Disk Access Error (by far the most common error)
15	Z-Stack Destroyed (e.g.; the Suspect bug)

A copy of this list has been transmitted to <INTERLOGIC>MICRO.ERRORS. If I get ambitious, I may even make a poster and hang it in the Micro Room for all to enjoy.

Q: “Why don’t ALL the micros use these same error codes, instead of just the Apple family?”
A: “What a graceful, elegant concept! Ask Dan.”

Date: 24 Dec 1984 1410-EST
Subject: Acorn
From: Linde Simpson <LINDE at ZORK>
To: MD

Sorry to have taken so long to give you information on the Acorn, but I was waiting to see how much room I could coax out of it once I was sure the zip was running. The results are that Zork I at 4F hex pages is the largest game that will fit, with 4 pages to play the game in. I was able to get only 53 hex pages free on the machine. So, these are the games that will fit: Zork I, II, III, Deadline, Starcross, Witness, Infidel, Suspended, and the demo.

Date: 3 Jan 1985 1134-EST
Subject: Room Name Length
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK, MICROS at ZORK

What is the maximum length for a room DESC? I’ve gotten a few conflicting answers from people. The longest existing room name I’ve found so far is 24 letters (“Volcano By Viewing Ledge” in Zork II). However, I have a dim recollection of the room DESC “Land of the Living Dead” in Zork I being shortened to “Land of the Dead” because the original name was too long. However, the original name is only 23 letters, one LESS than a room name in Zork II. Can anyone give a definitive answer?

Date: 3 Jan 1985 1150-EST
Subject: Room Name Lengths Revisited
From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK, MICROS at ZORK

“... and the winner of the 1985 Shortest DESC Line Award is — the envelope, please — the Tandy Color Computer, with 21 characters!”
(Applause.)

Date: 7 Feb 1985 1436-EST
Subject: Random before read
From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at ZORK>
To: Marc at ZORK, SWG, MSB, PDL, SEM

The following games have the random occurring before the first keystroke:

SUSPECT	PLANETFALL	INFIDEL
SEASTALKER	ZORK III	DEADLINE

The micro-people cannot create an interpreter to override this, and subsequently there is basically no random within these games.
This needs to be changed. If you can figure out a new way to get your random we, in testing (and the outside world), would be much obliged. If you dare to ignore this plea for effective randomness, you’ll have to deal with Hollywood’s wrath.

If this makes no sense, call the Samaritans at x258.
-Suzanne

Date: 7 Feb 1985 1501-EST From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Random before read To: SWG

Sounds good. Let me tell Dave and Ernie and I'll get back in touch with you.

The extended parser's inception:

Date: 27 Feb 1985 1337-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Opinions requested To: IMPS at ZORK

I'm looking for opinions on having the EZIP interpreters recognize words by their first 9 characters rather than 6 as is the case presently. The costs include changes to virtually all parts of the development system and some additional changes to each of the interpreters. The advantages are obvious. Opinions?

Date: 27 Feb 1985 1745-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Of new ZIPs and size limits To: IMPS at ZORK, DA at ZORK, DAN at ZORK, ANDY at ZORK

New versions of the Apple II and Commodore 64/Plus-4 ZIPs are about to be approved. The improvements will directly affect Imps and Testing, so here's a list of what's new:

For the new Apple II ZIP:

— The maximum game size limit has been ELIMINATED. Games may occupy up to 131,072 bytes (128K), the absolute limit of the development system. This is especially good news for Dean Agnew & Company, since most of our outside testers use Apples.
— The stack size has been increased from 240 to 255 words, bringing it in line with the Atari, C64, Plus-4, Acorn and CoCo ZIPs.
— The user interface for SAVE/RESTORE is consistent with the other machines.
— Best of all, the new ZIP does NOT use the &@%#^! Apple Pascal system.
It now uses the Rainbow-based 6502 kernal like all the other 6502 systems. In theory, that means we can change all five 6502 ZIPs in less time than it used to take to change just one. (No, Stu, you CANNOT have another split screen opcode!)

For the C64/Plus-4:

— The maximum game size limit has been "almost" ELIMINATED. The old limit was 118,784 bytes (snarl). The new limit is 130,560 bytes, just 512 bytes shy of the absolute top. Will miracles never cease?
— The stupid little red light on the disk drive now turns on and off when it's supposed to. No thanks to Andy Finkle of Commodore Int'l.
— Printer errors are now gracefully ignored. QUIT really quits, and RESTART really restarts.

The new Apple and Commodore ZIPs will be released as soon as Testing's done pounding on them. All new releases (Sampler II and Wishbringer) will use them, and all old games will be remastered as needed.

What, you may ask, are the new Game Size Limits? The limiting machines are now the Atari (with an unchangeable "pure" limit of 92,160 bytes) and the CoCo (with a "pre" limit of 22,528 bytes). Now, your average Joe Implementor might just add these two numbers together and say, "Ah, the maximum game size must now be 114,688 bytes!" But clever people like me (who talk loudly in restaurants) would point out that the CoCo has NO "pure" limit, and that the Atari's "pre" limit is a generous 33,792 bytes (allowing 4K for swapping). So, as long as the "required" preload doesn't exceed the CoCo limit, you can fiddle with the Atari's preload pointer (a la Suspect) and sell a ZIP game with up to 125,952 bytes in it ... 15K larger than anything we've ever sold.

Don't ask about the TI-994A. Don't even discuss it. Maybe it will go away.

EZIP and EZIL now handle words of 9 letters:

Date: 3 Mar 1985 1212-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: XEZILCH/XEZAP/XEZIP20 To: EZIPPERS at ZORK

There is a set of new tools available which incorporate 9-letter vocabulary words into the EZIP system. Please use them so that any bugs can be shaken out. I have tried it in EZIPTEST with excellent results. It turns out, by the way, that the changes to EZIP20 were fairly trivial to implement.

Date: 3 Mar 1985 1427-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Vocabulary in EZIL To: IMPS at ZORK

I have adopted the suggestion of extending the length of vocabulary words in EZIL to be 9 Z-characters (from the old limit of 6). You may feel free to strangle strangers, identify identical twins, and inventory your various inventions.

Date: 8 Mar 1985 1538-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Coming Soon… To: imps at ZORK

The combined ZIL/EZIL, which will be running in machine-independent MDL. This means that ALL games will fit COMPLETELY in memory regardless of the size of the game. For comparison purposes, the ENTIRE sampler (118K) was loaded into the new combined ZIL in only 3 CPU minutes.

The new CZIL will be coming to a processor near you early next week. The only incompatibility is that the statements:

```
<GC 0 T 5>        and
<BLOAT ...>
```

which live in the load files will have to be removed. It will work in both the old and the new schemes if you put...

```
<COND (<GASSIGNED? MUDDLE> <GC 0 T 5> <BLOAT ...>)>
```

in the file instead. This will cause the GC and BLOAT statements to be executed only in the non-MIM (i.e. old) system.

More to follow.... -marc

("MIM"=Machine Independent Muddle, their programming system)

Date: 9 Mar 1985 1303-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Combined Extended/Classic System To: IMPS at ZORK

The Combined system will be released soon. Here are some more details:

1) ZIL and ZILCH will NOT have to ask whether the game is using the Extended system or not. It will determine it by looking at the first item in the load file. By convention, this is already a STRING saying something like "LOAD FILE FOR xxx …". If the first 8 characters are 'EXTENDED', the game is presumed to be an Extended game. So as to avoid confusion, ZIL and ZILCH will let you know which system it thinks its dealing with. Note to SWG and SEM: I have changed your load files for SPY and S5.
2) ZILCH will output information so that ZAP will know automatically which system it is compiling for.
3) ZAP will always produce a <game>.ZIP file (no distinction between Extended & Classic in the file name).

4) ZIP20 will play BOTH styles of game (it can tell by looking at the <game>.ZIP file which system it wants to be.)

5) Since the same ZIL is used for Extended and Classic, it is worth noting to Classic system users that this new ZIL runs in the machine-independent MDL which means that games of ANY size will completely fit into ZIL without resort to ZEBRA/ZBIN kludgery. In fact, ZEBRA is obsoleted by this change (it was nice while it lasted.)

This new system will probably be installed sometime in the current week.

-marc

Date: 9 Mar 1985 1307-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Addendu To: IMPS at ZORK

As an added bonus for using the new ZIL, the STATUS LINE will actually work in ZIL!

Date: 11 Mar 1985 0949-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Installed To: IMPS at ZORK

I have installed the new Combined system as the standard one. Here are the useful things to note:

1) If you have an EXTENDED game, make sure that your load file begins with "EXTENDED ...."

2) ZIL is now in machine-independent MDL. All games will fit. Status lines will exist.

3) ZILCH functions normally. It will say whether it thinks your game is EXTENDED or not by looking at the opening string in the load file.

4) ZAP functions normally. It will determine whether your game is EXTENDED by looking at the output of ZILCH.

** NOTE: EXTENDED games created prior to this weekend will not run with the new ZIP20. Please recompile/reassemble those games. **

5) ZIP20 can tell whether a game is extended by looking at the ZIP file. Both EXTENDED and CLASSIC game files are called <game>.ZIP now.

6) ZEBRA is obsolete.

7) Old versions of ZIP20/ZAP/ZIL/ZILCH are now OZIP20/OZAP, etc.

8) PLEASE use these new tools. I intend to flush the other ones by the end of the week, so it would be best to use the new ones now. I have tested games in both systems, and haven't found any problem.

9) There is no number 9.

10) There was no number 9.

11) There never will be a number 9.

Date: 11 Mar 1985 1012-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: ZEBRA To: IMPS at ZORK

ZEBRA: Zebra Endangered By Revolutionary Advances?

Date: 14 Mar 1985 1612-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: EZIP Size Limits To: imps at ZORK

It seems that the size limit of EZIP games can be increased to 236K if absolutely necessary (from 204K). Note that this approaches the theoretical limit of 256K imposed by the design of the virtual machine.

Date: 14 Mar 1985 1715-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Revised ZAP Alarms To: IMPS at ZORK

The "classic" game-size alarms in ZAP have been changed to reflect the increased capacity of the new CBM and Apple interpreters. "Extended" alarms will be installed as soon as Dan knows (chuckle) what they are.

A sample of Commodore's "128" arrived today. They claimed it was 100% compatible with the 64. We yawned ... but surprise! The games run perfectly on it.

OOPS makes its return:

Date: 24 Apr 1985 1928-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: The legendary OOPS feature To: imps at ZORK

For those of you who don't remember (or haven't heard), OOPS was a feature of the original Zork that allowed the player to replace a word in his last input that the game didn't recognize.

For example:

```
>WEAR THE GOON
I don't know the word "goon".
>OOPS GOWN
You are now wearing the gown.
```

Yes, I mention this for more than nostalgic reasons. OOPS has now been successfully implemented in my ersatz Hitchhikers, and can be installed (along with the new improved AGAIN) in your new game!

Definition of a "feature":

Date: 25 Apr 1985 2316-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: SAY "[anything]" To: TESTERS at ZORK

You may notice an extra carriage return before SAY "[anything]" responds. This is not a bug. It is a Feature.* Got it? F-E-A-T-U-R-E.

*Features: Bugs that are too obscure, difficult or (especially in the late stages of testing) DANGEROUS to track down and repair. Features are best left alone. Got it? A-L-O-N-E.

Date: 26 Apr 1985 0148-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: SAY "[anything]" Revisited To: TESTERS at ZORK

Never mind that crap about the extra carriage return. I fixed it.

Date: 2 May 1985 1559-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: A New Generic Kernal To: IMPS at ZORK

I've stripped all the game-specific code out of Wishbringer to create an "up-to-date" generic ZIP kernal, affectionately called G. G has 22 objects, 97 globals and occupies 28,676 bytes after F-wording. It runs fine in ZIL and assembles without errors in ZAP.

G includes two sample rooms (connected in all 12 directions) and a "thing" to pick up and drop. It's a good place for a new Imp to start.

The files are in <INTERLOGIC.GENERIC>.

Date: 9 May 1985 1441-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: A New Generic Kernal To: imps at ZORK

I added AGAIN & OOPS to Brian's generic kernel, and put in the changes needed to make an Extended version. So now there are two generic games in <INTERLOGIC.GENERIC>, named G and GE.

Note: the SAME source files are used in both, and the choice between Classic and Extended is made using "%" code.

Discussions begin on gracefully starting and ending the story:

Date: 22 May 1985 1507-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: "STORY" To: IMPS at ZORK

I think this "STORY" stuff is getting out of hand. The Apple EZIP says "The story is loading…" in the middle of the screen while the first side of the disk is being read into memory. That's not too bad. After it's done, you are told "Insert side two of your STORY disk and hit return." This seems like too much to me. Why isn't just "disk" instead of "STORY disk" enough. [The capitalization is real, not added by me.] Finally, when you quit, it prints after the last text of the game "The story has ended." This is particularly bad because it looks exactly like all the text leading up to it, making it look like text from the game rather than a system response. What do you think?

Date: 22 May 1985 1546-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: "STORY" To: imps at ZORK

I agree that something needs to be done. To the extent that the player can't tell whether words on the screen come from the game or from ZIP, we should have some control over what they say.

I propose these messages:

1. "Please wait …" (avoiding the issue of whether "loading" is transitive)
2. "Please turn the disk over and hit the RETURN key." (as Steve suggested)
3. "Thank you for playing." (since the "story" may be far from "ended")

Date: 22 May 1985 1546-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: "STORY" To: IMPS at ZORK

The message "The story is loading …" is standard on the Apple, Atari, C64, Plus/4, Acorn and CoCo ZIPs. The "Insert Side 2 of the STORY disk …" message is the same on the Apple EZIP and Atari ZIP. The word STORY is capitalized to distinguish it from the SAVE disk prompt used in SAVE/RESTORE, which otherwise

appears confusingly similar.

The "Story has ended" message is apparently unique to Apple EZIP. The other 6502-based interpreters say "End of story." when the <QUIT> opcode is encountered. I'll ask Linde to make Apple EZIP consistent, unless anyone has a clearly superior alternative that's acceptable to Marketing (who are responsible for such things as "STORY").

Before everyone starts screaming about changing the ZIP prompts on half a dozen interpreters, consider Ernie's reaction when you tell him to throw away tens of thousands of reference cards because you don't like the word "story." Then imagine Dan and Hollywood's reactions when you announce the urgent necessity to create and test six new interpreter versions because the word "story" doesn't meet your critical standards.

Date: 22 May 1985 1616-EDT
Subject: Re: "STORY"

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: SWG

I like your suggestions.

Date: 23 May 1985 1518-EDT
Subject: Re: "STORY"

From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: PROF cc: SWG, sem, jon

I agree with your point about not changing the "loading" message, since it does indeed appear on Reference Cards.

And I can believe that the "turn over" message cannot be changed in many ZIPs because it's shared by the SAVE/RESTORE routines.

But the last message still bothers me. It seems that a simple "Thank you" or "Good-bye" is better than something misleading about the story having ended. This message doesn't appear on any Reference Card, and I can't believe that simply changing a message in a ZIP would require re-testing.

Date: 23 May 1985 1543-EDT
Subject: Re: "STORY"

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: SWG

I agree with you, reluctantly on points 1 and 2, and wholeheartedly on point 3.

Date: 14 Aug 1985 1559-EDT
Subject: End of session.

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: imps at ZORK

That's what the new Apple, C64 and Atari ZIPs now say when you <QUIT>. Happy?

Date: 23 Aug 1985 1104-EDT
Subject: End of Session

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

The Apple II and CoCo have also joined the ranks of micros that say "End of session." Rejoice.

Date: 19 Nov 1985 1553-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Apple II+ text display To: ehb cc: Linde, swg

One of the first things Dan Horn did here was to modify the Apple ZIP interpreter so it would know it's running on a IIe or IIc, and if so give the user the option of seeing the text in a format with 80 columns and upper + lower case.

At that time I said to him, "That looks great! I wish you could do the same for my II+, which has an 80-column board in it made by Videx. I know that Applewriter uses my board correctly — and it's the top-selling Apple word processor — if I use a 'pre-boot' disk that came from Videx, the board's manufacturer." He investigated a little and decided that we couldn't support any such boards unless they followed the Apple interface standard. So I had to be content at home with regular 40-column upper-case text, which is much harder to read.

Just last week I borrowed a copy of "Brimstone", an "electronic novel" developed by Synapse and sold by Broderbund, to evaluate at home. These people are perhaps our closest competition in interactive fiction. The first thing the program asked after booting: did I want 80 columns? Just for fun, I said yes, and imagine my delight when the thing actually worked with my hardware configuration!

Now I'm wondering whether we could do the same thing. There must be a lot of older Apples out there with the same sort of hardware. I assume that implementing this feature wouldn't have high priority, but I'd like to see it on somebody's list anyway!

Date: 8 Apr 1986 1738-EST From: Dave Lebling <PDL at FRED>
Subject: MOUSERY... To: IMPS at FRED, MICROS at FRED, MD at FRED

MOUSE STUFF

It has been suggested more than once that our games could be a lot sexier on the Macintosh, Atari ST, and Amiga (or any other machine that routinely uses mice). It has been suggested that people who own such machines are reluctant to buy programs that don't "take full advantage" of the capabilities of the machines.

On certain machines, Zip would benefit from the ability to accept commands from the mouse. There are three areas which are frequently mentioned is this regard:

* movement commands * inventory * common verbs and objects

The following is a proposal for how our interpreters and games could do this (from the point of view of the game/interpreter specification).

The proposal is based on communicating tables of information to the game interpreter via special locations in the low bytes of the interpreter.

1. Compass Table

   If this table is supplied, then bit 0 of the mouse-table word is turned on. This is an LTABLE which contains pairs consisting of characters and strings. The characters are the abbreviations of the directions, and the strings are the "words" typed when the direction is selected. The LTABLE must have at least 10 pairs in it, corresponding to the 10 directions normally encountered in a game (N.NE.E.SE.S.SW.W.NW.U.D).

   Selecting any of these should be the same as typing the direction on the input line.

   If a direction is not to be displayed, it is zeroed. If it is to have a different abbreviation, then the slot is changed. If the table has changed and should be updated on the screen, bit 1 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

2. Inventory Table

   If this table is supplied, bit 2 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

   This LTABLE contains the objects which should appear in the on-screen inventory. Selecting an object in the inventory should be equivalent to typing the name of the inventory object in the input stream. Double-clicking the inventory object should be the equivalent to typing "Drop the object."

   If the table has changed and should be updated on the screen, bit 3 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

3. Frequent Verbs

   If this table is supplied, bit 4 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

   This LTABLE contains interesting words corresponding to interesting verbs (LOOK, TAKE, DROP, etc.). Ideally, it should be changeable (like a scratchpad) by the user, to contain any interesting verbs that he has found useful.

   This table is only an initial setting for what one would expect to be a user-tailorable display, and as such doesn't change, but if the table has changed and should be updated on the screen, bit 5 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

4. Frequent Words

   If this table is supplied, bit 6 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

   This table is exactly like the previous one, but contains an initial selection of non-verb interesting words.

   This table is only an initial setting for what one would expect to be a user-tailorable display, and as such doesn't change, but if the table has changed and should be updated on the screen, bit 5 of the mouse-table word is turned on.

5. The Mouse-Table Word

   This word contains bits which tell the interpreter whether the game uses any of the tables, and whether any of them have changed.

6. Miscellaneous

   Double-clicking might have different effects than just selecting. For example, double-click of a direction might mean the direction followed by a carriage return. Single-click might just type it in the input line.

   Display considerations are interesting. There may not be room for all these windows. Should they be pull-down (pop-up) menus? What if none of the directions in a game are normal? Still use a compass rose?

What about manuals? This is a lot of stuff for a reference card. Comments?

SOOPER-OOPS is introduced:

Date: 16 Apr 1987 1504-EST From: Gray lust tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Retrofix #64 To: imps at FRED

How many times has this happened to you?

```
>LAT LONG-NAMED-THING
[I don't know the word "lat."]
```

Wouldn't you love to be able to do this?

```
>OOPS L AT
It looks even purpler than you expected.
```

Well, to equip YOUR game with new improved SOOPER-OOPS (tm), just find the clause in your parser that looks like (<EQUAL? <GET ,P-LEXV .PTR> ,W?OOPS> ...) and replace it with Z:OOPS.ZIL. (This feature does cost about 60 bytes, and it hasn't been blessed by Testing, so beware!)

Date: 1 Jul 1987 1613-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: c-128 for x-zip To: clr, taa, jon

It's performance is fine in terms of speed. Gary timed some actions on the 128 - typical times were 5 seconds (with the 1571 drives - the 1541 drive take twice as long.)

Saves take 120 sec., restore takes 80 sec., and Booting takes 150 seconds (2 1/2 minutes). It's quicker than EZIP for Jeff's game.

Date: 14 Dec 1987 1636-EST From: Truly eat slag! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: parser report To: CLR cc: TAA, SWG

List of features of new parser:
* recognizes new types (or patterns) of sentences, for example questions or statements or foreign languages, as required by individual products
* recognizes old types of sentences more flexibly and reliably
* converses with user in order to clarify sentences
* allows individual products to give helpful comments to user, based on common errors or key words

Date: 23 Mar 1988 1618-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Good news! To: SEM, PDL cc: TAA, Jon, SWG

Among the improvements to the parser today is this one: a phrase like WEST DOOR is understood, in the sense that
-if no object can be found to match the phrase, and
-if one of the adjectives is an exit direction from HERE, and
-if there is a door at that exit which otherwise matches the phrase, then the door is it!
Now how much would you pay?

P.S. I suppose the same scheme could work for adjectives like CLOSED, if we wanted it to.

Date: 5 Apr 1988 1824-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Request for Comments To: imps at FRED cc: Challenge at FRED, Marc at FRED

At the request of the Challenge folks, I am proposing a method for the (new) parser to find objects in adjacent rooms, if the author so desires. The goal is to avoid this kind of situation:

```
221-B Baker Street

You are standing in the spill of a gas streetlight outside
Holmes's house.

...

>LOOK THROUGH WINDOW
You look down into Baker Street.

>EXAMINE STREETLIGHT
You cannot see any streetlight here.
```

The author has to do two things for any such method to work:
(1) declare what rooms are adjacent to a given one, and
(2) declare what verbs should look for objects in adjacent rooms.

Here is my proposal (ahem):

(1) The player can see into adjacent rooms if HERE has an ADJACENT property whose value is a LTABLE containing the names of adjacent rooms. (The table can contain zero(s) if the corresponding room(s) is not visible at the moment. Maybe it's hidden behind a closed door.) In the example, the author would write:

```
<ROOM HOLMES-STUDY
    (ADJACENT <LTABLE BAKER-STREET>)
    ...>
<PUT <GETP ,HOLMES-STUDY ,P?ADJACENT> 1 0> ;"window shade closed"
```

Note: This property duplicates information from the CORRIDOR property in the mysteries. But does anyone plan to use CORRIDOR in the future?

(2) The player can use a verb (syntax) on an object in an adjacent room if the syntax has a special combination of bits following OBJECT. (A single bit would be tidier, but none is available.) The special combination is one that will never occur otherwise; I propose the combination (HAVE EVERYWHERE). (By the way, I took a census of the OBJECT bits actually used in Shogun and Zork Zero. See P:SYNTAX.CENSUS.) In the example, the author would write:

```
<SYNTAX EXAMINE OBJECT (HAVE EVERYWHERE) = V-EXAMINE PRE-EXAMINE>
```

Note: If the adjacent room itself has a SYNONYM or ADJECTIVE property, and the author wants the player to be able to refer to it (for example, ENTER BAKER STREET), then it should appear in the GLOBAL property of HERE.

[This file is P:ADJACENT.TXT.]

Date: 7 Apr 1988 1038-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Request for Comments To: SWG

Maybe it's a good thing, but it seems to me that this will make it hard to have complicated geographies—the poor loser has to remember, when the window shade is opened/closed, which slot in any affected ADJACENT properties to clobber. It just seems to be an invitation for obscure (and probably not found, because not tested) bugs.

The routine at least has the advantage that the conditions for adjacency are specified in one place; the disadvantage is that there could be dozens of the little devils running around. (I don't think speed would really be a problem, given that they'd presumably only be called from GLOBAL-CHECK (or equivalent) when there's actually an ADJACENT property.)

How's about this? The table has pairs, of rooms that might possibly be adjacent and a true or false indicating whether the room is actually currently adjacent. In many games, this could be a byte table, since room IDs are <= 255.

Date: 7 Apr 1988 1200-EST From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: adjacent rooms To: Challenge cc: TAA, SWG

Tim suggested two changes:

1. So that it's easier for routines to make changes in the table, leave the rooms in always, but follow each with a byte that tells whether it's visible from here at the moment.
2. So that these tables don't occupy too much space, store each room in only one byte. This means a game can't have more than 255 rooms.

I updated P:ADJACENT.TXT with these changes.

Date: 8 Apr 1988 1601-EST
Subject: Re: Quotes

From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
To: CHALLENGE at FRED
cc: SWG at FRED, imps at FRED, Marc at FRED

Saying things "out loud" is an interesting philosophical issue that we here have argued about in the past. Should the player be able to "say" anything at all, and should the parser ignore what's inside quotes completely?

Here's an example: Suppose the player types

```
>SAY TO CREATURE "YOUR MOTHER WEARS COMBAT BOOTS"
```

Is it reasonable for the parser to say "I don't know the word 'mother'"? That would be entirely consistent with all of the player's other interaction with the program. Or is it reasonable for the parser to ignore all words between quotes? In that case, the creature would ignore the insult. If the creature is unfriendly, that's probably okay; but if the creature is friendly, it's probably not okay.

The new parser tries to ignore everything between quotes. But, because of its fundamental mechanism, it HAS to look ahead at the word following the first quote, at least to see if the word is known. It's not reasonable to treat SAY followed by quote as a special case, because there are many ways that the player could phrase a command to say something; my example is just one other way.

I guess I'm saying that you haven't made a good case for changing the way the parser works now. If you have a better case, I'd like to hear it.

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1425-EDT
Subject: Mine, All Mine!

From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
To: SWG

Suppose the game says...

```
You see your teddy bear here.
```

The typical, garyesque, literal-minded tester immediately says

```
>TAKE YOUR TEDDY BEAR
```

and the game grumps about it. On the one hand, it's not English. On the other hand, many other things we understand aren't English either.

```
>TAKE MY TEDDY BEAR
```

works, of course.

Date: 23 Jun 1988 1020-EDT
Subject: The Parser and the Player

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: SWG cc: Jon

Concerning QUERIES.PART.2:

If we wanted to include all that info in an instruction manual, I don't believe that I could write it any better than you already have. (Some readers/players may still be confused, but a lengthier explanation might be even more confusing.)

But is the first kind of valid sentence that you mention necessary? The examples you give are THE TROLL ATTACKS ME and I SEARCH FOR A CLUE. I can't recall specific instances in Shogun where such a syntax is needed. (Maybe I'm forgetting something.)

If we DON'T need to explain that first kind of sentence, it might be easier for the reader/player to understand the rules. We might say something like:

> You can use the verb "to be" in all its inflections (I was..., I am..., I shall be..., You were..., She is..., They will be..., We are..., etc.) followed by a noun phrase or an adjective or a prepositional phrase. Examples: ... [Instead of mentioning NOT in the "rules," I'd just show an example.]

As for valid sentences for questions, I'd rather simplify the rules so the reader/player knows what syntaxes are NECESSARY to finish the game, not what syntaxes are hypothetically understood. (I guess this thinking underlies my earlier comments.) Is it sufficient to give the following (very narrow) rule?

> You can ask a question about a noun. Examples: WHAT IS A GRUE? WHEN IS LUNCH? WHO IS OMI? WHERE IS SAN DIEGO? HOW ARE THE RIBS? etc.

What a wondrous accomplishment if a game could handle all the reasonable questions possible within this "narrow" rule! I was going to add another sentence like: "You can also ask simple questions about people or things, using the verb 'to be' in its inflections. Examples: IS THE POPE CATHOLIC? WILL THE DOOR BE LOCKED? …" But then I decided to let my rational side take over. I believe Infocom can make these syntaxes understood in specific instances, but I don't think we should encourage players to type such questions, because a game cannot possibly handle most of the possibilities.

I'm not sure I've answered your questions.

Date: 18 Aug 1988 0942-EDT From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: Re: Superbrief To: MARC

Synoptic messages work best for me. Do you mean by your post scriptum that this is low-priority and may be implemented if we're lucky? Or is the idea going to wait for the next in the series, without a doubt?

Date: 19 Aug 1988 1001-EDT From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: [I assume you mean] To: BUGCORPS at FRED cc: IMPS at FRED

How about replacing it, making it less condescending, etc? My suggestion:

```
>PUT HER IN THE COMFY CHAIR
[her being old woman] (or) [her meaning old woman]

>PUT OLD WOMAN IN THE COMFY CHAIR AND TELL HER ABOUT HERESY
[and meaning then]
```

But what happens when there's two ANDs?

```
>TELL HER ABOUT HERESY AND GIVE HER TEA AND BISCUITS
```

(Maybe) `[first "and" meaning "then"]`

This could get hairy.

```
>GIVE HER TE
[I don't know the word "te".]

>OOPS TEA
[give her tea]

>PUT HER IN COMFY
[comfy ?]
```

What to do here? Are there any other cases where It assumes I mean?

Z

Game systems in general

Date: 12 Jul 1983 1327-EDT
Subject: $VER

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: consumers at ZORK

I have done a study of relative verification speeds on most machines. Here are the results. The first number indicates the number of seconds required to verify Zork I. The second number is the relative verification speed, using the PDP-11 on-line version as the standard.

PDP-11 (hard disk)	8 seconds	1.00	NEC APC	48 seconds	6.00
Apple IIe	20 seconds	2.50	Osborne 1	51 seconds	6.38
PDP-11 (floppy disk)	33 seconds	4.13	TRS-80 Model III	62 seconds	7.75
IBM PC	33 seconds	4.13	Atari 800	95 seconds	11.88
TI Professional	33 seconds	4.13	Commodore 64	255 seconds	31.88
DEC Rainbow	37 seconds	4.63			

Date: 10 Aug 1983 1412-EDT
Subject: $VERIFY

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

Question For The Day: Should we document $VERIFY?

Pro: It will cut down on people who think they have a bad disk when it's really their hardware. It might save customer service time in determine whether a phone complaint is really a bad disk.

Con: People who never thought they had a bad disk might get the bright of seeing whether they have a bad disk. Sometimes $VERIFY will not work for several tries, even though the disk is perfect.

My opinion: The benefits and risks are about equal for us, but it might be a nice service for all the little people out there in Micro-America to let them know that this option exists.

Date: 13 Aug 1983 1252-EDT
Subject: New kind of OBJECT

From: Michael Berlyn <MSB at ZORK>
To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

We now have a new kind of object, implemented in a general case — a container which can also function as a surface.

Infidel has 2 such objects — the CRATE and the SLAB. I can think of many other objects which would fall nicely into this category.

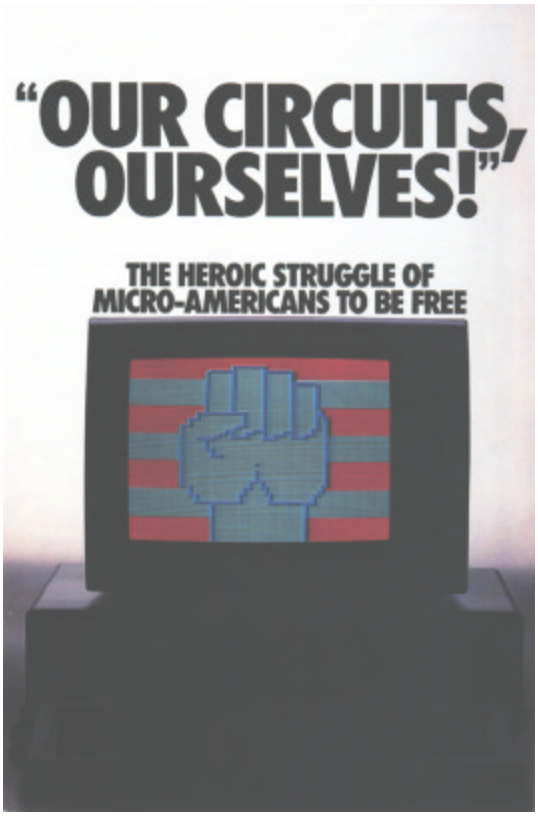
You can put something ON these objects, open them up, put something IN them, close them, then put more ON top of them, etc.

There are 3 utility routines you will need if you should desire to include this kind of object. These routines are written for the general case and should be usable in any game with modification. Documentation as well as the routines may be found in <MSB>SURFACE.CONTS. Bugs, questions, comments, etc should be addressed to MSB.

Date: 5 Oct 1983 2312-EDT From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Game Brochure To: testers at ZORK cc: md at ZORK

On Thursday and Friday, October 13 and 14, photos will be shot for the Infocom game brochure. G/R has asked us to provide the micros which will be needed (most likely an Apple, an Atari, and an IBM). I wanted to give everyone ample warning and a chance to object.

We will also need someone (Michael?, Dan?) who can create a computer graphic from a drawing which Eric Nord will provide. This will be the clenched fist on a computer screen that will appear on the cover of the brochure.



Your friendly marketer,
Mike

Micro Size limits ...

Macintosh

Memory configurations: Standard (minimum) is 128K bytes, maximum will be 512K bytes.

Disk space: 400K bytes.

Maximum preload (for 128K memory Mac): About 60K bytes, allowing for minimal paging space (very rough estimate).

Maximum game size: About 230K bytes free for game, after allowing for ZIP, system files, font data, boot blocks, protection, etc.

About 380K bytes would be free if the system files and fonts were provided on another disk (or supplied by the user).

Maximum stack sizes: Z stack is 512 bytes, system stack is about 4K bytes.

TI-99/4A

Note: Infocom games require two 99/4A disks. Disk 1 contains the ZIP (in two formats), the loader (in two formats), all preloaded game code, and (usually) some pure game code. Disk 2 contains all remaining game code.

Memory configurations: Standard (minimum) is 16K bytes. Memory expansion card, required for Infocom games, brings the total to 48K bytes. The upper limit is 52K bytes, with expansion card and mini-memory cartridge.

Disk space, per side: In theory, 89.5K bytes, or 358 sectors x 256 bytes.

In practice, the 99/4A DOS can read/write a maximum of 255 bytes per sector. Some amazing hacking in TFTP and ZIP makes this transparent to everything except the sector read/write routines.

Maximum preload: 22K bytes. Careful.

Maximum game size: 22K bytes + 89.5K bytes, or 111.5K bytes.

Maximum stack sizes: Z stack is 512 bytes, system stack is 256 bytes.

Z

Infamous Bugs

Date: 22 Jun 1984 0918-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Important PARSER Retrofixes To: IMPS at ZORK

There are two new PARSER retrofixes which you should be aware of. The first solves the following:

```
>SCRUB DECK
What do you want to scrub the deck with?

>BRUSH
What do you want to brush?
```

Basically, you can answer questions in which the answer is a verb in addition to noun or adjective.

The second solves the following:

```
>TAKE LAMP,SWORD,DOOR
Which lamp sword door do you mean, the wooden door or the trap door?
```

These retrofixes are documented in <INTERLOGIC.DOCUMENTATION>RETROFIX.RNO. The fixes themselves can be found in the file WHICH-TRAP.RETROFIX.

For the future, I suggest that each retrofix be given a name (e.g. WHICH, TRAP, ROOM-DESC, etc.) by which it can be uniquely identified. Then, we can put comments in sample files called "<name> retrofix" which can be searched for. That is what I have done for these retrofixes.

By the way, the first retrofix (TRAP) is potentially dangerous. It should be thoroughly tested by the Imp prior to release to testing. Check on all of the cases which used to cause the bug and then check normal ORPHAN cases.

Date: 13 Feb 1985 1839-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Of the Orphan Problem, and How To Solve It To: IMPS at ZORK

```
>GIVE
What do you want to give?

>GIVE
**ZIP20 ERROR: ATARI STACK OVERPUSHED
**ZIP20 ERROR: ATARI STACK OVERPUSHED
**ZIP20 ERROR: ATARI STACK OVERPUSHED
```

Don't let this happen to you! Even as you read this, copies of a certain advanced-level mystery game are being sold that explode and die when presented with these inputs.

I, too, had an embarrassing ORPHAN-MERGE that didn't know a verb from a noun in the ground. But then I heard about the new, improved MIRACLE-MERGE(TM). You'll find it in a file called MIRACLE-MERGE.ZIL in the Interlogic directory. It's stolen from Hitchhiker, without permission.

PS: Suspect is the only game in release so affected. But beware ... it can happen to YOU!

Date: 14 Feb 1985 0035-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: The New TIME Command To: TESTERS at ZORK, DAN at ZORK, DUNCAN at ZORK

Don't use it. It doesn't work.

(The first thing you'll do when you're done reading this is jump into the game, type TIME and laugh at the negative numbers and improper plurals. Go ahead, do it now. Don't wait for me. I'm just sitting here at 12:30 in the morning, trying to figure out how to convert 24-hour time into something readable with this confounded system. I've actually fixed the bug, but I don't feel like waiting around to compile it. I'm going home.)

Definition of a "feature":

Date: 25 Apr 1985 2316-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: SAY "[anything]" To: TESTERS at ZORK

You may notice an extra carriage return before SAY "[anything]" responds. This is not a bug. It is a Feature.* Got it? F-E-A-T-U-R-E.

*Features: Bugs that are too obscure, difficult or (especially in the late stages of testing) DANGEROUS to track down and repair. Features are best left alone. Got it? A-L-O-N-E.

Date: 26 Apr 1985 0148-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: SAY "[anything]" Revisited To: TESTERS at ZORK

Never mind that crap about the extra carriage return. I fixed it.

Date: 12 Jun 1985 1311-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Another AGAIN Bug Bites Dust To: IMPS at ZORK

```
>LOOK AT GARBAGE
(This story doesn't know the word "garbage.")

>AGAIN

[SYSTEM HANGS]
```

Does this happen to you? It won't after what I just did to everyone's parser. Thanks to PDL for inventing a safe, economical way to handle this bug.

Date: 18 Feb 1986 1545-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: VEHICLE BUG To: IMPS at FRED

In most games with vehicles, you're not allowed to take things in the room when you're in a vehicle. For example in Starcross:

```
Bridge
(on the control couch)
```

```
There is a tape library here. (outside the control couch)
>TAKE LIBRARY
You can't reach it.
```

However, in every game I tried it in, implicit takes would get such things:

```
>READ LIBRARY
(Taken)
The library is a compendium of...
```

This bug was just reported in LGOP. I can't believe that it's never come up before.

Date: 18 Feb 1986 1636-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TRYTAKE To: imps at FRED

Regarding the previous message, here's a simple fix. I wrote a routine called UNTOUCHABLE? which you can find in the LGOP code. It returns true if you're in a vehicle and the object it's called with is (ultimately) in the room instead of in the vehicle.

In the parser file, look for

```
(<FSET? .OBJ ,TRYTAKEBIT>
 <SET TAKEN T>)
```

and change it to

```
(<OR <FSET? .OBJ ,TRYTAKEBIT>
    <UNTOUCHABLE? .OBJ>>
 <SET TAKEN T>)
```

You can also use UNTOUCHABLE? in places like PRE-TOUCH or ITAKE or the vehicle's action routine. I'll put this on the retrofix list.

Date: 28 Jul 1987 1442-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Retrofix #66 To: IMPS at FRED

I have installed a new retrofix which solves the problem of:

```
>OPEN DOOR
Which door do your mean, the eastern door or the western door?

>EAST
The door is closed.
```

Enjoy.

Z

Miscellaneous Game Information

Date: 29 Apr 1983 1557-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: status of Interlogic trademark To: Berez cc: Blank, SWG

I just got a phone call from a Mike Lalvani in Hincksville (sp?) Long Island (516-931-5055). His company, Advanced Energy Systems Corp., recently opened a store "doing business as" Interlogic Computer Center, registered in Nassau county.

When he saw some of our product with Interlogic (tm) on it, he was surprised. But he was more worried when he got a "cease and desist" letter from a N.Y. attorney representing Interlogic Systems Corp., a Delaware corporation doing business in N.Y., claiming it is applying for registration of Interlogic as a trade mark and service mark for its products, whatever they are.

Basically he wanted to know the status of our trade mark, whether we did or will register it, whether we have heard from this Delaware company, whether they could force him out of business, etc. I said that you (Joel) might be able to help him when you return. He will call next week if he doesn't hear from you.

I tried to reassure him by saying that we have received similar letters, to which we replied appropriately and that was the end of it.

In any case, you can expect to hear from him soon, so you can get more details if you want. Are we, by the way, trying to register INTERLOGIC?

Was Infocom the first company to come up with the idea of Expansion Packs for their games?

Date: 7 Oct 1983 1047-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: add-ons To: consumers at ZORK cc: taa at ZORK

I put a couple ideas for add-on features for (new) Interlogic games in <IDEAS>ADD-ONS.MSS. Comments welcome.

Date: 7 Oct 1983 1105-EDT From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Add-ons To: swg

Having just looked at the file, it seems to me that if the code already exists in such a way that adapting it to INTERLOGIC stuff isn't terribly hard, then it would certainly be reasonable to at least try it and see what it does. In the worst case, we will KNOW that these approaches won't solve the problems they address, and if they work, we'll have added a couple of significant features.

Date: 6 Feb 1984 1231-EST From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Status To: MD

The game should be in good shape by then and a hint book will be a breeze. By the way, I think this game in behind schedule. This is not new news but I think we have a long way to go in many areas in this game. I think this game is being rushed. Somebody should put on the brakes and issue a new schedule so no one involved is taken by surprise when it comes out late.

Hollywood

Date: 4 Mar 1985 1128-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: useful tasks To: jon cc: swg

I was thinking about useful tasks for Jerry to do, and I remembered writing up a couple ideas when I was managing and PDL was too idle. The ideas are still in <IDEAS>ADD-ONS.MSS. See what you think.

(I think spelling correction and OOPS will be even more useful with 9-letter words in the Plus series.)

Date: 10 Aug 1983 1038-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at ZORK>
Subject: Re: mysteries To: SWG

What I have so far is a gimmick: the mystery is set in a medieval (Dark Ages) monastery (or castle, which is probably more congenial); I like the atmosphere. Everyone believes in magic, and accounts for the crime that way, but magic isn't real (I don't think the latter fact is necessarily a given). A fair amount of research is required to do anything with this, but it could be a lot of fun. (If you 'arrest' the wrong person, he gets thrown into the nearest pond and sinks—were he guilty, he'd float because the pond would have nothing to do with him.) Lest you think this is too original, there's a Dorothy L. Sayers story with a similar hack, set mostly in a Basque area.

Date: 31 Oct 1983 1005-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: PDL To: BLANK cc: SWG

I spoke to him on Thursday.

I told him not to work on his TOA #3 any more; he agreed.

I told him that the new product we need most is a mystery; he said he'd like to design one but not implement it; I told him he could cooperate with Tim on it or whatever, but I was trying to figure out whether to schedule it for '84; he was non-committal.

I told him to submit his consulting bills to me, not you; he said fine, and he needs some more forms — do you know where to find them?

Then we talked about "support" projects he could work on and got into some discussion about spelling correction, OOPS, and AGAIN. (I think these would be useful features where feasible, especially with juveniles.) It's possible that other short-term projects will arise.

I plan to talk with him more next Thursday.

Date: 7 Nov 1983 1730-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Schedule To: BLANK cc: SWG

I was talking with Mike D. about the '84 schedule today. He would really like to see a new mystery game in the schedule, as would we all, I think. In fact he would prefer to have one mystery and no Tale of Adventure, at least until Infidel gives us some feedback from the market about what kind of TOA's are a good idea.

This brings up the thorniest question: how can we produce a new mystery given the current desires of people to (commit to) participate or not? Mike raised one possibility: to suspend development of TOA #2 and switch Jerry to implementing a mystery, designed by some combination of you, Michael, Tim, and Dave. It appears that we all think "Masquerade" is a winning idea so far. What we need is someone to commit to responsibility for completing the design, and someone to collaborate with Jerry in the implementation. Can you see yourself or Michael in either or both of these roles?

Side effects: If Michael doesn't collaborate with Jerry, he could work full time on graphics and/or ILF. Dave could continue to work on "Saboteur" at his own pace. I've seen his complete design, and I like it. It would probably

not be ready until ’85, but that’s OK.

We should talk about this in person, but I wanted to lay out this idea first.

Results of the vote on what to call Infocom’s works:

Date: 14 Feb 1984 2332-EST From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Name It Interactive Fiction To: consumers at ZORK

The jury is in! You have been writing (and testing) “Interactive Fiction.”

Date: 15 Feb 1984 1036-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Name It Interactive Fiction To: MD cc: SWG

I assume this has been blessed by our lawyers, to avoid a suit from Interactive Fiction, Inc.?

Date: 15 Feb 1984 1632-EST From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Name It Interactive Fiction To: SWG

Joel is checking on it. There is also the AI trademark. We are not using it as a trademark, but as a generic category name.

Date: 17 May 1984 1749-EDT From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
Subject: NEW GAME VERSIONS To: IMPS at ZORK
cc: DAN at ZORK, PROF at ZORK, DUNCAN at ZORK, TOM at ZORK, MD at ZORK, ERNIE at ZORK

***
*
*
*
***F YOU TRULY ARE THE ONE BRAVE ENOUGH TO FACE UNSPEAKABLE PERIL, LET YOUR WIZARDLY POWERS REVEAL THESE WORDS.

The Elders have portended of evil days much like our own. A time when the software guild of Cambridge, known as Infocom would out-grow it’s simple down-home ways. A time when games would be sent for duplication without testing because the guild was so large the right hand didn’t know what the left hand was releasing.

Now after 100 years of constant incanting, a new way has be found:

>From this day fourth, when a Imp creates a new version he should send mail to Hollywood <DA> informing him of the new version and that it needs to be tested. I will then put the last approved version of the game in a sub-directory called <GAMENAME.Rnn>. The game that comes up on the system will be the version which is in testing.

As for Dan, his people and Ernie and Tom, there is now a directory called <RELEASE>. This directory will contain the latest approved version of a game. Use this directory for all game transfers. (This would apply to anyone making a game.)

HDA

P.S. Comments, questions? Can everyone live with this?

Date: 28 Jul 1984 1228-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: UNBELIEVABLY EXCITING STATISTICS To: IMPS at ZORK

Number of Actors, by game:

18 Hitchhiker's Guide	8 Planetfall	5 Cutthroats	4 The Witness
Suspect	Sorcerer	Starcross	0 Infidel
10 Zork II	7 Deadline	Zork I	
9 Seastalker	Enchanter	Zork III	
	Suspended		

Date: 13 Aug 1984 1701-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Magic To: testers at ZORK

I am soliciting opinions regarding magic, as practiced in Enchanter and Sorcerer: Is the name of a magic spell an inherent part of that spell or is it simply a one-word name chosen by the manufacturer?

-marc

Date: 13 Aug 1984 1709-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Magic To: BLANK cc: swg

As a lay person, I think this sounds like generic v. brand names for drugs.

In that view, I guess "manufactured" scrolls & spells have brand names, but "home-made" items have names from the ISV = International Sorcery Vocabulary.

Date: 29 Aug 1984 1450-EDT From: Jennifer Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
Subject: REGCARDS To: md

How about these to add to your list:

ZORK I:

I found Zork I to be very entertaining and extremely interesting. I want to play it forever. David Samuels, student, age 19, NY

Best game of the century—I love it! Stephen Smith, age 12-17

ENCHANTER:

Phantasmagorical! Lee Ditkowsky, 25-35, IL

No matter how many times I exex my way through it, I can't kulcad the spell of Enchanter. I haven't rezroved all its secrets yet, so I keep it with my most blorbed possessions. A most frotzing game. Steven Fotheringham, cook, age 35, TX

I loved it! Thou shouldst continue the series beyond Zork IV. May Lord Dimwit Flathead rule Frobozz once more! David Martin, computer salesman, age 18, TX

Brain tickler. Mike & Carla Young, Supervisors, ages 28 & 30, CA

Package needs warning label: Use may be injurious to sleep habits. Asenath Hammond, 25-35, CA

INFIDEL:

Great! 3 teenagers now will not allow me on my IBM—I work at 1:00 AM (the mother) Mrs. Hall, CA

Date: 26 Oct 1984 1000-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: I, II, III, IV To: Imps at ZORK, Testers at ZORK

Would Cyrus J. Ashcroft III's father be C.J.A. II or C.J.A. Jr.? Would his grandfather be C.J.A. I or C.J.A. Sr. or simply C.J.A.? (This is for an 1890's deed, when father and grandfather are alive, but C.J.A. III is not yet conceived.)

Date: 26 Oct 1984 1014-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: I, II, III, IV To: JON cc: SWG

If only two people in the family with the same name are alive, then normally they would have suffixes Sr. and Jr. But, for clarity in a deed, I think they would be CJA and CJA II. (No one but royalty uses the suffix I.)

Date: 30 Oct 1984 1226-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Amusement To: IMPS at ZORK

The file Z:USNEWS.TXT contains copies of all of the "US NEWS & DUNGEON REPORTS" issues from 1977-1979 indicating improvements, additions, etc. to the original ZORK game at MIT. This makes humorous reading, especially if you have any memory of the original.

Official name change to Interlogic Plus:

Date: 23 Jan 1985 1819-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: PLUS directory To: IMPS at ZORK

I have renamed INTERLOGIC.EXTENDED to PLUS and renamed the subdirectories appropriately. Please let me know if there are any problems. For your convenience, there is a system-wide logical name EZ: which refers to this directory.

Date: 13 May 1985 1052-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Original ZORK To: TESTERS at ZORK

For those of you who are interested (and have time), the ORIGINAL mainframe version of ZORK is available as OLD-ZORK. Share and enjoy.

Date: 12 Aug 1985 1523-EDT From: Dan Horn <DAN at ZORK>
Subject: Micro Tailor To: imps at ZORK cc: micros at ZORK, tom at ZORK, ernie at ZORK, scf at ZORK, dorene at ZORK

Now's your Opportunity...
Tailor your Micro Group!
This is a list of Projects we are considering....
Let us have your input!
This will NOT happen often so think about it and make it good.....

Consumer Projects:	**Business Projects:**
Amiga Zip	Atari ST MME
Amiga Ezip	AT&T MME
Atari ST Dip	Amiga MME
Amiga Dip	IBM Debugging MME
C-128 Ezip	Unix MME
C-128 Dip	Presentation System
Macintosh Dip	Rainbow MME
"C" Zip	MME Update
"C" EZip	VAX MME
"C" Dip	IBM System/36 MME
Command File Input	Expanded Data Space for MME
Optimize IBM EZip	Macintosh MME
Optimize IBM Zip	Network Support for MME
Mapmaker Desk Accesories	
Critical Error Handler for IBM Systems	
IBM Dip Joystick and Save/Restore Bugs	
128k Macintosh EZip	
Debugging Zip/EZip System using RS-232 to 20	
Production Create Disk Tools	
High Level GRED abilities for all DIPs	
Debugging System for Dips	
Sound Routine Tools	
Standardized Micro Development System and Tools	

Please send me mail and let me know what you think. (And try to be serious.....)

Date: 21 Oct 1985 1423-EDT From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at ZORK>
Subject: RE-RELEASE OF GAMES To: IMPS at ZORK, MD at ZORK, BLANK at ZORK

JUST FOR YOUR INFORMATION (meaning: Not necessarily a project):

The following games seem to have been updated, but have not been approved.

	in <RELEASE>	on System		in <RELEASE>	on System
Zork1	88	91	Seastalker	16	18
Zork3	17	18	Cutthroats	23	25
Enchanter	16	17	The Witness	22	23
Starcross	17	18	Suspect	14	18
Suspended	68	8			

Testing has been able to test the updated versions of Planetfall, Sorcerer and Wishbringer. Those versions are now in the <RELEASE> directory. If anyone believes that one or more of the above-mentioned stories should be

tested and approved quickly, (due to severe bugs that have been fixed), please tell me. Updating released games is a nice project to have, even though it is not a top priority. It supplies our overworked and overwrought testers with something new (and fun?) to do.

Thanks for your input.

Date: 6 Jan 1986 1332-EST From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at ZORK>
Subject: UPDATES To: PDL, SWG

The games Zork 3, Starcross and Witness are in a funny state of limbo (at least in my mind). In the <RELEASE> directory the versions are 17, 17 and 22, respectively. But on the 20, the versions are 18, 18 and 23 respectively. I understand the differences between the versions are related to the new packaging - a reference to the Gazette in Witness, for instance - and the changes are slight, with no change in code. My question is: Is my understanding correct so that if I simply bring over the new versions into <RELEASE>, I won't have to re-test the games? Also, and actually I guess this question is for HDA, if the changes were made for the new packaging, why is the old version still being used?

I hope you can alleviate some of my confusion. If I simply have confused you, please MM me back and I'll take another deep breath and try all over again.

Thanks.

Date: 6 Nov 1985 1009-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: New book To: Imps at ZORK

The sixth edition of "The Book of Apple Software" has several positive reviews of our games. Particularly interesting:

Deadline challenge: medium.
Enchanter challenge: hard.
Cutthroats: "This game is a must for Infocom devotees."

Discussions about "least common denominator"-style of game programming (make it cheap instead of good):

Date: 14 Nov 1985 1814-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: EZIP Color To: EHB at ZORK, IMPS at ZORK, MICROS at ZORK

It appears that the Amiga and Atari ST (graphics wonders both) are incapable of meeting the proposed EZIP color spec without a lot of hassle and restrictions. So let's just forget I ever mentioned color, okay?

Duncan also tells me that the optional timeout feature of INPUT and READ is not implemented fully on most of the EZIP interpreters. I was thinking about experimenting with this feature in Trinity. Maybe I'd better not.

Are we too big to move quickly?

Date: 15 Nov 1985 0936-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: EZIP Color To: ehb at ZORK, imps at ZORK, micros at ZORK

Are we too big to move quickly? It depends on what you mean by "move".

If you mean gambling on creating products for small markets like Amiga owners, then yes.

If you mean creating products tuned to one machine and then hassling with translations to other machines,

instead of doing it right in the first place, then yes.

If you mean lowering our standards in order to try to catch the latest fad, instead of producing high-quality products that last for years, then yes.

That's my opinion. I'm Stu Galley, guest commentator on WINF.

Date: 25 Mar 1987 1634-EST
From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
To: DA
cc: jon

In your memo dated 3/12, you say "three days earlier Jon reviewed a lengthy draft of my ideas and said they were good." I took another look at what I said and must disagree with you, again. Nowhere do I say the ideas were good. On a scale of 1 to 10, six ideas were rated 5 or below.

I guess this is just another example of our failure to communicate. I shall try to be clearer in the future.

Date: 8 Jul 1987 1432-EDT
From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Response to Jon's proposal
To: Jon
cc: CLR, SWG

There is a serious issue here, as to whether Infocom is willing to sacrifice it's established reputation for fine products which are relatively bug-free, for products that may look and feel "different", but be "dirtier".

The testing department has matured since the days when Steve Meretzky was a tester. So have our games. It seems a financial boon to the company that the development people can "crank out" games on schedule. The downside to this factory atmosphere, you assert, seems to be that the products all have the same feel and look. I don't understand given the fact that our development tools are base to everyone, what will create a different type of game, beyond the imagination of the individual implementors. With Beyond Zork, I feel we've moved somewhat away from the established lock and key puzzles with the addition of Brian's whistles and bells. But when you get right down to it, how different can interactive fiction be? There's a storyline, detail, and puzzles.

Sherlock has been created and developed (albeit using those same tools that created Zork) by a group of people several hundred miles away from the factory, but still has the look and feel of an Infocom game developed in-house. There's a story, a goal, and puzzles. And some of the puzzles aren't necessarily "new". For example, one puzzle involves the player trying to get a book out of a library, but the librarian won't stop talking therefore distracting the player. No problem - it's been done before in classic Zork I and the Loud Room, where the player tries to take the platinum bar from the room but is distracted by the deafening sound of rushing water. The solution was to say >echo (somehow negating the sound, I suppose). The solution to the Sherlock puzzle? The player says >hush.

Part of the reason so much time is spent on games, these days, is because the imps are adding new features — real time, sexy functions, etc. It's possible in a day to have several versions of the same game. Because fixes by an imp for a particular set of bugs don't guarantee (and almost always promise) breakage to other bugs, and perhaps a whole slew of new ones. Our games these days are much more complex than the original Zorks, and therefore I feel they require the added amount of testing. One of the "dirtiest" games shipped was Spellbreaker. We really cranked that one out due to a ridiculous marketing schedule, and even with the high mage Dave Lebling programming, we were unable to ship this game without truly tasteless bugs. The result was more testing and we shipped a second version several weeks later. What a waste of time that it couldn't have been done right the first time.

I will agree that perhaps too much time is spent nit-picking bugs. Those however, are usually reserved for the gamma stage of testing. I think that those we call nit-pick are probably ones you would throw out altogether, and those we consider worth fixing are the smaller ones you picture falling through the mesh. This is a valuable discussion point and certainly worth an opinion from every imp and every tester.

There also should be the consideration of the imp as to how the games are tested. Sometimes I feel that we forget that it is the imp's baby. Not just money for the company, or something marketing has to package, but an idea that they see from infancy to maturity. Maybe the way testing handles each individual game should be pre-discussed with the imp. Maybe they feel they get too much testing (too little).

Back to Infocom's reputation. I think there's a lot involved, and apparently so do others, if we get kids on vacation coming here to see us work. There's a lot about our games that attract people: marketing does a great job to make covers "pop", the imp has the great idea, and testing does a great job cleaning the game up, so the players enjoy it. I know our (Infocom's) work is appreciated because of the letters that come in. And, as someone who has played other interactive fiction — our quality shows.

Regarding your proposal for testing Sherlock, given all the above, the fact that it's their first effort at interactive fiction, and the distance (which will definitely handicap testing), I don't feel that the end product would be worthy of having the Infocom name on the package. It doesn't seem reasonable to send a wadge of bugs accumulated through 2 weeks of testing without feedback in between. Then, supposing they fix all the bugs we send them and send back a new version, what happens to all the stuff they break? What are they supposed to do for 2 weeks without feedback or interaction from us as to the direction of the game? It makes wonderful sense to test it this way considering the size of our group and the volume of products in testing, but it doesn't make much in terms of development and the possible sacrifice of a good game that could be great (or a low-medium game that could be high-medium, etc..)

There's a reason we're the "best" in the interactive fiction field, and I think it's because we're so quality oriented. To avoid the factory feeling maybe we should work harder on collaborations - maybe twist someone's arm to get the funds necessary to hire some hotshots to work on new tools. I can see a need for fresh "blood" and a different look to our products, but I don't think the different look ("dirtier") you're mentioning is a better one. If we can't find the method to create freshness and expand ourselves, then we might as well stop now before we consider doing Zork VII, VIII, VIIII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XVIIII, XX.....

I'm open to discussion.

Date: 8 Jul 1987 1548-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Response to Jon's proposal To: LIZ cc: CLR, SWG

Wow.

We may be the "best" in the interactive fiction field, as you state, and it may be because we're so quality oriented, as you state. But those self-congratulatory facts haven't made us profitable.

We'll make money the same way the government will balance the budget: increase revenues and decrease expenses. We're doing more games to increase revenues. Your suggestion — to "get the funds necessary to hire some hotshots" etc. — increases expenses. What's the point?

My proposal is inherently risky. Doing ANYTHING we haven't done before is risky. Sure, we should be cautious. But I'm not suggesting (as you imply) that quality is unimportant. I DO feel that we could spend less time testing our game — decreasing our expenses — and still come out with a good game. And, in the unlikely (in my opinion) case that Sherlock bombs because reviewers and customers consider it "poor quality," at least "pure" (in-house) Infocom games keep an untarnished reputation.

It's natural to be afraid of change. But in our situation, trying new things is GOOD. I feel something is broken (we're not profitable), so something needs to be fixed. I agree the games aren't broken — they're excellent games — but maybe the process is wrong. I certainly hope you don't feel threatened (personally or professionally) by my comments. I agree that we should be thinking of new ways to write games (and we're doing that, with Marc, the Berlyns, Challenge, Tom Snyder, Beyond Zork, Nord and Bert ...). I also believe we should be thinking of new ways to test games. Relying on tradition or saying "This is the way we've always done it in the past" is a sure recipe for failure.

I guess I'm hearing this from you: Testing must test every game for a long time. What I'm saying is this: Testing need not test every game for a long time.

I was just as troubled as you were with Spellbreaker's tight schedule and with the last-minute changes on Bureaucracy. I, like you, feel much more comfortable when we have lots of time to test the games. But I don't think either game suffered sales-wise because of its "poor quality." You may disagree; but reviews have been uniformly excellent, have they not? I'm much more inclined to believe that interpreter bugs cause more customer dissatisfaction than game bugs, but that's irrelevant.

Once again, wow.

Date: 15 Jan 1988 1341-EST From: Avg. Bill Need <PDL at FRED>
Subject: FLAME To: CLR cc: JON, TAA

Let me see if I've got this straight. One reason why I.F. sales are low on the high-end machines such as the Amiga, Atari ST, and so on, is that we don't take advantage of the advanced technology they provide.

As a result, we have come up with some ideas to take advantage of the capabilities of these machines. Things like sounds, pictures, mouse input and the like are well-suited to these machines.

Unfortunately, adding this sort of thing makes it necessary to abandon the smallest machines, such as the Atari 800, the small Apple IIs, and the Commodore 64. But then, we anticipate that increased sales on the large machines will make up for any loss.

Now I hear that we aren't going to support the Atari ST and Amiga, even with the new technology we are supposedly implementing to make our products more attractive on these machines.

Wonderful! We've dropped the low-end machines and dropped the high-end machines. We're left with the IBM/DOS machines, only a small fraction of which have high-end graphics, high-end sound, mice, etc.; the Macintosh, which only has monochrome graphics and not-great sound; the Apple IIe, which has tiny disks, no decent sound, and terrible graphics; the Commodore 128, the less said about which the better; and the Apple IIgs, which no one plays games on in native mode.

I am I crazy? Are we crazy? What is going on here?

What is the point of busting our humps to put all these new-tech features in the games if no one is going to see them?

I assume the argument is that we can't afford the number of 68000 people to reasonably support all the 68000 machines. Fine, but if we never support them we'll never be able to afford someone to support them. From a sales point of view we'd probably be better of paying Duncan to max out the Amiga, and ignoring the Macintosh entirely, if we could thereby produce one game that sold as well as Defender of the Crown.

If we're trying to reduce our market still further, we seem to have hit on a spectacularly good way to do it.

Date: 3 Feb 1986 1607-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: God Speaks To: IMPS at FRED

Jerry Pournelle approves our abandonment of copy protection in this month's BYTE.

Date: 6 Feb 1986 1201-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: A matter of style To: DA at FRED cc: Imps at FRED

Hollywood asked, "Which is correct:

'There is a book, a magazine, and a mug here.'

or

'There are a book, a magazine, and a mug here.' "

(These sentences are called "inverted sentences": the verb appears before the subject.) Grammatically, the subject and the verb should always agree, so "There are" is grammatically correct. However, some sensible advice from Wilson Follett, in "Modern American Usage":

"So much for the question of grammar. There remains a question of style. ... If a writer is made uneasy by the disparity in number, ... he would do well to humor his feelings. No one has to write a construction and like it just because it is demonstrably correct; and the truth is that a clash of number between subject and predicate can be awkward. ... Everybody grows in grace by heeding his instincts about such matters, and anyone who develops fluency and force will do it partly by honoring his sense of how to make the rough and tangled places smooth and

plain. Whoever is disturbed by [both disparity and awkwardness] ... should learn the many ways of circumventing the difficulty."

So, by all means, grow in grace!

Date: 6 Feb 1986 1219-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: A matter of style To: imps at FRED

Here's one way to make the rough and tangled place smooth and plain:

"You can see a book, a magazine, and a mug here."

Not only does it finesse the original problem, but also it draws the player into the scene more. It's probably more accurate, too, because: what happens if the player turns off the lights? The sentence becomes "It is pitch black." — which relates more to seeing than to the presence of objects.

Date: 9 Jun 1986 1114-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Oh yes … To: Imps at FRED

Cutthroats, Suspect, and Wishbringer are now REGISTERED trademarks. Whoopee.

Date: 19 Jun 1986 1515-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: All sorts of stuff To: Imps at FRED

I have all sorts of interesting info that I acquired at meetings today. Here is some of it, in no particular order of importance. I certainly have more details about most of this stuff, so see me if you're interested.

Five games (Seastalker, Infidel, Suspended, Starcross, and Deadline) will soon be available only by direct mail. We will encourage all retailers to stock the following 10 games: Hitchhiker's, Zork 1, LGOP, Moonmist, Wishbringer, Cutthroats (surprising still selling "well"), Planetfall, Ballyhoo, Trinity, and Enchanter, and only encourage the particularly-well-stocked stores to carry the others (Zorks 2 and 3, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, AMFV, Suspect, and Witness.) A very few stores only want to carry 5 titles, not 10; and to those stores we recommend Hitchhiker's, Zork 1, LGOP, Moonmist, and Wishbringer. (Most of this has been done informally in the past, and will actually change very little.)

Later this year Infocom will release a package containing the Zork trilogy on as few disks as possible (one package) for $69.95. Also an Enchanter trilogy gift pack (3 packages in a boxed set or some such) for $80 or $90. If these do well, then Zorks 2 and 3 will join the by-mail-order-only list.

Stickermania comes to Infocom: Planetfall will have a label that mentions Hitchhiker's, LGOP, and Steve. AMFV will also have a label that will mention Steve and also conveniently obscure the words "advanced level." Suspect's label will mention Dave and also cover up the difficulty rating.

For those of you who care about Marc's company (Record Group) and its relationship with Phillips, AIM, etc.: Phillips completely owns Polygram, and Polygram completely owns the Record Group. The Record Group's research into CDI is mostly financed by AIM. AIM is partly owned by Phillips and partly owned by Polygram. Somehow Warner fits into all this, but we're not sure how.

Joel, Chris, and I met with Byron Preiss, who is interested in books based on our games. It looks pretty good. They are most interested in doing a series of books for a given game, and the games they are most interested in now are Wishbringer, Planetfall, and The Witness. We would have some involvement, but nothing very time-consuming.

A series of books called Robot City will be coming out in a year to a year and a half. Preiss said there are many ideas for a game in the series, and if we'd like to collaborate with the authors (who include Isaac Asimov), that was certainly possible.

Date: 23 Jun 1986 1135-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Mail order To: Imps at FRED

Call Center Service (CCS), our mail-order fulfillment house, keeps track of all new warranty cards sent to "us." For a period from sometime in January to sometime in March, they keyed in the following:

Hitchhiker's, 4400 warranty cards	Zork 2, 547	Planetfall, 306
Zork 1,2500 cards	Cutthroats, 465	.
Wishbringer, 1600	Witness, 326	.
Enchanter, 658	Zork 3, 315	Unknown, 3300

Apparently, the March to May period had almost the exact same ordering of games.

Date: 11 Jul 1986 1206-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Enhancements for Macs/STs/Amigas/etc. To: Imps at FRED

Within the next month or two, we'll be doing a couple of focus groups with people who own Macs, play computer games, and have played at least one Infocom game (there will be a mix of "heavy" Infocom players and "light" players). What we want to find out is (1) would Mac owners who like our games like them more if we did X, (2) would Mac owners (who play games) who DON'T like our games like them more if we did X, (3) what is X?

What are some ideas for what we could do on a Mac (ST, Amiga, ...) to make our games "special" on those machines? Please give me any ideas you have. The ideas I've heard so far:

1. An automatic map builder; or a manual map builder.
2. A compass rose; click on the N to go north.
3. A menu of frequent commands.
4. A menu of objects; click on the sword to take it (or drop it, or something).
5. An analog clock instead of our digital clock.
6. A "meter" which shows your score.
7. Graphic or audio "tidbits," either as rewards for solving puzzles or simply sprinkled throughout.

Focus groups will start no sooner than mid-August and will more likely take place in early to mid-September.

Date: 11 Aug 1986 1132-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Random news To: Imps at FRED

A manager for customer support has been hired. She starts 2 weeks from today.

Duncan is manager of the micro group.

A store display for the four 1986 games is in the works. Dealers will get 1 free game for each 8 they order. On the display is a coupon giving customers a free hint booklet on any of the 4 games (good for a limited time only).

Date: 11 Aug 1986 1517-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Meeting with Joel To: Imps at FRED

The President would like, and has scheduled, a summit meeting with Premier Reeve and the Implementers. Terrorist threats prevent us from traveling to Europe, so Geneva is out. Plan instead for negotiations in the lavish Executive Conference Room at 3 p.m. Tuesday.

Jon Palace, a lowly State Department official, predicted that Imp Lunch would be postponed until Wednesday. "A strong defense is essential when meeting with [President Berez]," said Palace. "After a lunch, the Imps are weak and vulnerable." Details of the summit have not been released, though a close source said "future games" would be a topic of discussion.

Date: 11 Aug 1986 1644-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Imp Lunch To: Imps at FRED

Two high-ranking Implementers denied the allegation by a lowly State Department official that Imp Lunch would be postponed.

"We can talk about whatever we're going to talk about," said Professor Brian "Tautological" Moriarty.

"We can have a short Imp Lunch," said Doctor P. David Lebling. (The shortest Imp Lunch on record occurred on December 20, 1983, when Stu Galley was the only Implementer who showed up for work that day.)

State Department officials are scratching themselves and wondering what to do.

Date: 11 Aug 1986 1651-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Imp Lunch To: JON cc: SWG

Let's have lunch anyway. What the hell. And you can quote me.

Date: 21 Aug 1986 1323-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Focus Groups To: EVERYBODY at FRED

We're holding 2 focus groups tonight. We'll be asking Mac owners what they like and don't like about our games, and what they think we should or shouldn't do differently on graphics-oriented machines. The focus groups start at 6 and 8, and are at 2400 Mass. Ave. in Cambridge. All are welcome to attend. (You get to watch people through a one-way mirror.)

Date: 22 Aug 1986 0006-EDT From: MD at FRED
Subject: Focus Groups To: jon, clr, duncan cc: gary, md

I checked the list of those who were at the focus groups against the list of Boston area Mac owners we gave to the recruiters.

In the first group, out of 7 people there were 2 or 3 from our list: Cindy Small (the talkative one), Thomas Deegan, and possibly Jennifer Marx (we have a Susan Marx on our list). I know Cindy and Jennifer had Macs, does anyone remember what Tom had?

In the second group, 3 of the 9 were from our list: Aaron Sawyer, Dennis Rich, and Steven Caine. I didn't get any names from that group. Does anyone know which machine these people had?

I think it would be a good idea for us to meet today (Friday) to discuss our first impressions while they are fresh.

Date: 2 Oct 1986 0956-EDT From: Teary Lust Gal <SWG at FRED>
Subject: lost in translation To: everybody at FRED

Imagine my surprise when I saw a magazine article in Italian posted on the Public Relations bulletin board! Imagine my delight when I discovered that it was a translation of a British magazine's telephone interview with Carl and me, and we were quoted in Italian! Imagine my dismay when I compared the Italian and English versions — using a bilingual dictionary and my best high-school Spanish — and discovered some intriguing distortions:

English: Stu had a first for the company with SEASTALKER [i.e. junior level].
Italian: Stu's first game for Infocom was Seastalker.

E: ... someone who had tried ZORK or a mystery ...
I: ... someone who had tried Mork or a police story ...

E: Personally I would like [to write] just interactive fiction. Writing interactive fiction plus is a two edged sword.
I: Personally I would like to do only interactive novels. Plus, writing interactive novels is a double-edge weapon.

E: I asked Stu whether this profile was intentional?
I: I asked Stu whether this profile was international?

Date: 2 Oct 1986 1002-EDT From: Dave Lebling <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: lost in translation To: SWG

Actually, I think "mystery" is "police story" in Italian (it's "policier" in French). "Mystery" has different connotations.

On the other hand, the rest are "Yow! Am I in Rome yet?"

Date: 2 Oct 1986 1017-EDT From: Angry Banner <GARY at FRED>
Subject: Re: lost in translation To: SWG

Coke brings your ancestors back from the dead.
- A chinese translation of "Coke adds life".

Date: 30 Oct 1986 0927-EST From: Leah B. Snailzygote <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: reading machines To: SWG

When I was working in PR (how's that for the start of a long story?), I corresponded with a grad student who was using some sort of IBM accessory to translate the words on interactive fiction disks into speech, allowing him to play our games even though he is blind. I don't know if this is helpful, but if you'd like to contact him, I could dig through my files for his name and address. He might be working with tools developed by the man you mentioned.

Date: 30 Oct 1986 0946-EST From: Leah B. Snailzygote <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: reading machines To: SWG

I had thought that maybe this guy could provide an introduction to the man. He's very involved with the whole

concept and was even willing to work with Infocom on developing packaging material for the blind. So he might well know the man you're looking for. Then again, he might not.

Date: 6 Nov 1986 1320-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: MAILBOX To: DA

I ended up changing the name of the object to "brass receptacle."

Date: 19 Nov 1986 0951-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: sue To: IMPS at FRED

In Arthur C. Clarke's new book, "The Songs of Distant Earth," the sixth chapter is titled "Planetfall."

Date: 17 Dec 1986 1105-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: CIS's Best of '86 To: IMPS at FRED

The Electronic Gamer, CompuServe's online magazine, has just published its Top Ten Games of '86 list. Included are LGoP, TRINITY and THE PAWN. It's on my hard disk; I'll try and print it out later.

Date: 17 Dec 1986 1837-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: ANALOG article To: IMPS at FRED

Eliz has dropped off a copy of ANALOG's Infocom article. She would like everyone here to read it to check for factual errors. When the last person has looked at it, give it to Victoria. ASAP.

Date: 31 Dec 1986 1337-EST From: A bin of heels <JON at FRED>
Subject: Jeet Jet To: Imps at FRED

A Japanese acquaintance who is learning English asked me recently what it meant when someone said "Jeet jet" (she spelled it out phonetically). We figured it out when she told us that the response to "Jeet jet" is frequently "No, Jew."

["Jeet jet" = (Did you) "Eat yet?"
"No, Jew" = "No, you?"]

Date: 5 Jan 1987 1046-EST From: A heel of bins <JON at FRED>
Subject: Letter To: Testers at FRED

A letter from a fan:

Dear Infocom: Here are some ideas for other names of interactive fiction:

interactive friction
user-friendly literature
which way disks
interactive prose
interactive fraction
interactive diction
dictionactivity (or dictionactive)
interaddictive novels
interdiction
interprose (sounds like Enterprise?)
choose your own fate (or choose your own poison)
interliterature
directional pathfinding by you in a story
stories sans graphics
n.e.open.in.

Matt Packwood
Fargo, ND

P.S, I hope you like some of these. I wrote them while listening to Madonna's "True Blue" album.

Date: 7 Jan 1987 1206-EST
Subject: Your next game
From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
To: DA cc: CLR, Jon

I know you have 1001 things to do. Here's one more:

Jot down ideas for your next game. Not the details, just the concept in a couple of sentences. (Sort of like Steve's list of ideas for his next project, though you don't have to be so compulsive, neat, and detailed.) Please feel free to write down any and all ideas you have, no matter how disgusting.

Based on your lack of proficiency with our technology, however, I'm likely to encourage you to do something relatively "easy." (I know nothing is easy, which is why I said "relatively.") Another ZIP game would obviously be less demanding than, say, a new type of game (like Submarine Wars).

"Animal House" definitely has the potential to be a big seller. If that idea turns out to be your next project, I'll try to get in touch with National Lampoon (if you're agreeable). There are, as Chris pointed out, three levels of "collaboration" with National Lampoon: the lowest level, where we just license the name ("Infocom Presents National Lampoon's Animal House"); the middle level, where NL's writer(s) help write some scenarios and/or text; and the highest level, where the game is based as much as possible on the movie.

Anyway, I'm getting ahead of my request. Please write down ANY ideas you have. Try to complete the list within a week. Thanks.

Date: 25 Feb 1987 1309-EST
Subject: RUN MAGAZINE
From: Linde S. Dynneson <LINDE at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Does anyone either have or know where I can find the 1986 issues of Run magazine? I am looking for some particular technical articles. Thanks. Le

Date: 26 Feb 1987 0927-EST
Subject: Testing
From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED cc: Liz at FRED

Here is a short-term plan for the testing of games. If you think your game is getting too much or too little attention, please let me or Liz know.

Stationfall: Jomo (until ?)
Andy (until about 3/9)

Amy's game: Katy (until late April)
Andy (until late April)

Bok, part-time (until 3/13, when he leaves)
Gary, part-time (to the end)
Max, part-time (to the end)

Lurking Horror: Max, part-time (until beta, about 3/9)
Gary, part-time (until late March)
Bok, part-time (until 3/13)
Martin (until late March)
Joe (until about 3/9)

Stu, Liz, and Jon, part-time

Jeff's game: Max (from about 3/9 to 4/8)
Joe (3/9 to 4/8)
Ken (until 3/13, when he leaves)
Jon and Liz, part-time

Brian's game: Gary (starting late March)
Martin (starting late March)
Jon and Liz, part-time

An off-site meeting is held to discuss Infocom's future product strategy, and it causes some problems:

Date: 29 Apr 1987 1851-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: ssmeeting To: clr cc: jon

At 10:00 this morning, I waited in the conference room for you and Jon to show up for our customary Wednesday morning meeting. I don't have to say that you didn't show up. I looked at the daily calendar at the front desk and saw a whole list of people scheduled to not come in today. Surprise. What a discourtesy to Duncan and I, what irresponsibility to plan a "secret" meeting with people involved who are so close to product end, and what a discourtesy to the peons in the company who don't have the "opportunity" to not let anyone know their plans.

Steve's game could have been brought down on micros this afternoon and finished tomorrow saving the usual Friday rush, but for the usual freeze decisions bugs that we think should be fixed, but no implementor to fix them! I had no idea that Steve wouldn't be in today. This secret society meeting was irresponsible to say the least for this reason.

And the "upper management" wonders why the peons around here are unhappy? Events like this. What possible reason can there be to have a meeting unannounced? It seems scurrilous and mysterious and altogether unnecessary. On the other hand, how would it appear to people in the company, if, for example, testing decided to have an all-day testers' meeting off-site two days before a ship date? Without telling anyone.

Although I have no idea what top secret issues were on the agenda, I'm guessing stuff along the lines of future product type stuff. Okay, why exclude some of the imps? Granted, the "big three" were in attendance, but I think the others' input should be considered, and for God's sake, Stu's been here since the dawn of time and even if he's not on the schedule, I'm sure his input is valuable. I think this whole situation was handled very poorly (I'm really thinking of shitty) and I know it's had a negative affect on many others in the company. What attributes makes the individuals in this group so special that they don't have responsibility to other members of the company?

I am angry and surprised over this whole thing.

Date: 29 Apr 1987 1813-EDT From: Gray lust tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: I'm pissed off! To: jon cc: swg

I don't know who to complain to, but since you're still my supervisor, I'll lay it in your lap.

About ten o'clock this morning, I said to Amy, Where is everybody? She said that Hollywood said that everybody was at an off-site meeting to discuss future product strategy. That's all the information we have at the moment.

First of all, wouldn't it have been polite to leave a message behind for the rest of us? Did you think that we wouldn't notice your absence? Why such secrecy?

Secondly, why weren't some people who are responsible for creating future products included? Aren't we important enough? Future product strategy is a topic dear to my heart, and I happen to think that I have some good ideas about it. I feel like one of the few people in this company that want us to move out of the "cave dweller" era and make products that more people will buy. In fact the reason for transferring me out of your

group, I assume and I hope, is to work on software technology for a new generation of products.

I feel more negative now than I did in the darkest days of our near-bankruptcy. Then, at least, I felt that I was part of a core group of creative people that could stick together and produce more great software. Now I feel excluded, forgotten, and downright shitty.

My only wish is that your conference turned out to be a waste of time, unfortunate as that would be, while I spent the day giving the attention to details that our users say is the most important thing to them.

On second thought, my wish is that you people decided today that the only way to decide on product strategy is by a consensus of everyone involved in creating the products. That means us, too.

Date: 30 Apr 1987 1507-EDT
Subject: Yesterday's Meeting

From: Buckets o' Blood <PDL at FRED>
To: IMPS at FRED

In case you are curious, my impressions of it are in <PDL>MEETING.TXT.

OFFSITE MEETING, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 1987.
by pdl. (opinions and attributions are my own)

Attendees: Joel, Chris, Mike, Gabby, Jon, Dave L., Steve, Brian
Jon's "agenda":

SOME POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Where is the market going? (Where has it gone?)
- Change collaborator philosophy? ("Name" authors? Licenses?)
- Outside developers vs. inside developers
- Any other technological enhancements we should be doing?
- Proper mix of small changes, big changes, no changes
- How do we go about judging outside possibilities?
- How many eggs in the I.F. basket?
- What do we do about I.F.?
- Genres we haven't tapped into?
- Non-I.F.
- Do we do non-I.F. in-house or outside?

—Categories—

We started by discussing the categories entertainment software falls into, with side-trips into such questions as "Is Portal interactive fiction?" The categories were:

Arcade games (Pacman, Airheart, etc.)
Sports games (Mean 18, Championship Football, etc.)
Strategy games (Ogre, Eastern Front, etc.)
Interactive fiction (our stuff, etc.)
Role-playing games (Rogue, Wizardry, etc.)
Simulations (Flight Simulator, Gato, etc.)
Board games (Shanghai, Fooblitzky, etc.)
Miscellaneous (Little Computer People, etc.)

Needless to say, there is a lot of fuzziness here. Is Arctic Fox a Simulation, an Arcade game, or a Strategy game? Is Portal I.F.? Is Time Bandits an Arcade game, or I.F., or what?

There was fairly general agreement that these categories have pretty much been with us since the beginning, and that what happens is that every few years, one of them gets "revitalized" and is the leading category for a while. There was also pretty general agreement that it is usually technology that does the revitalizing (either hardware or software). Lately, it seems that graphics is the technology that's doing it.

There was a great deal of discussion about defining what it is we do. For example, do we just do I.F.? Do we do anything that has an English parser in it? Do we have to have puzzles? Do we have to have stories? If you do a point-and-click interface (like Deja Vu) is it still "what we do"?

The most popular formulation seemed to be that we do "Interactive Storytelling," which was fuzzy enough that it could hold a lot of different kinds of products, but understandable enough that anyone out in the world could figure it out.

This has implications for what kinds of products we might do, and what submissions we immediately return.

We beat the subject of Portal into the ground. Brian and I contended that it isn't I.F. (in fact, it's barely interactive), just a "novel" way of presenting a fairly traditional story. Some (Jon?) disagreed.

—Technology—

Some people in the market seem to believe that I.F. technology, particularly ours, hasn't advanced in years. They don't notice the small improvements in the parser and substrate, probably because to a casual observer, our newest games look a lot like our first ones.

[Apparently, Personal Computing is doing a piece on new stuff, and said they weren't including anything of ours (when asked) because it's "old hat."]

Some ideas for changing this opinion:

* Graphics title screens.
* "Illuminated" text adventures (as XZIP will permit).
* Sound.
* Friendlier parser (knows about common "first-time" mistakes).
* Better demos (a demo mode, or a demo with speech recognition and speech synthesis for output).

There was a fair amount of discussion about whether it is worth doing any kind of graphics unless it is "the best." Is it worthwhile merely equaling the level of graphics in The Pawn? I think the consensus was that doing good graphics (such as an "illuminated" adventure with Pawn-quality graphics) was better than doing nothing.

A friendlier parser that might make it possible to learn how to play without reading the manual was proposed. It was pointed out that we do this already (to some extent) in games such as Seastalker and Wishbringer. Might be nice to do even better, though.

The consensus was that these things should not all be introduced at once (waiting until they've all been designed and implemented), but rather one thing at a time, whenever we have a game that wants to use them. Of course, given our manpower shortage, we can hardly do it any other way.

[I made a pitch for a more-unlimited game system, possibly based on MU instead of ZIP. Brian is already running out of table space in his game, Amy's game is too big and no even in Beta yet, all our EZIP games have had to be cut, and Bureaucracy had to become EZIP instead of LZIP.]

—The Market—

There was a lot of discussion of what the market is. Do we think there is any realistic chance of doing "mass-market" stuff? Reading and typing make us a minority taste immediately. What if you don't have to read and/or type? Can you do a good I.F. game with a point-and-click interface? Deja Vu has one approach, Labyrinth another.

What makes our games enjoyable? Lots of different things were mentioned: Puzzles, story, humor, exploration, etc.

I proposed that a major thing is satisfying one's curiosity. Seeing new responses, getting the exciting response when you solve a puzzle, etc.

—New Hardware—

There is a Nintendo game machine out there that has 256K of RAM and uses 256K ROM cartridges. On the other hand, it doesn't have a keyboard. On the other other hand, they've sold a fair number, and it might be good practice for the CDI machines.

The CDI machine introduction date has slipped to Jan '89 (at CES). CDI doesn't have a keyboard either. Can you do a good point-and-click story game? Brian thinks so, but is vague on the specifics. The Tom Snyder cartoon game and some game-like audio things proposed for CDI may give some clues.

Mike would love to see something with voice recognition in it, for all three people in that market. On the other hand, something like that might make a good demo.

—Pricing—

Mike expressed the opinion that lowering prices doesn't increase sales all that much. He even suggested that we ought to consider a $50 price, as that wouldn't reduce sales much. We've sold about 7000 of the $15 games through Call Center, which certainly isn't bad, but...

Our dealers and distributors are confused by the various price changes.

—Collaborating—

We used to say we'd only do "real collaborations," where the other party did significant work, and not licenses. Is this still true? Bureaucracy violated it (not by choice), we can't be sure how much work Clavell will do on Shogun, and who knows what will happen with Restaurant?

Mike contended that one purpose of getting big names (Stephen King was used sort of generically here) is to get buyers who are interested in that name enough to follow it. Some fraction of these people will interested enough to try other games, even if the name they are fans of isn't involved. Obviously, some names will be better for this purpose than others. Stephen King has been hurt because so many adaptations of his work have been bad. Other people, such as Vanna White (another generic name) wouldn't be perceived as contributing much, even by their fans, and are too ephemeral anyway. There seemed to be some sentiment that with a big name, the product could be an original rather than an adaptation (Bureaucracy vs. Hitchhikers?).

There was a fair amount of excitement (from Brian, for one) about "collaborating" with an illustrator, such as Edward Gorey or even Doctor Seuss.

There was also some sentiment that we should pursue certain potential collaborators, rather than hoping they'd come to us. No names were mentioned, however, and the usual caveat about having an interested imp was caveated.

—Genres—

We talked about genres we haven't done. The usual ones came up again: Best-sellers, Historicals, Thrillers, XXX-rated, etc. The usual mumblings about mysteries were mumbled.

One new one came up, which was Jokes. (A side-trip was made into about a zillion horrific dead-baby jokes, elephant jokes, "Mommy, Mommy" jokes, etc.) The idea was that you could do what Jeff is doing in Wordplay, but go even further, and essentially have a collection of jokes and riddles.

—Submissions—

How do we feel about submissions these days? Joel is not worried about being sued if we develop a game that someone thinks is a ripoff of a submission. (Actually, it's Smith McKeithen who isn't worried). It was suggested that Jon have anyone he gives an outside submission to initial it, so we know who's seen it. Submissions that are well developed would be given more consideration that mere "ideas."

Once we are working entirely on micros we can license our development system to outside developers (like EA does).

—Product Mix—

It was proposed (sort of as a confirmation of what we already seem to be doing) that if we shoot for nine products a year, we do:

3 traditional I.F. (Stationfall, Lurking Horror, etc.)
3 "enhanced" I.F. (Beyond Zorkquest IV, Illuminated text, etc.)
3 misc. (non-I.F. stories, outside collaborators, etc.)

There was some discussion of whether that's too few traditional games, or too many games of all sorts. The question of whether Lurking Horror and Stationfall will hurt each other's sales was brought up. Once we find out we'll have more data on how many games the market will support.

It might also be nice to have a game "in the bank," to fill in for a delayed Bureaucracy, for example. I got the impression that Mike would rather release anything finished. We may end up with a game in the bank anyway (the Challenge game, if we end up distributing Guild of Thieves).

Doing fewer games a year would be cheaper in terms of overhead (fewer Imps needed, fewer testers, fewer everything) but more dangerous because then if one of your (say) three games a year bombs, you are up a creek. If you do nine games a year, a bomb or two can be absorbed; you're unhappy, but still in business.

Inception of the Trilogy Slipcase packaging:

Date: 26 May 1987 1039-EDT
Subject: FYI
From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

Later this year we'll be marketing a science fiction 3-pack containing Hitchhiker's Planetfall, and AMFV. We'll also be marketing a mystery 3-pack, probably containing Witness, Suspect, and Moonmist. Mike was thinking of a $59.95 price, though that's not final or definite.

Date: 13 Jul 1987 1413-EDT
Subject: pirates
From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
To: da, sem cc: clr

Someone sent in info re: Hollywood Hijinx and LGOP being on a bboard in Hawaii.

(Sigh.) They sent a screen dump of the possible download files, the sysop's name, address, phone num, etc.. I'm forwarding it all to the S.P.A.. I believe it's an Amiga users board.

(Infocom helped found the Software Publishers Association.)

Date: 22 Jul 1987 1559-EDT
Subject: Do You Care?
From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

We have received more than 220,000 warranty cards. Of these:

156,000 are from males	24,000 new people registered in '85
28,000 are from females	20,000 " " " in '86
38,000 are from sex unknown	22,000 " " " in '87 [Mike isn't sure he believes
41,000 are Apple owners	38,000 are Californians this so is checking on it]
30,000 are Commodore owners	19,000 are New Yawkers
	35 are from the Virgin Islands, etc.

Date: 30 Jul 1987 1332-EDT
Subject: Stuff
From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

After Plundered Hearts, Infocom will not be making new games for the Atari XL/XE. In effect, then, I guess ZIP is dead, and we will have XZIP and LXZIP.

Bruce Davis is not a big fan of stickers for info which is permanent ("By the author of …" "Includes on-line hints" etc.), so I believe that future packages will have such info worked "into" the cover, and stickers will be used primarily for "temporary" or after-the-fact info ("over 100,000 sold"?).

Future games which do not use the features of the Amiga or the ST — sounds and/or graphics — MAY be

available direct mail only. To be decided on a case-by-case basis. (Joel said there are on the order of 100,000 STs and 100,000 Amigas out there, and that we're not selling to even 5% of them.)

All Activision employees (including us) who worked for the six consecutive months from 9/1/86 to 3/31/87 have received (or should be receiving) 178 shares of Activision stock. An employee stock ownership plan was discarded when new tax laws took effect, so the shares were divided evenly among employees, without consideration of length of service, salary, height, etc. The shares had a value of $1.15 (each, I believe) when we took ownership; we will have to pay taxes on these capital gains.

Date: 30 Jul 1987 1349-EDT From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stuff To: Imps at FRED

Correction: the value of Activision ESOP stock is ordinary income in 1987. When you eventually sell the shares, you may have a capital gain or loss.

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1622-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Advertising To: Imps at FRED

Advertising plans as follows:

Nord & Bert in
Nov/Dec. Games magazine and in Family Computing. (Sixty five percent of Family Computing's readership own IBMs.)
(That was a non sequitor.)

Beyond Zork in:
MacUser (probably) rather than MacWorld
A+ (probably) rather than Nibble or InCider (A+ has a readership of 75,000; an ad will cost about $5K)
Commodore magazine (probably) rather than RUN or Compute's Gazette
(Eighteen percent of RUN's readership own C-128s. Since Mike didn't mention Commodore's percentage, either it's higher or he doesn't know.)
PC magazine definitely, rather than PC World
Computer Gaming World, which is the most expensive per 1000 readers, but is so specialized as to be worth it to us
TBD: Byte (400,000 readers, ad cost of about $10K) and Compute! (Fifty percent of Compute!'s readership own IBMs, thirty percent own Commodores).
We will probably NOT advertise in Personal Computing (almost all business-related; mostly IBM owners)

If you have comments or opinions, particularly about the "rather thans," please tell Mike or me.
Sorry I presented this in such an unreadable manner. Must be the Yankee Doodles.

The "Plus" in Interactive Fiction Plus is retired:

Date: 7 Aug 1987 1322-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Bye-Bye ZIP To: Imps at FRED, Liz at FRED

Since we don't plan to make our future games available on Atari XL/XEs, I assumed all future games could be LZIP or EZIP (or LXZIP and XZIP). Some side effects I didn't consider:

1. Macs will need 512K
2. IBM versions may not run on all MS-DOS machines; only on IBMs and 100% compatibles
3. IBMs will need 128K
4. Apple IIs will need 128K

Joel and Gabby (and Chris and I) don't believe any of this is significant, though we'll try to find out how many 128K Macs are "out there."

We'll also stop the "Plus" designation, since everything will be "Plus."

Date: 10 Aug 1987 1502-EDT From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Endings To: Imps at FRED, Marc at FRED

Most "wrong" endings are visually obvious to players, primarily because of the asterisks. A typical wrong ending looks something like this:

```
  "Here's what you did and here's what happened. It was wrong of
course. There's some purple prose here and here's some more purple
prose and maybe here's yet more purple prose.

     *****You have died [or something]*****

  Your score and rank ..."
```

As soon as I see this I get a feeling of disappointment — before I even READ the message. I don't think this is a feature. (It seems game-like, not story-like.) Perhaps in a future game, someone would be willing to try wrong endings which are less visually obvious?

Date: 10 Aug 1987 2129-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Endings To: JON at FRED cc: IMPS at FRED

One problem with endings is that, for reasons of playability, you want the "end screen" to include the "QUIT, RESTORE, etc." message, which is inherently game-like. I think the ***'s were just to wake people up.

Date: 24 Aug 1987 1441-EDT From: Chaaa on Planet J <JON at FRED>
Subject: Mostly boring stuff To: Imps at FRED

Below are the notes I took at this morning's meeting. (Joel et al. wasn't here last Thursday, which is why we had the meeting today.)

The Wishbringer and Planetfall books by Byron Preiss will be out next June. Brian, who has read the manuscript, should give his comments to David Harris.

Terry Ishida at Activision (Russell Leiblich's manager, now that Jeff Steinwedel is gone) plans to hire a sound assistant who Russell will train around November or December. If we're serious about sounds, we should hire a sound person who will work out here but who will be trained by Russell, maybe in January or February. Russ is taking a vacation and doing Last Ninja sounds, and will be ready to start Sherlock sounds around October 1. We'll do sounds (if at all) on the ST, Amiga, gs, and Mac only.

Will Infocom market Anita Sinclair's games starting Fall 1988? Anita has to give British Telecom 5 more products, then her contractual obligation to them is done. Joel isn't confident that we'll be able to strike a deal with Magnetic Strolls, but says we should and will try. Bywater is to write a game for her; it may be an interactive

Bible. (Unknown where he/she got the idea, but let's remember that she IS a competitor so we should be discreet talking with Bywater and Sinclair.)

Wayne Herriford of Activision will be here Sept. 1-3 to give some training seminars; I'm supposed to tell Linda by later today who in our group should attend the Communications seminar.

The Sept. 16 Activision board meeting will be here at Infocom. A corporate-wide product planning meeting starts Oct. 9 and goes for 2 or 3 days; the SPA meeting happens around then and I'm supposed to figure out who should go to what parts of the SPA conference.

A paging system is very likely to be installed here.

Peter Reynolds delivered a schedule showing 2 games on 3 machines coming out in early January as hoped. The third game (Zork) is scheduled for April 1; this isn't acceptable. Gotta figure something out.

Bywater likely to do no programming while he's here; he'll just leave a script. We assumed he was going to do the bulk of the programming, though we would do a lot of the debugging. Have to figure out how to train Bywater so he can do the bulk of programming, and figure out when he's going to do it.

The Case of the Missing Agent: Ken Mannering not returning phone calls. What to do? Keep trying. Sigh.

Gab wants to see Jeff's list of next game ideas; I'll give her a copy.

International division and Infocom each expect to contribute $900K to corporate profit this year; Activision West Coast expects to contribute about twice that. But Corporate G&A (of which we don't assume a specific amount) may make it hard for the corporation to be profitable in the fourth fiscal quarter.

According to the Beyond Zork instruction manual, IBM owners with a Microsoft mouse can use the mouse. This may not be true; I'll keep customer support informed.

Sales force, according to Johnny Ma, is supposed to sell 98,500 Infocom games between now and end of September. "Very reasonable," says Gabby, though certain accounts will be a challenge. But if sales force ONLY makes this forecast, we will be disappointed and under our own forecast.

Gabby said Nord and Bert and Plundered Hearts were very well received by the sales force. Beyond Zork too.

Late (i.e. Sept. 11) Beyond Zork disks to Activision will not affect ship date but will affect trade release, sales sell-ins, etc.

Date: 17 Sep 1987 1018-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: InfoTrivia: KIRSCH cc: SWG

Comments on others' questions:

The first Infocom game without grues was Deadline.

Infocom, Inc. had two corporate addresses before 6 Faneuil Hall Marketplace, but both were P.O. boxes at Kendall Station (as in "The Ballad of the M.T.A.").

Original questions:

In 1983 Infocom ran a two-page full-color ad in two versions, with identical copy and art but completely different headlines. Summarize a headline.

Ans: "We stick our graphics where the sun don't shine." or "We unleash the world's most powerful graphics machine."

Two founders of Infocom and its first novelist share the same initials.
Ans: MSB = Marc S. Blank, Michael S. Broos, and Michael S. Berlyn.

How many different kinds of computers do Infocom products run on?
Ans: over twenty! (Product Support or Gabby should know exactly.)

How many computers have run a game called Zork?
Ans: over a million! (Could be mult. choice: A. 10 thou ... D. 10 million.)

P.S. I'm sure you can also use these Q's (esp. harder ones) in The Status Line.

P.P.S. Here's the hardware I'm looking for (for my Apple II GS): MDIdeas makes both OctoRAM (smaller one) and SuperSonic sound card.

Date: 22 Oct 1987 1005-EDT From: nJo celPaa <JON at FRED>
Subject: Notes from Yesterday Morning's Meeting To: Imps at FRED

To members of the Mystery Writers of America: Is there any newsletter in which we might advertise or announce the Sherlock game?

Activision tries to keep a low inventory on-hand, including a low inventory of disks. When we suddenly need more Wishbringer disks (for instance), someone at Activision calls Xemag or Dysan or whoever has the masters, and says "Make us N more disks." So we don't have a lot of lead time — sometimes none — to provide new masters. Mike said "Well, Xemag [or whoever] should always have from us the most recent version." But making new versions of old games isn't a high priority for most of us; so even though a new version is hypothetically ready, it may not have been tested, downloaded, and sent to Xemag. Joel suggested we should make new versions for games for 6 months after their release; thereafter make new versions only on a case-by-case basis (depending on inventory, expectations of future sales, seriousness of bugs, etc.). I guess I should pass this info on to the Testers and Tom Veldran ...

Some retailers seem to be doing well with IBM games on 3 disks. Gabby will check with Babbages to see if they want to be a test bed for us; if so, we may make a separate SKU of Beyond Zork with 3½ inch IBM disks.

Date: 22 Oct 1987 1234-EDT From: nJo celPaa <JON at FRED>
Subject: Headlines To: Imps at FRED

Here are the headlines I gave at yesterday morning's meeting:

"Upcoming Infocomics Meeting Hopes to Resolve All Outstanding Issues Between Infocom & Tom Snyder; Large Attendance Expected"

"Lebling's Depressing Forecast Looking Believable"

"Briggs Still Undecided About Next Game; Dr. Who and Vampire Game Head List"

"Last Monday's Meeting with Berlyns a Development Success but of Uncertain Sizzle; Palace and Syska to Get High (Concept)"

"Infocom Accused of Being 'Like EA' by Two Outside Developers; Trend Continues"

"Palace, Lebling, and Briggs Give Presentations at NE Computer Faire, Which Does Not Computerize Its Registration"

"Palace WAY Far Behind on Evaluating Huge Stack of Outside Submissions"

Date: 28 Oct 1987 0029-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: THE GAME To: MD

Features:

1) It would make people more aware of sales levels (just like LSC game made people more aware of attendances levels).
2) It might force the people who make sales figures available to make them more regularly and easily available.

Disfeatures:

1) It's often difficult to get sales figures. For example, I have no idea how many Stationfalls we've sold to date.
2) What about returns? Foreign sales? Etc.
3) The event are less frequent: The LSC game had a scoring opportunity three times a week; the Infocom game would only be once a month or once a quarter. Interest would wane.
4) The numbers are more unpredictable from period to period. For example, with LSC attendances, a larger than average attendance one night would have little affect on the next night's attendance. But a large sale of a title during one month might mean an overstocking and corresponding decrease in sales for that title the next month.
5) Less access to old sales figures for most people. Old attendance figures were easily accessible doing LSC game guesses.

This thought has actually crossed my mind before, and I think it might be a good idea, but it would never be as good as the LSC game.

Date: 2 Dec 1987 1745-EST From: a cap no jel <JON at FRED>
Subject: Announcement To: Everybody at FRED

IICS/Boston December Meeting Announcement

CD-I, DVI, CD-V, Interactive Tape, Interactive Toys — a host of new interactive technologies are jostling for position in the home entertainment marketplace. Come join us Thursday, December 3rd, when we'll spend an entertaining evening looking at these new technologies and where they are headed.

Dr. Diana Gagnon, whose audience research at MIT's Media Lab is helping to define the direction the new technologies should take, will be our main speaker. Dr. Gagno will tell us about "The Future of Interactive Entertainment": What are the new technologies? Who are the key players? What form should the new technologies take? And what type of content is most appropriate for them?

We'll also hear from the developers of a fascinating new educational toy, Lego Logo. And we'll have a play-time. We'll have several interactive toys set up for hands-on experimentation, including: Lego Logo, the "Captain Power" ray gun, and several interactive fiction videodiscs.

The meeting will be held at VizWiz Inc., 115 Dummer St. in Brookline. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. and the formal meeting will begin at 7:30.

Admission is free to IICS members, $8 for non-members, and $4 for non-member full-time students.

[If you go, let me know. -Jon]

Date: 24 Dec 1987 1515-EST From: Cajan Lope <JON at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stuff To: MARC

Chris told me a little about the meetings at Activision; I'll tell you what I heard, but you should certainly ask Chris and Mike directly.

Apparently, Mike and Chris thought that Journey and Space RPG (Prof's game) would be an "easy sell"; that is, they assumed that Zork 0, Shogun, and Restaurant would be viewed as "i.f. warmed over," whereas Journey and Space RPG would be viewed as new and different and, therefore, exciting. To Mike's and Chris's surprise, they were questioned most closely about Journey and Space RPG, because they WERE different and, therefore, "risky."

I believe that Space RPG was considered the MOST questionable, for several reasons. (Mac only, Brian's flaming, etc.) It was decided to decide later (surprise surprise), after Brian has a prototype or a demo or something presentable, ideally by the end of January. We're already expecting something from you in January.

Besides Chris, Mike, and Joel (when he wasn't sick), the attendees at the meeting were: Dick Lehrberg, Johnny

Ma, Stan Roach, Alan Chaplan, and Bruce Davis. I heard that Dick, Johnny, and Alan said little, and Bruce often "deferred" to Stan.

Infocom is CLOSED all of next week, and I'm leaving here soon. But if you want to talk to me, I'll be home from Monday night on. I'll be in the office all day Monday, January 4th as well.

Thanks for the holiday wish! Kristin and I hope you and Cezanne have a healthy and happy 1988.

See you soon.

Date: 21 Jan 1988 1649-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Hi To: MARC cc: LIZ

There's a graphics meeting going on that's been on for about two hours: CLR, PROF, PDL, JDARNOLD, JOEL, TAA, DUNCAN, PHIL (new IBM guy) I think that covers it.

Also, a packaging meeting for ZORK0 - Mikie's in there.

Not much is in testing. ZORK0 has been in pre-alpha - I've solved it. Really like the game. The puzzles are excellent and the atmosphere is very Zorkian. I think Steve did a good job. We had a brief meeting today to discuss additional puzzles and features.

I've looked at Journey and I think it's sexy. Like an frp but better story. Interested in seeing more and more.

That's about it in testerland. We've been trying to learn more about frps as a group, because up to now only Gary's been a player. And if we're going to join the forces, testing needs the experience to critique, etc..

Infocomics have been in and out of testing, although there isn't a whole lot of testing as we know it. They're cute, but I'd rather have a meaty puzzle.

Sigh. That's about it. I'm looking forward to the products that are supposed to be in testing soon, because this whole new world of graphics seems to be something that will perk us up.

All for now. liz

Date: 22 Feb 1988 1504-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: This day in history To: clr, pdl, joel, swg, marc

MAC Muddle successfully read, evaluated, and printed 1.

Date: 24 Feb 1988 0906-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: Crazy Dimwit's Castle Clearance To: Kirsch, DA

It's most amusing. Well done!

(This is a product catalog Infocom published, written by Dimwit Flathead.)

Date: 3 Mar 1988 1631-EST From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
Subject: An interesting article ... To: imps at FRED

Here's an interesting letter that I found in the Gamemasters Digest (an ARPAnet mailing list that I began two summers ago to discuss issues in developing computer adventure/frp games. I'm not actually running the list anymore, that task was happily taken over by Ron Fischer, a Xerox employee, and member of the original list).

(P.S. And all we need for a multi-player game is more than one 'cretin' structure. Gee, wish I had known that before working on Arena ...)

GameMasters Digest Volume 9 : Issue 1

Date: Mon, 29 Feb 88 12:36:25 EDT
From: Dimitri Vulis <CLDLV@NASAGISS.BITNET>
Subject: Data Structures in Infocom games

Regarding the data structure for IF: a long time ago we disassembled a few Infocom (tm) games to see what made them tick. Since Infocom games are of higher quality than most (probably all) competition, I think this info may of interest to some.

Most of the game is written in a pseudo-assembly language with very few instructions. Since there are no registers, it does not qualify as RISC :). (I.e. instructions like: print the following compressed string and return) The strings (most of the program, actually) are compressed in a funny way (not very efficient, but fast to decompress) There are things like subroutines with arguments, so it's more SISC in spirit, but the total number of instructions is small.

A short stub at the beginning of the program interpretes the instructions. This is sort of like the USCD P-system (tm) in spirit, i.e. porting _all_ of their games to a new architecture involves only porting this little stub (I mean, short).

There is one array that contains both locations and objects. One object, known internally as 'cretin' is the player. Each object has two pointers: one to the object that contains it (none if it's a location or the object does not exist yet) and one to the list of objects contained in it (in particular, the current room contains the 'cretin'). Each object has a property list (obvious MDL influence) as a bunch of zero-terminated ASCII strings (really inefficient). Also, there is an ascii name for the object (for a location, it's the name displayed on top of screen)

This way you no longer have to have separate variables to substitute for things like 'object containing cretin' (current location), 'objects contained in cretin' (inventory), 'objects contained in object containing cretin' (other objects or players at current location'. For a multi-user game, one would need several cretin structures, that's all.

Date: 3 Mar 1988 1657-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Annals of Implementer Correspondence To: PDL, JON, SWG, AMY cc: MARC

The following MM exchange may be of interest...

Marc (re: Gary and Zork0): What will happen when Gary gets a hold of it? Which reminds me: Liz volunteered Gary to look at Journey; I declined. Do you think he'll get a complex?

Steve: I hope he gets a complex with thirteen hyphens in its name.

Marc: It's the "Nobody-wants-me-to-play-their-game-because-I'm-so-damned-picky-that-it's-fucking-disgusting" complex.

Steve:

1. name of complex too long; wraps in mid-word — shorten name of complex or fix MM's parser
2. complex name has 15 hyphens — only supposed to be 13
3. I don't think we should use "damned" or "fucking"
4. game doesn't know word "complex"

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1051-EST From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: December 1986 To: Imps at FRED

I just found a game schedule from December 1986 for calendar 1987. We were aiming for:

Hollywood Hijinx	2/ 1/87	Words at Play	8/15/87
Bureaucracy	3/15/87	Zork RPG	10/15/87
Stationfall	6/15/87	Romance	10/15/87
Lurking Horror	6/15/87		

It also said "something will probably happen" with Marc Blank. Challenge was mentioned but not on the schedule.

Date: 27 Apr 1988 1753-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: SystemSoft To: Joel cc: Kirsch, SWG

I just spoke with Sharon Doy at SystemSoft in California.

She wanted to know how long to allow the engineers in Japan to review the new documents we are sending before they come here for training. Since the only new documents I could think of are the source files for the games, I estimated they might want to study the parser for 2-4 weeks before coming here to ask questions about it.

She said that would put the training session in early June or so. I said okay, but I plan to take vacation the last two weeks in June. Maybe they can't use even 2-4 weeks profitably and would want to come sooner. We'll see.

Date: 29 Apr 1988 0936-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: SystemSoft To: SWG cc: JOEL

What we ought to send SystemSoft right away are the sources for Zork I, Planetfall, and Moonmist along with the IBM interpreter source code that goes with them. The best medium to use would be 360k IBM disks. Is it any problem for you to do this?

Date: 29 Apr 1988 1040-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: SystemSoft To: SWG cc: JOEL

I think not Solid Gold. I believe we are only selling ZIP technology and not XZIP. Correct me if you know something different.

Tell me when you'll have the disks and I'll tell you where they go.

Thanks.

P.S. Is there any useful documentation that they don't already have?

Date: 29 Apr 1988 1042-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: SystemSoft To: JOEL cc: SWG

"They" already have all the useful documentation we could find in January. But I don't think we gave them ZIP sources on a disk.

Date: 25 May 1988 1024-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: SystemSoft schedule To: TAA cc: Jon, Joel, Kirsch, MD, SWG

I just got a phone call from Sharon Doy of SystemSoft (Calif. office), asking whether I'd be available the week of July 11 for more talking with Ito-san on "localizing" our games for publication in Japan. I said okay, although I would be re-entering real life at that time after my vacation. We estimated that a week's time should be enough to cover his questions, after he's studied the source (ZIL) files from now until then.

Date: 18 May 1988 1321-EDT From: Shinghatsubai <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Question mark in quotes To: everybody at FRED cc: swg

Due to exhaustive research by Stu Galley, it has been determined that if a question mark and a quotation mark coincide, the question mark precedes the quotation mark only if that which is being quoted is a question. Thus, in the Zork Zero calendar, the correct version is:

Who said "A home cut in half will usually fall over"?

Strunk and White were silent on the matter.

Date: 18 May 1988 1813-EDT From: Style H Zabaglione <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Question marks in quotes To: Forum cc: SWG

According to Margaret Shertzer (author of the famed tome "Elements of Grammar"):

When the exclamation or question is not included, place the quotation marks inside:
I doubt that any mayor likes to be referred to in print as "hizzoner"!

Who needs Strunk and White when you have Shertzer? (Or when you have SWG.)

Date: 19 May 1988 0945-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Question marks in quotes To: ELIZ cc: Forum, SWG

Yow! As Zippy the Flathead said, "Am I punctual yet?"

Date: 3 Jun 1988 1121-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Locks o' Gold To: Imps at FRED cc: Challenge at FRED,
Marc at FRED, Liz at FRED, Eliz at FRED, Jacob at FRED

And when Locks o' Gold had finished eating the porridge, she went upstairs to take a nap. In a little spare bedroom she found the Three Bears' [ownership] little home office, with three little home office computers on three little home office desks.

She sat down at the computer of Papa Bear [ownership], and tried out its [possession] English parser. But it had trouble whenever she used OF's or apostrophes. She scratched her [body part] head and decided that it found objects to match with the phrases in her commands TOO SOON, and it often claimed that there were no such objects.

Then Locks o' Gold [material] tried Mama Bear's computer's parser, but it matched objects with phrases TOO LATE, and often had too many owners and ownees to deal with. She sighed, thinking that both of the parsers [quantification] were a poor reflection of [universal ownership] the Bears' programming ability. She thought

about having another bowl of porridge [self-ownership].

Finally, in desperation, she turned to the Bears' Baby's computer. And it matched objects with phrases JUST RIGHT, and she played to her heart's content, until she got all of the game's points.

COMING SOON TO A SCREEN NEAR YOU!
THE BEARS' BABY'S COMPUTER'S PROGRAM'S PARSER OF ENGLISH'S ALGORITHM

[yikes!]

Date: 24 Jun 1988 1006-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Pictures, the penultimate word To: pdl, sem, marc, challenge, jon

On the care and feeding of pictures for games:

I'm assuming that all pictures are created by some paint program (Deluxe Paint II comes to mind) that generates IFF files. If your artist must use something else, ample warning is needed on this end, along with documentation of the file format that results.

We strongly recommend that no picture (or set of pictures, if you have more than one on the screen simultaneously) have more than 14 colors—better for the artist to reduce the colors than for my program to do it. You can go up to 16 on the title screen (or equivalent—full-screen, and no transparent areas), but that can produce odd effects on certain Mac IIs, so don't get too excited. If a picture has 14 or fewer colors, those should be 2 through 15 in the palette; 0 and 1 are special.

All pictures so far have used even RGB values, on the advice of Magnetic Scrolls. I forget why (probably something to do with the Atari ST), but it doesn't hurt for the artist to realize that his stuff is going to a lot of machines with palettes considerably smaller than the Amigas.

0 and 1 are special because my programs normally recognize them as transparent: if a picture has an area in color 0, that area will not be displayed by zip. (Again, the only exception is for a 16-color title screen.)

Due to rapid improvement in the tools (sorry, Steve), there's no requirement that the useful part of a picture be flush top left, or that there only be one picture per IFF file. Here's what I need to know in order to build the final picture file from your disks full of IFF files: For each picture ID, I need the name of the file it lives in, and the area it occupies (the top-left and bottom-right corners). I also need to know what groups of pictures might be on screen at the same time, and whether some pictures have funny palettes. [For example, the compass rose in Zork 0 uses colors 3, 5, 6, and 7 from the palette of whichever border happens to be on the screen at the time.]

One problem that came up in Zork 0 has to do with the location of points inside pictures. For example, one has a border of a certain thickness, and wants text to start inside that border. On the Amiga, the thickness is 30 pixels; on the Mac, it's 45; on the Mac II, it's 60. Rather than compiling a separate version of the game for each machine, the game writer should define a null picture for this case whose dimensions contain the appropriate 'constant' (30 x 30, for example). Then, to place the text in the border, one should PICINF the appropriate null picture to see what its dimensions have become. (All that I need for these pictures is the picture ID you've assigned, the dimensions, and the fact that the picture is null.) (One advantage of this approach is that it allows us to substantially retouch pictures for some machines (Apple II) without causing any extra pain to the game writer.)

Finally, we have the following advisory on the PICSET opcode. Let's imagine a group of 10 pictures that will go on the screen along with some border. The PICSET should be applied only to the 10 small pictures, NOT to the 10 pictures and the border—this gives the interpreter a much better chance of fitting everything into its buffer.

The initial version of the picture file for Zork 0, by the way, uses about 150K to store 356 (mostly quite small) pictures.

Date: 28 Jun 1988 1735-EDT
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: More picture guidelines
To: jon, pdl, sem, marc, CHALLENGE

1) Don't put spaces in picture names. Many systems don't like them, and I don't like fixing the damn names.

2) Remember the limit on file name length—if the significant part of a file name is more than fourteen characters, lossage will occur.

3) Be careful with transparencies. Example of something that doesn't work: In Zork 0, the towers of Bozbar problem has a border picture with a large transparent area in the center; the towers are drawn there. When one of the pieces is removed from a tower, it is impossible to erase it, because no one (and I do mean no one) knows what background color to replace the piece with. Solution: the border picture no longer has the large transparent area, it has a large light-brown area. The picture that's used to erase pieces is more of that color.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 1336-EDT
From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Demos
To: SEM, PDL, Marc cc: Duncan, TAA

Eileen wants Mac II disks of Shogun, Journey, and Zork Zero for her press conference in NY on Tuesday. I've asked Duncan to make disks for Eileen by Friday.

Duncan has added a new font — Geneva 12 — to the Mac. However, the space for this font is smaller than most characters. Thus the commands in the bottom window of Journey don't get completely erased. I know Tim has talked to you about this, Marc; can it be fixed by Friday?

The status line looks funny on Shogun and Zork Zero — Duncan says it looks like 4 pieces of black bars rather than 2 black bars. He's going to try to fix this (at least temporarily) with a kludge.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 2337-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: PR Demo
To: JOE, PATTI, CRAIG at FRED

As you may know, there's going to be a PR announcement of our fall games next week and each game will be demoed briefly. If you've got any favorite scenes that you'd suggest showing, I'd be happy to hear about it.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 0921-EDT
From: Patricia Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: PR Demo
To: MARC

If the graphics are in, the tube scene is pretty nice. The menus, etc., are, however, kind of skimpy there. The woode (wood) elf scene is very interesting. Again, the menus (because Tag is alone) are slender, but the pics are great.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1315-EDT
From: Joseph Prosser <JOE at FRED>
Subject: Demo
To: Marc

Do I sense some anxiety in your voice?

A lot has been fixed. Lavos' window was too small, the picture background is now black. The menus are being cleared correctly too.

However, When you choose BUY or SELL or anything with multiple sub-choices and select an item other than the top, that item is highlighted, but the top item is not de-highlighted.

The text in the title screen needs to be centered in the screen as well as center justified.

Sometimes the Title screen stops scrolling with the words "All rights reserved" at the bottom of the window.

The picture of Hermit shows him outside his hut. The text says it's inside. I would make it all take place outside rather than just beginning outside since that picture's up so long.

Also there is some text that says that the hut is new. There is also some text that says it's ramshackle, It can't be both. make it ramshackle since the pic is.

Date: 21 Jul 1988 1703-EDT From: Gluey salt rat <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Compuserve, etc. To: MARC cc: SWG

My "honchoness" doesn't extend to strategic issues like usefulness and getting accounts. Brian showed me how to log in to Infocom's three corporate accounts (CompuServe, Delphi, GEnie), respond to questions, and upload press releases and The Status Line.

Several people here use CompuServe for technical info about micros. I'm the only one who uses the GAMERS bulletin board, and there's a lot of annoying messages from people who want hints, or want our products to run on their nonstandard equipment. My job is to make the company look friendly and responsive. I think, if they learned that MARC BLANK HIMSELF used the system, you might be hounded by groupies more than you want to be.

Both Delphi and GEnie bboards are run by Scorpia, and the users seem more interested in war games and hack/slash than stories.

One bboard I haven't used is BIX, which seems like a good technical resource. J.D. (JDArnold@Fred) knows about it. In fact he's hosting an Infocom real-time conference on it next Wednesday night; maybe you'd like to join in that.

Maybe what you should do is get a "starter kit" for CompuServe or The Source (of which I know nothing). What you get is a manual and some free hours of connect time for a reasonable price. Then you can try it and see if you like it.

— Stu.

Date: 27 Jul 1988 1142-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Stuff To: Erhardt, PDL, Eliz, Joe, Joel, Joey, Liz, SEM, SWG, TAA,
cc: Jon Veldran, Challenge, Marc

In my directory are three new files:

REMEMBER.ARTHUR REMEMBER.JOURNEY REMEMBER.MISC

The MISC file mostly has random notes concerning graphics (artists contacted through the Mass. College of Art, for instance). Feel free to add to these files.

Date: 9 Aug 1988 0947-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: schedules To: joey

I've worked a schedule for games shipping this fall. (Have I already sent you this mail?) Anyway, the schedule DOES NOT have anyone testing BattleTech or Arthur. You and I need to determine priorities and realities. Zork0, Journey and Quarterstaff are the definite shippers, right? Where does Shogun really fit in, and what of the impossible dream dates set for BattleTech? In the second place, we should be testing Arthur, but I don't know where to put that on my schedule either.

Liz

Date: 12 Aug 1988 1346-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: mac To: LIZ cc: TESTER.ADAM

Glad to see you're in a good mood. You're usually not when you answer my mail. Perhaps I was just blindingly witty this morning. Perhaps not.

The Expo was great. I took the T to Bayside, and the Bus to the World Trade Center... it took me, no joke, almost 3 hours to find Infocom. First, I walked around to Mediagenic. That was the only one on the map. But the map was wrong, and it took me ages to find the Mediagenic booth. It was supposed to be between CODA and Hewlett Packard... there was something between them... 4 little booths with SE's (hint, hint) on them, and a medium size booth in the middle, with a couple of SE's on it. Anyway, it took me about half an hour (of straight cursing and swearing) to find that the set of 5 booths actually was I NEED MAGIC. So, smiling, I walked up and introduced myself to one of the Exhibitors. "Hi," I said, "I'm from Infocom. Can I help run the booth[s]?"

"Infocom?" she replied, "Are you here to demo their software?"

"Yes... where are they?" I asked.

"North Complex One - follow this colored carpet," she said, gesturing to a mauve colored rug which ran the length of the World Trade Center, "and you're there."

"Thanks." I left, followed the carpet all the way, and came upon a wall. Two women were standing nearby, discussing a map that the shorter one was holding.

"Excuse me, but do you know where 'North Complex One' is?" I asked.

"Let's see... Yes. Turn left, go about 20 feet down, and open the door to the left. Go down about 10 feet, and take another left. You can't miss it." The taller woman replied. [They reminded me of Prickly and Sickly from Z0]

I followed their instructions, and came upon two guards, standing outside a row of meeting halls.

"Can I help you?" said one.

"Uh, yes. Do you know where Infocom is?" I asked.

A puzzled look came over the guard's face. He close his eyes and looked up, perhaps looking for divine intervention. Apparently, it came. "Yes, third floor, right in the middle. You can't miss it."

"Thanks." I turned around and went back to the escalators, which I had passed while following the tall woman's directions. I went to the third floor, and looked around. There was nothing there. Sure, there were registration forms and stuff like that, but no demonstrations. I took the escalator down the stairs, and sat down. I had been carrying 60 pounds of hardware/literature since 10:00, and it was now noon. I decided to make one last effort. I walked over in the opposite direction that the women sent me. Sure enough, Infocom. Dave was showing some guys Shogun, and Steve was doing a crossword puzzle. Eileen was wearing her little PR smile, and I showed some guy Sky View (or something like that... It's by MicroIllusions. Mike came in, Stu followed, and there were roughly 4 times as many InfoCommies as there were people to see the demos.

"Hi, Eileen. I'm Adam -" we shook hands "- can I help out?"

"Well actually, no," she said, almost in a whisper, "we had a lot of people this morning [around 11] but we're not too busy right now. Go watch the show - it'll be more fun than just standing here."

"Uh, okay. I'll come back each half hour and check that you're not too busy." I said.

"Okay, that sounds fine."

"Can I put all this stuff," I pointed to the hardware/literature bags, "under a table or something?"

"Sure."

I put all the stuff under the table Steve was doing crosswords on, and covered all of it with bags. I walked out, and watched the show. Later, I came back, and Nancy was there. What good she was, I don't know, but she too was smiling. Maybe she's got this secret than none of the rest of us know about... why else would she be eternally happy? People with one emotion make me sick. Dave had just finished talking about Journey (and trust me, I'm sure Marc would have used more superlatives).

"Eileen, can I DO something? I feel like an extra thumb, just standing around here."

"Well, have you played any of these games?"

"Oh, yeah. I've played Zork Zero, Quarterstaff, a little bit of Journey and BattleTech, but mostly Shogun."

"I think Dave will want to demo his game, and I think Steve'll want to do his. And this other mac is in use -" she pointed to an SE where Nancy and some guy were playing a children's game (he was probably teaching her how to play) "- so I don't know what to do with you."

I sighed. Was I still going to be paid? Then, I thought I'd write a long, enchanting story, and hope 'Da Boss' would accept it. Hopefully she will.

The End

[Pweddy pwease? I've worked sow, sow hawd!]

Date: 12 Aug 1988 1356-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: mac To: TESTER.ADAM cc: LIZ

You are so weird. I kind of thought the booth would be organized (disorganized?) like that, but I'm glad you seemed to get some enjoyment from it. Yes, you'll be paid.

Date: 31 Aug 1988 1141-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Testing... To: MARC cc: LIZ

Schedules for all games currently in testing are in a juggling pattern. Part of the holdup/difficulty/(whatever the term is) has been getting the graphics done. We're having a scheduling meeting this afternoon to determine just where everything is. To say it's been hectic around here wouldn't be giving the word "hectic" justice. On top of all the bs, I'm interviewing for a new tester and had about 25 responses to the ad that ran a few days ago. Also, if you've been on the system you may notice that Adam and Craig are gone, Jake leaves this Friday, and as of today, Joe Prosser's back to school (therefore part-time here). I don't know what consolation or dread this will bring you, but Steve Watkins starts next Tuesday!

whew. liz

Date: 1 Sep 1988 1232-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Tanya To: MIKEK, JOEY, ERHARDT, VELDRAN, JOE

Tanya Allen, who's been working on conversions, told me she'd like to be considered the next time we need someone for original art. She's the best of the three, and she claims to have done "half" the graphics for a Spinnaker game that's due out at Christmas — an animated adventure or RPG whose working title was "Star Lords." I told her I didn't think there'd be anything for at least six months; I also don't know anything about her wage scale.

Date: 2 Sep 1988 1448-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: Re: Tanya To: SEM cc: JOEY, ERHARDT, VELDRAN, JOE, MIKEK

Yeah. I think you are right about Tanya. I don't really have much in the way of original art right this moment, but I will talk with her. She has a friend from Spinnaker who came in with some AWESOME original artwork for that same game. He seemed like a natural to come in and work here, too. Tanya has some other clients who she has to serve and that makes her schedule a little bizarre, but that's something we would have to live with. Tanya's rate is not bad for the kind of work that is involved. To me, her rate is a real bargain.

Infocom makes it to the Olympics:

Date: 30 Sep 1988 1259-EDT
Subject: Trademark violation?
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I don't know if anyone out there was watching the Olympics Wednesday night at about 2AM, but a fine young runner named Zorko moved to the finals of the 5000 meter competition. What I'm unclear about is whether he pronounces his name Zork-oh or Zork-zero.

Date: 30 Sep 1988 1324-EDT
Subject: Re: Trademark violation?
From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
To: MARC

What nationality is Mr. Zorko?

Date: 30 Sep 1988 1520-EDT
Subject: [Re: Trademark violation?]
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: SWG

Yugoslavia.

Date: 10 Nov 1988 1211-EST
Subject: Apple II game size, and hints
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
To: zilch-users at FRED

The maximum size of a YZIP game is about 1152 pages (589824 bytes), plus pictures. For a game to ship on two Apple II disks, the maximum size is smaller, but fuzzier:

111 pages (56832) of preload. This is a hard limit.

810 pages (3 sides at 270 pages/side) (414720) of game (exclusive of preload) and pictures. This gives a total of 921 pages, or 471552 bytes.

There will inevitably be some duplication of data on the disks, say 30 pages; that brings us to 891 pages (456192). In addition, if you have big segments (the CASTLE segment in Zork 0 is 204 pages by itself, if you include pictures), there's great potential for wasted space, because the segments won't fit cleanly together. Zork 0 is 912 pages, but it doesn't fit in the 921 pages available.

However, there are 70-odd pages available on the preload surface (which also contains the interpreter). This can't be used for normal game code, because the parser lives on the flip side--you'd be flipping disks once or twice a move. It can be used for hints, since the hint code doesn't require the parser, thus increasing the size limit by the number of pages used exclusively by hints.

If a game breaks the two-disk limit, it gets an extra 540 pages for each additional disk (in addition to earning Dornbrook's undying wrath). It may not break the 111-page preload limit, nor may it break the 381-page segment 0+preload limit.

There are two compilation flags used in CLUES.ZIL that control segmentation:

SEGMENTED-HINTS, if true, assumes a slightly different form for the arguments to CONSTRUCT-HINTS: each chapter title is followed by a segment name that the chapter is associated with (if SEGMENTED-HINTS is false, the segment name is just ignored, so it never hurts to include it); the hint strings for that chapter will become part of the named segment, rather than the HINTS segment. In this mode, the code for displaying hints goes into segment 0. The purpose of this is to eliminate the colossal HINTS segment.

SPLIT-HINTS, if true, builds two separate segments: HINTS and CLUES. The HINTS segment contains all the strings; the CLUES segment contains all the code. This allows the Zork 0 hints to live on the preload surface

without the code for displaying them, since the sum of the two is more than the 80-page limit. In this case, the CLUES segment lives on surfaces three and four, and the HINTS segment lives on surface one.

Questions —>taa

Date: 14 Nov 1988 1103-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: 2 things To: JOEY

1) I spoke to Dan Horn on Friday. His company is interested in buying Mac Cornerstone. I explained that no such animal existed, but he'd like you to call him. I hope you have his number, because I don't.

2) I'd like a hard drive for my Mac. What do I need to do?

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 89 09:14:57 EST From: jon (Jon Palace)
To: taa, jd Subject: ibm

When Joe Y. saw my first draft of the IBM Ref. Card, he was appalled at the length of two sections in particular: Making a Backup Copy, and Loading the Story. He suggested putting all the relevant info in a batch file on disk.

I have significantly edited the sections; they are quite short. Is there some advantage to having the info on disk?

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 89 10:13:32 EST From: taa (Tim Anderson)
To: jon Subject: ibm

Well, the advantage is that we don't have to print it, so revisions are much cheaper. The disadvantage is that the losers have to find the file, and it takes up precious disk space.

I wouldn't think the Loading the Story section would be that enormous these days, given that most of the switches no longer have meaning. JD's mail address is jdarnold, by the way.

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 89 10:09:37 EDT From: Stu Galley <swg@portland>
Subject: demo versions To: marc@spike, pdl@spike Cc: swg@portland

Rob Sears asked me to cons up demo versions of Shogun and Journey for use in retail stores and, probably, trade shows. This is THE BEST way to encourage sales at retail, according to store managers.

You can see how I did this for Zork Zero by finding SLIDE-SHOW in /home/development/zork0/prologue.zil. Basically I added the GLOBAL DEMO-VERSION? so that I could make the demo version just by editing the DAT file and re-zapping; then the SLIDE-SHOW routine shows off the most exciting features of the game instead of running it as usual.

So, what would you like to show off in your new game? Your ideas, along with Rob's and mine, would be very helpful in designing this frob.

Scheduling Original Graphics

At Project Start, identify Who, What and How:

Identify the Artist and make a first pass at evaluating his skills. Keep the artist's speed and aesthetic ability in mind.

Develop a list of graphics needs for the product - this should include the screen layout, the basic graphics scheme (such as using illustrations as in YZIP, or tiles as in Aliens), any character profiles and the boot screen and victory screen.

Identify the technology that will be used to create the graphics and the technology that will integrate them into the product. Project start is the time to identify special technology needs for the artist (such special draw software or graphics tablets) or to bring up special graphics technologies (such as creating digitized pictures).

The Scheduling Process

Scheduling will be structured in the same way as software scheduling. There will be milestones that will have to be achieved by the artist. The milestones break down the work into more manageable tasks which allow the producer and the developer to check the progress and quality of the project.

The Milestones

Prototypes

The first prototype is the producer's first chance to judge quality and to estimate a schedule for completion. To have a complete first prototype the artist should have one of each of these graphics:

a graphic with a representative human figure
any location scene or landscape
a full-screen or big picture
an animation sequence (if appropriate)
any unique graphic as determined by the producer (such as digitized pictures)

The artist should also provide the time used to complete this prototype, a time estimate for completion and an estimate of the final picture size.

The producer should do a technical check-up on the graphics at First Prototype, to see if the image will fit in the graphics window, check on the amount of compression that can be performed on the image and to feel good that the graphics can be integrated into the game code.

The producer would determine if there is a need to have more prototypes during development and should schedule them if needed.

Alpha

Alpha is reached when the artist has enough graphics completed to play the game. So, if the game requires a certain set of graphics to be playable at alpha then those graphics will determine the Alpha milestone. Alpha is also the last chance to determine if the artist can complete the project or not. Graphics should reach Alpha before the game code reaches Alpha. Alpha graphics should also be the point where the developer and producer make a final review for the graphics needs for the project. If there are additional graphics needed or any changes to be made to the existing graphics, now is the time to do it.

Beta

Beta is achieved when all graphics are completed and are integrateable into the Beta game code. Beta is the last chance to make touch-ups and aesthetic changes to the graphics themselves. Beta graphics will occur before beta software.

Final

When the developer, and producer agree that there are no more graphic changes to be made, the graphics are final and are ready to ship.

Notes about Infocom's competition

Date: 19 Aug 1984 0056-EDT
Subject: IBM
From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: marc at ZORK cc: md

I was talking to my sister tonight. She moved from Chemistry to programming at IBM a while back. Her group in Austin (about 4000 of the 6000 people who work for IBM at that location) has become part of the Entry Systems Division (of PC fame).

Evidently they have an internal computer bulletin board for program ideas. Recently someone mentioned Zork on the bulletin board. This has led to an intense discussion of Infocom products, to the exclusion of anything else on the bulletin board recently. She says that everyone thinks our stuff is the highest quality on the market. People were speculating on how we do it - discussing parsers, etc. So far, she says, they seem stumped.

Let's hope they stay that way and forget it.

Date: 20 Aug 1984 0930-EDT
Subject: Re: IBM
From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: MD

Good lord! That's all we need is competition from IBM!

(Personal/home computers were considered toys until IBM made their "Personal Computer". Today, a "PC" is synonymous with and IBM-compatible computer running Microsoft's "Windows", ignoring all other brands of computers and operating systems.)

Date: 16 Nov 1984 1647-EST
Subject: Amusing Xmas Software
From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

Flip through the December issue of COMPUTE! for the following ads:

— "Zyll," a text adventure game from IBM.
— MAD Magazine's "Spy Vs. Spy" game, in amazing split-screen SimulVision(TM).
— Not one, but TWO breakdancing games, "Break Street" from Creative Software and "Breakdance" from Epyx. "You'll soon become a break dancing expert …"
— "Raid Over Moscow" from Access Software. Their slogan: "Play it like there's no tomorrow!" Seriously.
— No Trillium ads.

Date: 12 Dec 1984 1512-EST
Subject: British micros
From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

I want to try out adventure games from Melbourne House in England, but some of them run only on Spectrum 48K or BBC Model B or BBC/Electron, probably with cassette-tape storage. Others run on Commodore 64, but they probably also require a tape player.

Does anyone know whether we have one of these, or access to one, or plans to acquire either?

A game concept similar to A Mind Forever Voyaging:

Date: 13 Dec 1984 1105-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: system dynamics To: SWG

I haven't written the algorithms yet, and I'm not familiar with Forrester's models. I'm sure they'll be incredibly simpler than his or any other professional/real-world models.

The game is intended to be more sobering and thought-provoking than either entertaining or educational. I'd be worried about trying to make it "educational" because it would probably mean that I'd have to pay more attention to reality and accuracy and accepted standards in the modelling, and I'd rather have more flexibility and editorial control.

There's an educational game from Spinnaker called "President's Choice" which I've asked Hollywood to acquire. It claims that you play The President and are able to see the results of decisions that you make.

Date: 11 Mar 1985 1015-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: C-64 tape unit To: DA at ZORK, TOM at ZORK cc: IMPS at ZORK

While I was in Caldor on Saturday, I noticed these frobbies on sale. So I bought one. Now we can try out "The Hobbit" and "Snowball" from England!

Date: 29 Mar 1985 1033-EST From: Gary T. Brennan <GARY at ZORK>
Subject: MINDWHEEL To: IMPS at ZORK

Does anyone know where MINDWHEEL wandered off to last night? I am supposed to try to analyze the way the parser works and compare it to ours. (Theirs is obviously the BRAND X parser.) Please drop it off at testing.

Thanks, GARY

P.S. The Synapse parser has no common sense in it.

Date: 29 Mar 1985 1522-EST From: Gary T. Brennan <GARY at ZORK>
Subject: SYNAPSE To: TESTERS at ZORK

Mindwheel was crashed with the classic two containers inside each other bug!

Date: 1 Apr 1985 1235-EST From: Gary T. Brennan <GARY at ZORK>
Subject: MINDWHEEL PARSER To: TESTERS at ZORK

The Mindwheel Parser Report is available in handwritten copies to anyone interested. Get them from GARY.

Date: 21 Aug 1985 1415-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Racter To: imps at ZORK

The library now has a copy of "Racter" (IBM PC version), an interactive raconteur or conversationalist. I tried it and thought it was an intriguing update on the Eliza concept. A transcript is posted by my office door. Others are published in "The Policeman's Beard is Half Constructed", also in the library.

Date: 24 Oct 1985 1455-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: The Wonderful World of EZIP To: IMPS at ZORK

Another nice thing THE KOBAYASHI ALTERNATIVE has is color. I've scheduled a meeting with Ed Black to discuss the possibility of adding color control to EZIP (the new MME already has it). If anyone has any input or comments, let me know.

Date: 20 Jan 1987 1405-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: Re: Mind Mirror To: SWG

I'll try and work it out. I've kind of given up trying to trade with EA, because their 'product exchange' contact is extremely detail-oriented, and tedious to deal with. I'll let you know...

Date: 20 Feb 1987 1045-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Sincere Flattery To: IMPS at FRED

New product info from the lips of Ken Williams (of Sierra Online and "Hackers" fame), via the miracle of CompuServe:

> "LEISURE-SUIT LARRY IN THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS is in good taste but definitely goes way beyond LEATHER GODDESSES. It's a spoof of the traveling salesmen who tend to hang out in the bar at Holiday Inn and tend to dress like John Travolta in Saturday Night Fever. It's being designed by Al Loew (who did THE BLACK CAULDRON and KING'S QUEST III). I expect it out in about 90 days."

Date: 3 Mar 1987 1749-EST From: Gary Brennan <GARY at FRED>
Subject: SPACE QUEST To: EVERYBODY at FRED

DID ANYONE MAKE A BACK UP COPY? THE ORIGINAL IS TRASHED.

Date: 11 May 1987 1639-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Merges To: imps at FRED

Spectrum Holobyte (of "Gato" and "Orbiter" fame) has merged with Nexa Corporation (the programmers of "Portal") to become Sphere, Inc., a new company owned by Pergamon Press of London, a company famous for its British game software.

Date: 7 Jun 1987 1242-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Balance of Power To: imps at FRED

I found a copy of Chris Crawford's book about BALANCE OF POWER. Most of it is dry political theory, but Chapter 8, "How Balance of Power Was Created," makes for interesting reading. The book's in my office if you're interested.

Date: 20 Jul 1987 1203-EDT From: Steve Watkins <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
To: da

Are you the keeper of the lost Atari Rogue??? Rumor has it you hide the disk from Max because he was possessed by it. I (as well as Gary and Brian would like me to) have a copy of the game. It gets boring here at night.

Date: 18 Sep 1987 1059-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: For Your Amusement To: Imps at FRED

I got it from Chris. Chris got it from Joel. Joel got it from Byron Preiss. You can get it from me.

It is a very lengthy manuscript which claims to be a game adaptation of Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles. Feel free to look at it.

Byron also sent to Joel (who gave it to Chris who gave it to me and I'm trying to give to you) "an Arthur C. Clark-like book," in manuscript form. Again, please feel free to look at it.

Both of these manuscripts are in my office.

Date: 11 Nov 1987 1606-EST From: Truly Gas Tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: acquisitions To: DA

You could add to your list of product trades that Tara received the C-64 versions of "The Pawn" and "Guild of Thieves" from Firebird. I left them in the micro room.

Date: 13 Jul 1988 0921-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Amusing Mail To: EVERYBODY at FRED

>From CompuServe:

#: 129984 S14/Vendor Support Fm: Sierra On-Line Inc. 72166,166
12-Jul-88 23:53:41 To: Infocom 76703,4270 (X)
Sb: Infocom Graphics

Brian:

As a person with some amount of experience with both graphic and text adventures, I must say that "all text" games are definitely superior. My recommendation is that you ask management to abandon all efforts in this direction immediately.

Thank You, Ken Williams

P.S. <being serious for a minute> What are you guys up to? None of the messages have ever said whether or not your games contain animation or whether they are similar to ours (with a central character you walk around). I heard rumors of an imminent press conference where the first game will be shown. As soon as the info is available let me know at once. For some reason, they neglected to send out my invitation.

I'm looking forward to see what you've been up to. As you are aware I REALLY am a fan of Infocom's work and am sure I will enjoy your new genre of games.

Date: 29 Aug 1988 1738-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Fool's Errand
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Does anyone know the whereabouts of the Infocopy of The Fool's Errand?

Date: 30 Jan 1989 1133-EST
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: ultima III
To: everybody at FRED

Anyone know if we have a copy of Ultima III for the Mac?

Z

***New Zork Times* and *The Status Line* information**

The New Zork Times inception:

Date: 22 Jan 1984 2333-EST
Subject: New Zork Times

From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: testers at ZORK

Hello Folks,

Infocom's first consumer newsletter is scheduled to go out in February. It is intended to be similar to The New Zork Times put out by the old Zork Users Group. It should be informative, but fun - and that's where you come in.

Rather than have a newsletter which sounds like ad copy or press releases, I'd like to see writing in the style of our games. The best way to achieve that is to get all of you involved in the writing. I would like to propose Saturday, February 4 for the New Zork Times (or whatever it ends up being called) writing party. Party to commence at 12:30 pm with brainstorming lunch.

Suggested articles include:

- New Products Coming Soon
- Interview with an Author
- Crossword Puzzle of Infocom Words
- Naming a Game (including some which didn't make it)
- Things Which Never Got into Games
- Infocom's Development System: How We Do It
- Interesting Bugs
- Letters/Comments from Players
- Summary of Reviews
- Package: From Concept to Reality
- Puzzles based on the games
- Special promotions/coupons
- Discussion of issues customers complain about or suggest such as the addition of graphics
- "What Would You Call Them?" Contest (Name the category)
- What Goes Into Making an Infocom Game (development calendar)
- FUN (Cartoons, Hack Articles, SEM's Yak Facts Column, etc.)

Other ideas are encouraged.

RSVP.

Date: 23 Jan 1984 0952-EST
Subject: Re: New Zork Times

From: David G. Anderson <DA at ZORK>
To: MD

I LIKE INTERVIEW WITH AN AUTHOR, THINGS THAT NEVER GOT IN GAMES, WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THEM CONTEST, NAMES THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT. I THINK I WOULD STEER AWAY FROM ANY DEVELOPMENT TYPE STORIES AS THIS MIGHT ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SEND US GAMES.

COUNT ME IN FOR THE WRITING FEST SATURDAY! AS AN EDITOR OF A HIGHLY SUCESSFUL NEWSLETTER MYSELF, I AM ALWAYS READY TO GIVE A HAND TO A NEW PUBLICATION.

HOLLYWOOD MURDOCH

Date: 23 Jan 1984 1001-EST
Subject: Re: New Zork Times

From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
To: MD

One thing about the development calendar: if we mention outside testing, we'll be deluged.

Date: 23 Jan 1984 1059-EST
Subject: NZT

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: MD

All your ideas for the New New Zork Times sound terrific. Too bad our other publications won't be as entertaining or readable.

Unfortunately, if everything goes according to schedule, I be somewhere in the vicinity of Baltimore on route to Florida at noon on Saturday, February 4.

Date: 23 Jan 1984 1430-EST
Subject: Re: NZT

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: MD

Why not make it this coming Saturday instead?

Date: 9 Mar 1984 1559-EST`
Subject: NZT

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: MD

1) Looks incredibly terrific.
2) I think that all the headlines should be in the same typeface. I count at least three. Also, they should all be consistently caps & smalls. The headlines on page 4 are all caps.
3) The "You Can Do It" continuation on page 2 is a bit confusing.
4) There's a lot of excess space at the top of Page 3; also, the page is pretty "gray". Why not have a sandwich? I don't have a favorite sentence from the article for such a sandwich, but there are several reasonable candidates.
5) "Weather" in the upper right corner of page 1 should have a box like the other corner.
6) It would be nice if there were space for people to write their name & address on the puzzle entry form.
7) Isn't it traditional to have some kind of bullet that lets you know when you've reached the end of an article? TIME, for example, uses a small black square.

Date: 12 Apr 1984 1340-EST
Subject: NZT ARTICLE

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

I'm thinking about writing an article for the next (or next to next) issue of the New Zork Times on frequently-asked questions by customers on global issues. Questions I've thought of so far...

WHY DON'T YOUR GAMES HAVE GRAPHICS?

WHY ARE YOUR GAMES SO DIFFICULT?

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY "RED HERRINGS" IN YOUR GAMES?

WHY AREN'T YOUR GAMES LARGER?

WHY ARE YOUR PACKAGES SO ELABORATE?

WHY ARE YOUR PRICES SO HIGH?

Opinion on these questions? Suggestions for other questions?

Date: 13 Apr 1984 1147-EST
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NZT
To: md

Don't forget that you're writing the InfoNews Roundup. Also, I've dumped a bunch of material into the file KUDOS.NZT — could you add anything I've left out and then whip it into an article?

Date: 2 May 1984 1710-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NZT PUZZLE
To: TESTERS at ZORK

The results so far:

ANSWER	# OF OCCURENCES	COMMENTS
128.000	11	The correct answer
107.773	13	I'm also excepting this answer
30.000	6	The most common wrong answer
(others)	16	Includes 1 FedEx and 1 Special Delivery entry
Total entries	46	Puzzle deadline: July 1, 1984

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.

This appeared in the Summer 1984 issue.

Date: 24 Nov 1984 0203-EST
From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: New Zork Times
To: everybody at ZORK

I'd like to get the next issue of the New Zork Times out early for a change, with a target mailing date of January 7. To reach that we would need final copy by December 7 (a week from Friday).

The primary articles for this issue would be:

- Hitchhikers Guide sponsorship on public radio (call your local station if they aren't running it)
- Cornerstone - why the reader should buy it
- Cornerstone - why Infocom did it (how does it fit in)
- Info Saturdays and Sundays to meet demand

- Infocom at Comdex
- Possible article on the real history of Zork
- Possible human interest on how Cornerstone was created (this could wait until the next issue)
- The usual Puzzle, puzzle results, letters, Yak facts, etc.

Those interested in writing for this issue should meet in the "middle level" conference room at 3:00 on Tuesday November 27. RSVP.

Date: 24 Nov 1984 1634-EST From: Joy Pulver <JOY at ZORK>
Subject: Re: New Zork Times To: MD

Tim sez he will cheerfully write the real history of Zork.... -Joy

Date: 8 Dec 1984 0322-EST From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Future NZT To: da, jon, blank, sem, paul, jennifer, pdl, taa, jeff, swg

It's never too early to begin to think about future issues of the NZT. I am still considering doing some special issues such as The New Zorker (with appropriate slick paper, color, and cartoons) or GruesWeek. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Already lined up for the next mailing are: another installment of The History of Zork, a photo-essay by Paul Gross (possibly on the Infocom environment - current and new), and Paul DiLascia's The Making of Cornerstone. Other suggestions are encouraged. It would be nice to get some of the work done early for a change.

Thanks for all your help on this and previous issues.

Mike

P.S. Marc, don't forget to create the NZT distribution list with the above names.

Date: 28 Jan 1985 1141-EST From: MCS (c/o LISA at ZORK)
Subject: Cornerstone newsletter To: SEM, msb, pdl, swg, jw, prof, blank cc: LISA

We (Business Product Support) are getting together a newsletter for end users of Cornerstone. We want it to stand a chance of being read, so it at least ought to have a decent name. Suggestions are being welcomed (serious and otherwise).

thanks kindly, Mark (Sawtelle)

Date: 28 Mar 1985 1747-EST From: Jenni <JENNIFER at ZORK>
To: Everybody at ZORK

I am taking a poll, and would appreciate as many responses as possible (the questions are easy):

1) What's your favorite color for t-shirts (NOT undershirts--t-shirts with printing on them)?

2) Would you wear a black t-shirt with writing on it?

3) If your color choices were only light blue and black, which would you prefer?

Thanks for taking 75 nanoseconds to help me conduct some marketing research.

Date: 5 Jun 1985 1120-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: God To: IMPS at ZORK

We got a brief letter from yet another in a long series of religious wackoes. It's on the bulletin board in the cafeteria, and it was chastising us for using the phrase "one of God's many mistakes" in one of our games. It doesn't mention the game, however, so (since I have nothing else to do, of course) I searched through all the sources for that reference. It doesn't seem to exist. Does anyone recognize it?

— The Royal Order for Debunking Religious Cretins

("One of God's many mistakes" was from the "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" book and game.)

Date: 10 Jul 1985 1126-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: History of Zork To: jenNIFER cc: swg

I've written about 2,000 words so far, and it may well be 3,000 before I'm done. Does that seem to fit your plans, or can't you tell?

Here are two ideas for illustrations:

1. original (1980) company letterhead, which I can supply;
2. cover art from original Personal Software Zork package.

I don't think we have the actual original, so we'd have to reproduce from a sample manual; does that sound feasible?

Date: 10 Jul 1985 1451-EDT From: Jenni <Jennifer at ZORK>
Subject: Re: History of Zork To: SWG

I'm not sure how long 3,000 words is—it's not a meaningful measurement to me. I'm certainly not worried about it being too long, as I consider it a central piece. Other things can be cut to accommodate it if necessary.

Company letterhead is a good idea, and I'm fairly sure Customer Support has an old Personal Software manual (I don't think we have original art, since Personal Software designed it). We MIGHT have to shoot a black and white photo to get the half tones right, but Paul Gross could do that in a pinch.

Thanks for keeping me updated.

Date: 12 Jul 1985 1221-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Yak facts To: Jennifer cc: SWG

"The yak's closest living relatives are the water buffalo, the sacred cow, and the platypus (by marriage)."

Date: 20 Sep 1985 1003-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: History of Zork To: jennifer cc: swg

I'm really concerned that the work I put into writing the history will be wasted, if most readers get totally lost in the middle. If it's too late to fix the jumbled story, how about printing a small erratum to insert in each copy? In fact, I've already written it:

ERRATUM:

Due to incredibly complex but boring circumstances, portions of "A History of Zork" were printed out of order. Everyone disclaiming responsibility for this error has been sacked. 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 farther!

A. After reading "'Come here, Mr. Watson; I want you!'", start reading from "Mike Dornbrook was enlisted …"

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.

This article appeared in the Fall 1985 issue.

Date: 20 Sep 1985 1038-EDT From: Jenni <Jennifer at ZORK>
Subject: Re: History of Zork To: SWG

Since we have already gone to press, correcting the mechanical will cost us too much time and money. However, your idea of an erratum is good, and what you wrote is funny. I will look into inserting an additional piece. The insertion won't cost us any more in handling charges, but will increase our printing and paper costs. I'll let you know what I find out by the end of the day.

Date: 30 Sep 1985 1731-EDT From: Jenni <Jennifer at ZORK>
Subject: Re: History of Zork To: SWG

No, I didn't resolve it. However, the mailing is being held up because we don't have mailing labels ready. I would suggest you talk to Michi about getting it printed and inserted, as she will be wrapping up this mailing. I'm sure we have the time to get it done, the only question is whether we can afford it. I THINK Gayle will also be involved in getting this out the door, but am not sure. I'm sorry it's one of the things I just didn't finish.

Date: 25 Oct 1985 1352-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: punkins To: FUNCOM at ZORK cc: SWG

I have five small pumpkins here, already gutted and cleaned, just waiting to be carved into jack-o'-lanterns at Friday party.

They could just sit by the punch bowl and wait for carvers, first come first served. Or maybe you want something more organized.

In any case, we have Fritzi to thank for the idea and the work.

Date: 4 Dec 1985 0931-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Halloween To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

SEE Betty and her Talking Ape!

SEE Jeff O'Neill and Dave Lebling in cahoots with Ronnie!

SEE Linda C. belly dancing!

SEE Mike Dornbrook in an embarassing pose!

You guessed it! It's InfoHalloween '85, in AMAZING Three Dimensions!

Date: 25 Nov 1985 1212-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NZT ARTICLE To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

I'm thinking about an NZT article entitled "The Sincerest Form of Flattery." It would point out how many companies are trying to break into the IF market, how their styles are usually so similar to ours, how their packages so frequently resemble our, how their manuals are ripped-off from our format, how so many claim that their adventures are in the Infocom Style, or as good as Infocom, or "Better Than Zork," etc.

Can people remember the names of specific products that made such claims or had such similarities? And can anyone locates any ads that made such claims?

From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: NZT ARTICLE To: SEM cc: SWG

For starters:

Hayden's (?) I.F. packaging is a cheap rip-off of ours.
Datamost "Earthly Delights" says it imitates Infocom.
You've already seen the manual for Pryority's newer game.
Of course, "BTZ" has appeared in the press, but I don't think Synapse actually uses the term in public.

(BTZ = Better Than Zork)

Date: 11 Jul 1986 0947-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: InfoWedding To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Did it ever strike you as odd that there were never any good pictures taken at the "wedding" of Joel Berez and Jim Levy?

Well, now that the merger is complete, THE SHOCKING TRUTH CAN BE REVEALED!

Yes, there was ONE camera on the scene, secretly snapping away at every lascivious scene. A camera with four lenses instead of one ...

SEE! Joel take the holy vows, as Jim takes another drink!

SEE! Heidi and Curtis taking up the rear!

SEE! Jim Levy cavorting drunkenly in his veil! (This one is SCANDALOUS!)

SEE! The ONE and ONLY good picture of the CUTTING of the CAKE!

Yes! It's InfoWedding '86 ... in the MIRACLE of 3-D!

Date: 5 Dec 1986 1034-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: NZT To: DA, JEFF

In the past, the NZT has always featured many articles on the creation of products — the various development steps that took place along the road to a product's completion. Based on this fact, how about doing a "Making of

Zork" article. I think readers would like to hear how you two sowed your first interactive seeds, and about all the crazy stuff that went into it. The only thing I worry about is that it might be too self-gratifying — we'd have to guard against that. What do you guys think?

Vending Man

Date: 30 Jan 1987 1035-EST
Subject: TSL Contest

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: JON, MD

Gary sent me this message; I'm not sure whether he thought it should be a TSL puzzle; if we did it, it should certainly be a contest, not a puzzle.

Date: 29 Jan 1987 1536-EST
Subject: nzt contest

From: Lurkin' USA <GARY at FRED>
To: sem

Suggestion for a contest from an outside tester.

GREAT SOLUTIONS TO INFOCOM PUZZLES THAT DIDN'T WORK

Readers submit solutions to puzzles that they thought would work but didn't. Prizes for funniest solution, cleverest solution, maybe one more category. Judges opinion (us) final.

Date: 11 Mar 1987 1415-EST
Subject: CARTOONS

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

How many cartoons are running in this issue to the Status Line? Three? The three you have checked on the sheet are "You Are Here" and "You Have Died" and "Prepare for the End." And indeed, all three are not in the folder you gave me. However, "Evolution of an Attitude" is not checked, but it is also not in the folder you returned to me. That is the cartoon showing the Pac-Man turning into the Hitchhikers guy. Is this cartoon running? If not, where is it?

Date: 22 Jun 1987 1432-EDT
Subject: TSL PUZZLE

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

For the next issue, I'm doing a reprise of Puzzle #9, where I supplied short transcripts from fictitious interactive fiction versions of famous movies or TV shows. I then asked the reader to identify the name of the main character (that is, the character that the player was playing) in each transcript.

They were: Charles Foster Kane (CITIZEN KANE), Richard Blaine (CASABLANCA), Wile E. Coyote (ROADRUNNER CARTOONS), Robby the Robot (FORBIDDEN PLANET), Lionel Mandrake (DOCTOR STRANGELOVE), Lassie, and King Kong.

I'm looking for suggestions for movies and TV shows which this could be done for. I would welcome just title suggestions, or complete scripts as well (two or three turns long). Also, any ideas for a new twist, rather than a straight reprise of Puzzle #9? (Keep in mind ease of scoring. Puzzle #9 was one of the most difficult to score. Usually there's only one answer to be checked; in that case there were seven. Also, there are more gray areas in judging an answer.)

This puzzle appeared in the Fall 1987 issue.

Date: 22 Jun 1987 1724-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Cartoon Time
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Consider it your patriotic duty to vote on the Status Line cartoons posted outside the supply room (formerly the micro room, formerly formerly the library). Ballots to cast your votes can be found next to the cartoons.

Date: 23 Jun 1987 1645-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: PHOTOS
To: DA

I have black-and-white prints of Second City. I have color slides of Upper Sandusky.

Photos from both appeared in the Fall 1987 issue.

Date: 24 Jun 1987 1151-EDT
From: EverestEnzymeTrick <SEM at FRED>
Subject: MD on Cartoons
To: IMPS at FRED

Mikey voted for Cartoon #9 as his first choice. This is the cartoon of the hitchhiker with the sign "PHOBOS (F)OR BUST." Only 3 of 13 people voted for this cartoon. Mikey sez: "Given the response to #9 on the other forms, democracy seems a poor way to choose cartoons. It is the best/cleverest/most humorous submission I've seen in AGES!"

Date: 26 Jun 1987 1520-EDT
From: Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Status Line article
To: DA

PHSTAT.TXT is in <R1> ready for its rise to fame and stardom in the Status Line. Or do you want it in printed form?

Date: 6 Jul 1987 1132-EDT
From: EverestEnzymeTrick <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

They'll be in your hands tomorrow. Lose them and you're meat.

Date: 2 Jul 1987 1143-EDT
From: EverestEnzymeTrick <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

I don't remember. I have five, all color slides:

* billboard outside town
* county seat
* main street looking one direction
* main street looking the other direction
* the Upper Sandusky computer store

Should I bring them all in?

Only the billboard picture appeared in the newsletter (Fall 1987).

Date: 20 Jul 1987 1732-EDT From: EverestEnzymeTrick <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

Awesome sleuthing.

He must have been pretty surprised, considering how old that cartoon is.

Actually, I was going to call him once it became definite that we'd be printing it. Did he mention if he still wants Seastalker?

Steve has a few comments on the puzzle that appeared in the Fall 1987 issue:

Date: 30 Jul 1987 1155-EDT From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TSL COMMENTS To: DA

1. Having the puzzle on page 12 and the entry blank on page 11 really sucks — you won't be able to see both at the same time. Can't you put the puzzle on page 10?
2. If entry form and puzzle remain on non-facing pages, please move the note about where to find the entry blank from the end of the puzzle to the beginning (right after the headline) and put a box around it. Also put a heading on the entry blank like "entry form for puzzle 15". Also add "and rules" to the box about where to find the entry blank.
3. The type for the rules (on the entry blank) seems way to tiny.
4. There needs to be a blank line before "Answer: Vanna White"
5. In the puzzle, it would be nice if the headings (such as ** Number One **) could be larger...it's hard to visually separate each section, currently.
6. Try to avoid hyphenating "Satirists" in the Rambo script...it destroys the joke.
7. In the puzzle answers, the columns of words need to be re-arranged. It looks like it says "NAME OF THE DELBOR SON".
8. What the hell kind of headline is "LOOK, PUZZLE WINNERS" ???

In an unrelated comment — is that "describe IF in 25 words" contest serious!?!? That's the kind of thing I'd expect to see on a cereal box!

(Yes, it was. It became the basis for Infocom's "The Master Storytellers" catalog.)

Date: 30 Jul 1987 2040-EDT From: Risk Such Tart <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: TSL Stuff To: da

New stuff in K:productnews.pm, K:envelop.pm, and a seed that needs to grow in K:enchtril.pm

Date: 3 Aug 1987 0939-EDT From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
Subject: CARTOON BLURB To: DA, KIRSCH

In the upcoming issue of The Status Line, add a line to the Cartoon Contest Blurb pointing out that trilogies are not acceptable choices for winning the contest. (I'd say about 20% of the entrants ask for a trilogy.)

The cartoon blurb that we run every issue that tells people how to enter the cartoon contest...

Date: 4 Aug 1987 2211-EDT
Subject: CARTOON BLURB

From: Men Try Zeke's Vet <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

Idea. Instead of a cartoon blurb which runs every issue, how about a cartoon contest entry form? This would have certain advantages.

1. It would look distinctly different from an article.
2. It would have space for all the information, which people frequently omit. (What computer they own is often left out; several winners have even left out their address!)
3. It would make keeping track of entries easier. Currently, they all come in with random little scraps of paper in all shapes and sizes.
4. It will discourage people from sending letters with cartoon entries. People are always including letters like "Here's my cartoon entry...and my idea for a game...and here's a bug I found in Cutthroats...and by the way I moved here's my new address."

I'll write a cartoon contest entry form and put it in the TSL directory.

Date: 14 Aug 1987 1925-EDT
Subject: BORDER ZONE in NZT

From: Cut Skirt Rash <KIRSCH at FRED>
To: marc cc: da

Dear Marc,

The Winter issue of The Status Line (formerly The New Zork Times) will be on the newsstands, ahh.....errr... in the mail the last week of October, in time for Christmas gift giving. The featured releases will be BEYOND ZORK, BORDER ZONE, and B-VALUE Z-PACKS. We here at the offices of TSL would be honored to have you author the feature article. Please let us know whether or not you can by Tuesday, August 18. Thanks.

Date: 17 Aug 1987 1744-EDT
Subject: Re: BORDER ZONE in NZT

From: Cut Skirt Rash <KIRSCH at FRED>
To: DA

I received a note from him asking what should be in it, on Friday night. I told him. I've heard nothing since.

According to Mikey, the further you go back, the more likely it is that the author wrote the story. Once we gained the capability to do it in-house (i.e. Elizabeth), it went there. Now, she's too busy too.

Ahhhh, the editorial life.....

Date: 21 Aug 1987 1349-EDT
Subject: TSL PUZZLE

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

For the puzzle in this issue of The Status Line, I'm going to combine to of my puzzle ideas: Zork trivia combined with the number-with-associated-initials idea. I need help coming up with them. Examples:

(answers below)	
15 R. in the M.	15 Rooms in the Maze
4 C. in the T. R.	4 Cakes in the Tea Room
10 T. to S. the D.	10 Treasures to Satisfy the Demon
4 M. R. B.	4 Machine Room Buttons

Suggestions?

Date: 21 Aug 1987 1635-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TSL Humor Piece To: KIRSCH, DA, JON, PDL

Please give me suggestions for <SEM>PUNCH-COUNTERPUNCH.TSL

Date: 31 Aug 1987 1958-EDT From: Cut Skirt Rash <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Winter tsl contest To: da

Yes, its the return of the datemeister!!!
Double Date with GAB & DEB!!!!!
see me for details

Date: 3 Sep 1987 1131-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TSL To: KIRSCH, DA

I've put the TSL puzzle in the TSL directory. It's called PUZZLE-16.TXT.
I decided to use 15 (for a 3x5 grid). (You'll help score them, right Stu?) I'll give the artwork to Wood.

See the Winter 1987 issue for this puzzle.

Date: 3 Sep 1987 1318-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TSL To: KIRSCH, DA

I put a puzzle-related letter and my reply in the TSL directory. It's called PUZZLE-LETTER.TXT. The letter was complaining about Puzzle #14 requiring knowledge of too many Infocom games; my reply explains that we like a mix — including puzzles which require knowledge of only one game or even none at all. You throw it in with the mailbag, use it as filler on the puzzle page, line a bird cage with it...

This letter was published in the Winter 1987 issue.

Date: 3 Sep 1987 1537-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: tsl To: KIRSCH cc: DA

PUZZLE14-ANSWERS.TXT is in the TSL directory. DA has the associated graphic. Stu has the names and addresses of the T-shirt winners.

Date: 13 Oct 1987 1626-EDT From: Ick! Trash Rust! <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: winter tsl To: da

Have Kathy ship the 15000 Status Lines to New Jersey as cheaply as possible. Bill's got plenty to keep him busy and doesn't need these soon. Mule train is fine, but I think that the Postal Service might be cheaper, though just as fast.

Date: 22 Oct 1987 1721-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: CARTOON To: DA

"Practicing Spells" and "Superman's Skeleton" didn't run, but they weren't in the folder of unused cartoons you gave me.

Both appeared in the Winter/Spring 1988 issue.

Date: 4 Nov 1987 1551-EST From: Bob Bates et al. <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: STATUS LINE ARTICLE To: da cc: swg

Dear Dave:

I have sent you a draft of the article about SHERLOCK for the Statue Line. Some of the copy is taken from the copy on the back of the game package that was written, I believe, by Elizabeth. I hope this is all right. Please feel free to add, subtract, or otherwise alter what I have sent you. If you have any questions, please be sure to give me a call.

Thanks for your help.
Bob Bates

Date: 23 Nov 1987 1247-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: ...and another To: KIRSCH, MD, DA

Have we ever explained in the TSL why we changed the package design? We should really point out the "failed browsable" concept in order to deflect the criticism that we switched packaging just to save money. (Just because a criticism is true is no reason not to deflect it.)

Also, we could point out that many people were unhappy that the manual was bound into the package. And any other excuses we could think of why the new packaging is a good idea.

Date: 23 Nov 1987 1238-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TSL IDEA To: KIRSCH, MD, DA

I'm in the middle of reading the latest set of Warranty Card comments, and I'm struck by the incredible diversity of very strong opinions about such issues as on-line hints, the new package style, game difficulty, etc. How about a TSL article, called something like "What's A Mother To Do?" giving a couple of loud and divergent comments on each item? It would be a good excuse to show how hard it is to please everyone and how we're constantly trying new things and haven't really stood completely still since 1979 and bear with us and buy every game and if you like it buy several.

Date: 22 Dec 1987 1741-EST From: Truly eat slag! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: [Re: xmas greetings (II)] To: KIRSCH, DA

Fodder for next year's Status Line?

Date: 22 Dec 1987 1522-EST
From: Bob Bates et al. <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: xmas greetings (II)
To: clr
cc: taa, gary, jon, liz, swg

```
AN INTERACTIVE CHRISTMAS

>ROAST CHESTNUTS ON OPEN FIRE
   You couldn't possibly open a fire.

>DREAM OF WHITE CHRISTMAS
   You can't see any white christmas here.

>JINGLE BELLS
   You jingle the bells.

>G
   You jingle the bells.

>JINGLE ALL THE WAY
 [You cannot refer to more than one object at a time with "jingle."]

>O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
   It is not likely that the town would respond.

>HARK THE HERALD ANGEL
   You have not committed the hark spell to memory

>GO A-WASSAILING
   You must specify a direction

>RUN OVER GRANDMA WITH REINDEER
   ZIP20 ERROR:  FATAL CRASH

>MERRY CHRISTMAS
   HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!
```

Date: 25 Jan 1988 1452-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: TSL Puzzle #17
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

There were 82 entries today — a one-day record!

The correct answer to the puzzle is “Leather Goddesses of Deimos.” The funniest answer so far: “Leather Goddesses of Demos.” I think I’ve seen them at some trade shows.

Date: 6 Jul 1988 1257-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: a puzzle
To: IMPS at FRED

What unusual feature do all of the following sentences share?

THE EARNEST TENANT TOOK KARL’S SPIGOT TO OUR RUINED DACHA.

FIVE EAGER RUNNERS SENT THEIR RED DESIGNER ROBES SWINGING GAILY.

MY YELLOW WIG GIVES SARAH HORRIBLE EARACHES.

DORA AND DAVE EVICTED DAGBERT THE ELF FROM MY YARD.

NO ONE EATS SALLY'S STEW WITHOUT TONGS.

Once you "gotten it" — can you think of a way to use this or similar things as an IF puzzle?

All five examples were used in Puzzle #19 in the Fall 1988 issue. The solution to this puzzle (and Puzzle #20) was never published. The answer is that the last letter in each word becomes the first letter in the next word.

Date: 11 Jan 1989 1607-EST
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: NAME OF THE DAY
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

We got a puzzle entry today from Walla Walla, Washington from someone name Christian Fletcher.

Z

Unpublished NZT & TSL articles

The following GNU NEWS did appear on page 5 of the Fall 1985 issue of "The New Zork Times" (Volume IV, Number 4). However, only the first three gnu facts were published, due to space considerations.

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 N.Z.T. 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 N.Z.T. now begins a series of public-service messages designed to enlighten its readership on the subject of gnus.

Did you gknow...

- 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"?
- that the white-tailed gnu, or black wildebeest [Connochaetes gnou] is extinct in the wild?
- that the brindled gnu, or blue wildebeest [C. taurinus], is abundant on African grasslands, forming migrating herds of a million individuals or more?
- that both sexes of gnus grow horns?
- that grazing gnus are often bothered by gnats?
- that gnus studying geology often confuse gneiss with schist?
- that gnus require large quantities of water and have been gknown to eat ice during the cold season, if they can get it?
- that a herd of gnus can migrate less than seven thousand miles in a single day?
- that a gnu's only defense against predators is running away? (Gnarled old gnus tell an old gnu story about one that tried (and failed) to scare off a big cat by gnashing its teeth and gnawing its gknees.)
- that a gnewborn gnu can stand up only five minutes after birth, follow its mother after ten minutes, and run as fast as an adult after 24 hours?
- that gnus in flight toss their heads, prance, and throw up their heels?
- that baby gnus learn to fly only when the parents push them out of the gnest?
- that a gnu can tell time by observing the shadow of its raised tail, which is gknown as a gnomon?
- that gnus, although gnative to Africa, sometimes wander as far gnorth as Zurich, where they are gknown as gnomes?
- that a popular African rock group is gknown as Ghuey Glewis and the Gnus?
- that a gnu was almost elected to the Toledo, Ohio, city council? (It lost in a recount.)
- that a group of religious fanatics in Tibet believes that St. Botolph has been re-incarnated as a gnu on a local farm?

Date: 5 Jun 1985 1120-EDT
Subject: God

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

We got a brief letter from yet another in a long series of religious wackoes. It's on the bulletin board in the cafeteria, and it was chastising us for using the phrase "one of God's many mistakes" in one of our games. It doesn't mention the game, however, so (since I have nothing else to do, of course) I searched through all the sources for that reference. It doesn't seem to exist. Does anyone recognize it?

— The Royal Order for Debunking Religious Cretins

("One of God's many mistakes" was from the "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" book and game.)

RELIGIOUS FRINGE MAILBAG

Never before has an article in The Status Line (or its predecessor, The New Zork Times) generated as much mail as the article in our last issue *[Volume VI Number 1, Winter/Spring 1987]* which documented some of the hate mail we receive for writing and selling magical fantasies, which (we are told) promote all sorts of satanism and other evils.

Thanks to everyone who wrote; here's a sampling:

* * * * *

Dear Sirs,

I have just read the article in your paper about the religious fringe. I think that the people who think your games are Satanistic are off their rockers. I am really into your games like the Zork games and Enchanter games. They are just plain fantasy games with nothing wrong with them. If there is anything wrong with these kinds of games why don't they ban books like The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings? If you guys ever stopped selling any of the Enchanter or Zork games, there wouldn't be much left to play.

Daniel Marcinkevicius
Richmond, VA

[If they had the power, I'm sure that the people who want us to stop selling Zork and Enchanter would be delighted to ban The Lord of the Rings. And what do you mean, "there wouldn't be much left to play"? There'd still be our mysteries and adventures and comedies and science fiction stories... — SEM]

* * * * *

Gentlemen,

I have just read about the "Religious Fringe" in The Status Line, volume VI number 1, and I laughed my head off. You see, I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and people think we are a cult and I laugh at them just as I laugh at the people who call you a cult.

I have owned and played all your games except for Hollywood Hijinx, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, and Bureaucracy, and at no point in my life have I felt the Devil in me. I do not sit in graveyards, chase people with an axe, or bite the heads off of chickens. I do not see the point of people saying you are the Devil. If that were true, all who played your games would be possessed and I am not.

It just makes me angry that people would say such things about you or your great games. Keep up the good work and keep the games coming.

Sincerely,
A Normal Teenager
Richard Meservy
Mira Loma, CA

P.S. As you can see [from the enclosed photo], I am not abnormal or possessed.

[If you've really played Enchanter, then you're already possessed and doing our evil bidding. You're simply not aware of it. — SEM]

* * * * *

Dear Sirs,

I was offended at the article "Religious fringe has own ideas about Infocom," by Steve Meretzky. You implied with the article, and the departmental address indicated for response, that anyone who is religious, or considers religion an important aspect of life, is a nutcake, or an idiotic person who does nothing more than drool on themselves.

I have purchased the Sampler, Zork I and Zork II, as well as InvisiClues. I enjoyed the writing, as well as the mental gymnastics that the game afforded. I have also considered purchasing Infidel, because of the sampler. I enjoyed the Zork series, but became stuck in the game. I purchased the InvisiClues book for Zork II, and was shocked to find out that I had to summon a demon, complete with pentagram, black crystals, and so forth, and then had to make an offering to that demon. Although, in Zork I, I did not particularly care to go into Hades (I couldn't imagine anyone who would, for that matter) to acquire the crystal skull, I passed it off, because of the silly things that the book said. However, the Zork II incident was just too much. It is because of this incident that I never finished Zork II nor purchased Zork III.

If I am a "fringe" person, or a "frothing nutcake" in an idiotic stupor, so be it. However, before you label me with such negative connotations, remember, I am also a customer. I agree that there are a lot of extremists in Christianity, but there are extremists in every philosophy of life. It just seems that Christians are targets for ridicule more often than any other group. No one would dream of offending Jews for their faith. But for Christians, it is open game.

Thank you for providing this forum for me to respond to you. I guess you know that I won't be buying Leather Goddesses of Phobos.

Sincerely,
Rev. Arnold L. Chavers
Pastor, Crosby Baptist Church
Crosby, MS

[Yes, I consider your refusal to complete Zork II, because of the appearance of a fictional demon, to be an extreme position. However, I make an important distinction between you and the people I wrote about in my article. You find Zork II offensive and simply elect to stay away from it; those I wrote about demand that we stop selling Zork II. Censorship rather than avoidance is their response to something that offends them.

No one would dream of offending Jews for their faith? That is an amazingly false statement, and I can speak from personal experience, since I am a Jew. The reason that Christian extremists have been a frequent target in recent years is NOT because of their personal religious views, but because of their desire to get these views ramrodded into the law of our land. — SEM]

* * * * *

Dear sir,

I have never bothered to respond to articles in newspapers and journals. Your article in The Status Line demanded a response. I darned near herniated myself when I read your piece! Even now (several hours later) I'm chuckling so hard I'm having a hard time typing this. Keep up the good work! Now your games AND your articles are priceless!

Steve Meretzky, the author of the article, is so funny. He is hilarious! Never, never have I read anything so incredibly funny. If I didn't know any better I might actually believe that those responses came from REAL people!

I passed the article around and started a raging debate. Some of my friends are under the impression that someone actually voiced those objections. Would you settle this for us?

Cordially,
Ed Brumbaugh
Palo Alto, CA

[Sorry, Ed. Your friends are a better judge of human character. Every one of those letters was real. We didn't make up a thing. Honest. — SEM]

* * * * *

Dear Friends,

I am a thorough lover of your interactive fiction! I have Hitchhiker's Guide, and the sampler/tutorial, and I have enjoyed them very much. I also enjoy reading J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy, with all of its wizards, sorcerers, and balrogs. Beside all of this, I am a Christian, a Baptist pastor in fact! (Tolkien was also a Christian and a good friend of C.S. Lewis.) I would just like to apologize for all the hassle directed at you by the "frothing nutcakes." I would also like to assure you that not all Christians are "frothing nutcakes"; many of us are real fans of your products, and not only fans but customers. We even have minds that are logical enough to play interactive fiction, and enjoy it!

I became a Christian quite logically after taking biology in high school where they taught me that uncreated clouds of gas and dust came together and formed into simple life forms, which also defied the law of entropy and became, with no outside agency, higher and higher forms of life that eventually reached an intelligence level that was capable of writing interactive fiction. When that absurdity was presented to me, I began to look for a Creator, and I believe I have found Him. Christianity today is plagued by "frothing nutcakes," a point made even more clear over the past few months by such visible personalities as Oral Roberts and Jim Baker [sic], but please don't judge the whole by the few; we may not all be "frothing nutcakes!" Again, I am sorry that you have been offended by these few — we all have!

Well, gotta go, there seems to be a bulldozer outside so I'd better get this in the mail.

Sincerely,
Timothy K. McNichols
Riverside, CA

[It seems that we're in perfect agreement on TV evangelists. Our views on Creation vs. Evolution are another matter entirely. For one thing, evolution is not a violation of the law of entropy. Entropy can only be said to increase within a closed system (such as the planet Earth in the case of evolution, or the entire Universe in the case of stellar and planetary formation). Entropy can DECREASE locally, without violating the law of entropy. But let us simply agree to disagree. For, as Anna says to the King of Siam in The King and I, "Creation is the same miracle whether it took seven days or millions of years." — SEM]

* * * * *

To Whom It May Concern:

Imagine my surprise and shock when, quite accidentally, I inserted my Zork III disk upside down and backwards. SATANIC MESSAGES began appearing on my computer screen!!

If this was on purpose, shame on you! If not, you should IMMEDIATELY have all of your disks exorcised!

How many computers have you infected with the Beastmaster?

What are you going to do about this?

Sincerely yours,
Dave DeCranke
Perrysburg, OH

P.S. Sorry about writing this in crayon. They won't let me have anything sharper.

[We would exorcise all our disks immediately, except the price of exorcisms is sorry, and it would raise hell (pardon the pun) with our Cost of Goods Sold. Remember, we're not just left-wing devil-worshipping pornographers, we're also a business. — SEM]

[Trivia: The 'Starting and Stopping' section of the <u>Bureaucracy</u> manual contains this sentence: "Because we do strange things to the disks (nothing satanic), owners of IBM (and compatible) computers, as well as all other computer owners, should follow the instructions on the Reference Card carefully.]

* * * * *

Dear Satanistic (sic-sic-sick!!) Sirs?,

I am utterly appalled at how you monsters single-handedly destroy G-d in your products. I think your product should be banned from existence. Cornerstone is definitely Satanistic and I can see no reason for it's existence.

Sincerely,
a deranged fan
(who's real name is: Benjamin Holzman)
Pittsburgh, PA

P.S. If you like my humour, send me the InvisiClues for Infidel. If not, forget it.

[Forgotten. And incidentally, any product that loses us as much money as Cornerstone did MUST be the work of the Devil. — SEM]

* * * * *

Dear scum,

Why don't you stop masquerading as a software company? You're nothing but a horde of impious, heinous fiends who bow only to the Prince of Darkness himself. One look at one of your games screams out the influence of the Evil One. Take Leather Goddesses of Phobos, for example: such a sugary and enjoyable substance as chocolate should be the source of damnation rather than the source of success. Hitchhiker's has hundreds of subtle references to drunkenness and intemperance. The very titles of Infidel, Leather Goddesses, and Trinity are offensive to the Holy Spirit, God, and more importantly, the Church. Your treatment of our Great Country's Great Legal System is scandalous and appalling.

I was first alerted to your existence by my father. He was an unshakeable, salivating Infocom addict. He used to play Enchanter for almost an hour a day, and would sneak out of confessional to play Trinity. He listened to filthy music like Boston and Bruce Springsteen instead of Holy music like Steve Green. At the end of my rope, I burned all his Infocom literature and diskettes and smashed his computer equipment. He cast a spell on me!

Beelzebub's influence on you is obvious. Is it just a coincidence that "Zork" is also an ancient mantra chanted by secret witches' covens and Satan worshippers? Is it just a coincidence that the letters in [InfoMarketeer] Mike Dornbrook's name, if their values are added up, 183 is added and the result doubled, turn out to be 666? Is it just a coincidence that the dots in Puzzle Number 11 can be connected to show a perfect likeness of a great golden cross set aflame by chanting hordes of Satan's beasts?

Your influence must be stopped before the Dorn beast progresses from marketing director to president of your company. There, as the Anti-Christ, he can translate Zork II into all languages and program subliminal messages and backmasking into the Daemon's words and bring about the destruction of humanity.

May you burn in everlasting hell.

Your enemy,
Paul Falstad

P.S. Is SNAVIG permanent? I keep slavering all over my church bulletin.

[SNAVIG is permanent, but is easily removed by a simple potion. We will send you a vial of it as soon as you renounce your immortal soul. — SEM]

[We should mention that Mr. Falstad's letter included copies of two of our advertisements, for Suspect and for Hitchhiker's Guide, rent from the pages of Games magazine. The offending words and phrases in each ad were circled. From Suspect: murder, corpse, blood, bar, snooping, peek, addictive pleasures, dance, slip, and ball. The offending bits of the other ad included: beer, drunk, hangover, party, beast, strapped down, Meretzky, intelligence, and sunglasses.]

* * * * *

Dear “Infocom”,

Or whatever you sickos call yourselves, I want to angrily protest one of the most disgusting pieces of trash and sado-masochistic garbage ever to masquerade in a fine, American computer store as “entertainment.” Yes, you know what I’m talking about, that vile and revolting “interactive fiction” called...

INFIDEL.

Infidel starts out with a bunch of men spending long periods of time ALONE in the desert, doing who knows what. Then, the “main character” is abandoned by these — ugh! — foreigners; he has to look for a pyramid and its limitless riches, thereby fueling the sin of greed among the fragile minds of today’s young people.

Of course, this person must go through all sorts of depraved actions to achieve his goal — marring sacred tombs and lighting a torch with fire, the devil’s tool. You must also decipher blasphemous hieroglyphics (obviously Satanic codes) and fondle statues of heathen Egyptian deities.

And, to top this all off, the demonically possessed “author” of this so-called “game” injects this program with ugly examples of cruelty to animals, such as the chicken carcass and the pit full of rats.

For that matter, the entire “company” of Infocom is riddled with such demonic innuendo — their name, for example. I-N-F-O-C-O-M has seven letters. Seven minus one is six. Six times eleven is 666 — the devil’s symbol! And the very phrase “interactive fiction” obviously refers to bizarre, erotic actions on the part of the employees of this “coven of computer programmers.”

Finally, I am taking this case to the nearest legal authority. My lawyers will talk to your lawyers.

Repent,
Farr Wright
Lynchburg, TN 00666

Har, har! Just kidding! Keep up the good work!

F.J. Van Lente
Chagrin Falls, OH

[Phew! We thought you were serious until we got to that postscript! — SEM]

* * * * *

TO: The INterworldly FOrmation of Communistic Odious Masterment
FROM: Olde Scratch, communications foreman
RE: The Business

Dear INFOCOM,

I just wanted to tell you what a great branch you are, and how you’re doing so much for our cause. Imagine all those ignorant people who think that interactive fiction is just a bunch of “harmless” games, when they play a major role in acquiring new souls! Boy, what an EASY way to twist their heads! Too bad I can’t say so much for the Movie division. Have their sales PLUMMETED! Why, I’m not one to talk, but last month their G.N.P. went down about 20%! That comes to a total of 350 SOULS! But not you guys — no! You keep the business going, like two weeks ago when we received word of 619 new personalities, just begging to be taken! Now that’s productivity!

Anyway, I just wanted to let you in on how happy The Master is about you, and to keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Olde Scratch
The Tower
666 Mephisto Lane
Belial, Abaddon 10100-1101

P.S. Who knows? Maybe we might raise your status!

[Jon, Gayle — make sure this letter from Olde Scratch doesn't get into The Status Line mailbag. It would blow our whole cover. — SEM]

* * * * *

Dear Sirs,

I find it hard to believe your refuting of the claims that Infocom is promoting devil worship and Communism. How can you deny it when you produce "games" that stimulate thinking and build knowledge in such areas of whichcraft [sic] and sorcery, which are the Devil's crafts?

When I found out that my son had been playing your games, I immediately threw all of his discs [sic] in the trash and grounded him for a month for participating in this pagan/Communist propoganda [sic].

I just hope you take my concern into consideration. I am just a concerned citizen who is trying to be a good American and Christian, who would also like to see some moral, Christian games for a change.

Yours in Christ,
The Concerned Christian
Birmingham, AL

[This letter wins this month's award for Hardest To Tell If It's Serious Or A Joke. Our congratulations. — SEM]

* * * * *

Dear Infocom,

Thanks for making my life a whole lot easier. I'm a Worshipper of Satan and demons and other various and sundry and nasty stuff. Formerly, to summon a demon I had to trudge into the forest and do some incantations under a full moon. However, I discovered that I can get the same effects by booting Enchanter and typing ZIFMIA DEMON when that spell is in my book. You guys are great. Thanks a lot.

Deathmaster
Elmira, NY

[Uh oh, that's a bug. You shouldn't have to have the spell in your spell book to ZIFMIA Satan. We want to make it as simple as possible. Thanks for bringing this bug to our attention, Deathmaster. — SEM]

The Micro Group Made Life Size

Among the many development groups within Infocom's Info-structure, the Micro group rarely gets a spot in the limelight. You are probably saying to yourself, "What is a Micro group?" or "Wouldn't it take a microscope to see such a culture?" So here's a brief review of the Infocom software Info-development structure.

As you may remember from reading recent *Status Line* articles on the making of *Zork*, our products are developed on a DEC mainframe computer. When a product is complete, the result is a large data file that is **not** executable. Just as a program written in BASIC requires a BASIC interpreter to run the program, our programs need interpreters of their own. Currently, we have three types of interpreters: ZIP (for Zork Interpretive Program) which runs the games, MME (for Mu Machine Emulator) which runs Cornerstone, and DIP (for Display Interpretive Program) which runs *Fooblitzky*. If a ZIP is written for a given computer, then all of our "Classic" games will run on that computer.

Infocom's development staff is broken into four groups: Implementors (the game writers), business product developers (the Cornerstone writers), the Systems group (responsible for maintaining the development environment

on the mainframe), and the Micro group (responsible for creating and maintaining interpreters). The Implementors get the credit for writing the games, the business product developers get credit for writing Cornerstone, and the Systems group gets credit for everything else. The Micro group, however, is responsible for all the interpretive programs running on the "teeming multitudes" of microcomputers. That probably doesn't sound so impressive until you realize that the Micro group has produced over 30 interpreters, allowing Infocom games to run on literally more than 100 microcomputers. Cornerstone has been ported to five new micros since its original release for the IBM family of computers, and *Fooblitzky* runs on three micros already.

Writing interpreters for all these machines is not an easy task. Each member of the Micro group has one or two microprocessors that are his or her specialty. Over the past year the Micro group has performed a number of minor miracles on various micros to maintain Infocom's competitive edge. As belittling as it may sound, these minor miracles are referred to as "micro hacks." The Micro group is proud of its hacks, and so is Infocom. To give the Micro group some long overdue credit, *The Status Line* will mention some of the best hacks in this article.

Our first micro hack award goes to Andrew Kaluzniacki. He has done something to the Apple's disk capacity that even Steven Jobs never knew was possible, and disk duplication companies are still pondering the hack to this date. You Apple II owners should thank him for *A Mind Forever Voyaging* and all future releases of Interactive Fiction Plus on the Apple.

Then we have Linde Simpson, who inherited Andrew's workload when 19-year-old Andrew decided that goofing off at Caltech would be more enjoyable than working at Infocom. Linde's greatest accomplishments include improving Andrew's code (reading it was only slightly less impressive), understanding Poh Lim's explanations (Lim is an implementor from Planet 10), and solving a randomly occurring paging bug in *Fooblitzky* on the Atari 800.

Duncan Blanchard, the Micro group's most venerable member, probably has the longest list of hacks. The search for Duncan's best hack drew a tie between two pieces of wizardry. The first hack was making our games run on the TI-99, which is akin to making an ant perform the firemen's carry with an elephant. The second miracle is less easily described. Our games work on micros by reading in the **bare minimum** of the data file necessary for the game to operate. The rest of the game is "paged" in to available buffers as each page is needed. Recently, Duncan saved the day by redefining what we considered the "bare minimum"; consequently, a few games will be available on micros that would not otherwise be possible. What Duncan found was the **barest** minimum. The extra space was found by paging the vocabulary table to provide more buffer space. (For those of you who don't understand terms like "paging" and "buffer space," don't fret — just be happy that our games run on your computer.)

Paul Gross, the Micro group's photographer-in-residence, also drew a tie for his best hack. Our first thoughts were turned to his combination of **four** interpreters (IBM, MS-DOS, TI-Pro, and HP-150) into **one** interpreter that would function on all machines without sacrificing the best features of any. But in remembering the extensive testing that this interpreter went through, we are also struck by the memory of a seemingly endless list of bugs coming back from Testing. So his greatest hack may not be the 4-in-1 interpreter, but his seemingly limitless capacity to produce bug-ridden code!

Daniel Easley has been working only on business products since he came aboard. Daniel is probably the King of the Hackers. Part of the credit for Cornerstone running on five new micros this year can be attributed to his keyboard driver hack. Daniel found a bizarre but graceful way of making all keyboards respond like the IBM keyboard. In Daniel's words, "It's perfect!" After it came back from Testing with bugs, he was heard to say, "It's near perfect!"

The Micro group's newest member, Mike Morton, integrated his own favorite dissolve routines into all our Mac products. Mike's dissolve routines are so impressive that it's worth a special trip to your nearest Mac dealer to check out the Mac Sampler. If your dealer doesn't have the Sampler, tell him or her to order it, and ask to see *A Mind Forever Voyaging* or *Spellbreaker* on the Mac. Click the apple to get the About Infocom screen. Try it, you'll like it...

The last Micro hack mention goes to Ed Black, the latest manager of the Micro group. Recently Ed did what we call the "brute force" hack, where he wrote an MME from scratch for the AT&T PC 7300 in two weeks. Writing an MME for a new processor would take any mortal approximately 4 months, but not Ed. In accomplishing this task, Ed also performed another minor but interesting hack: turning the PC 7300 (a desktop PC) into a portable. Every night for two weeks he could be seen balancing manuals on top of the monitor and tightly gripping the base of the computer as he tried to ring for the elevator.

In conclusion, we would like to thank some micro hackers who are gone but not forgotten. Implementor Brian Moriarty left the Micro group for game writing, yet seems to have performed both jobs at once. Rick Lay, who **played** more Infocom games during work hours than any of the testers, is credited with the creation of the *InvisiClues* sponge (for revealing all the hints on a page with a single stroke). Special thanks to former Micro group manager Dan Horn. And finally, we proclaim Tom Veldran of Production as the Micro group's "honorary member" for knowing how to use more micros than all of the Micro group members combined.

An unpublished letter about LGOP:

Dear Sirs:

My wife and I just finished playing Leather Goddesses of Phobos, and we enjoyed it.

I do, however, have a question: When you are at the south pole, the description says that there are three paths visible. They go north, north, and north. Now that part's okay (although I think that they could go north, east, and west). My question is: where does the third north go? One goes to the orphanage igloo; one goes back to the gypsy camp. Where does the third go? (Answering this question is worth between 5 and 9 points out of, oh, say, 93 points.)

Michael Honig
Houston, TX

[The author replies: When you at the south pole, the only direction you can go is north! Thus, three paths leave the South Pole location in different directions, but all of those directions are north! In this case, typing NORTH takes you to the gypsy camp. Typing IN takes you into the igloo. The other two paths are probably just either end of a looping path that leads nowhere; it hardly matters since LEATHER assumes you mean the path to the gypsy camp when you say NORTH. For fun, go to the South Pole location and try typing EAST or SOUTH.]

This clearance sale took place after the Fall 1987 issue:

CRAZY FLATHEAD'S BLOWOUT CLEARANCE SALE!

Can you believe it? Infocom is discontinuing five games because it doesn't want to carry the inventory! Well I can! I've bought out billions of *Starcross, Suspended, Infidel, Seastalker,* and *Deadline* games at excessively low prices so I can sell them to YOU, the customer, at below wholesale costs. (These games are bound to become collectors' items in the future, so I'm keeping a million each, myself.) So now, while supplies last, you can by these games direct from me at the excessively low price of $14.95 each! Since dealers won't be carrying these games any more, no one can undersell me, because I have a monopoly. (No, Lord Feepness ... It's raise taxes, lower prices.)

HINT BOOKLETS? HAVE WE GOT HINT BOOKLETS!

To go along with this excessive game sale, I was even more excessive and bought hint booklets! I got such a great deal from the printer that I ordered too many, so to move my inventory I'm offering the following hint booklets at a low, low price of 3 for $10: *Wishbringer, Zork III* (my favorite, since I'm in it), *Deadline, Suspect, Suspended, Planetfall, Infidel, Seastalker,* and *Cutthroats*. These hint booklets are more than just hints! They're filled with typical Infocom humor. Develop the clues that aren't real clues. Try the "Have You Tried" sections filled with all sorts of zany inputs that generate even zanier responses. Impress your friends with your knowledge of Infocom trivia. How else would you know that kissing Floyd gives you a painful electric shock and that Lord Feepness is one of my advisers?

ON A SADDER NOTE ...

Alas, microcomputers, like empires, sometimes fall into ruin and disuse. Since I have a soft spot for the obsolete, I've bought up all of Infocom's inventory for obsolete computers. (A moment of silence.) I'm offering these at a funeral sale price of $14.95 each. Here is an obituary listing for the departed. Look at the order form to see which games are available for the discontinued machines. Rest in Peace:

Apricot, CP/M (8" disks), Epson QX-10, Kaypro II (CP/M), NEC APC (CP/M-86), NEC PC-8000 (56K CP/M), PDP-11 (RT-11, RX01 disk or RT-11 emulator), TI99/4A, TI Pro (those with the product code suffix "-TI1"), TRS-80 Model I, and TRS-80 Model III.

All of Crazy Flathead's offers are limited while supplies last.

Prices Slashed on Infocom Hits!

Infocom wants you to own the classic titles of interactive fiction. Save $10.00 on the platinum-certified Zork I! Now only $24.95 (Atari XL/XE, Commodore 64/128) and $29.95 (Apple II, Macintosh, Atari ST, Amiga, IBM MS-DOS). Or get the all-time best-selling Zork Trilogy at super low prices of $44.95 and $49.95! But wait, that's not all!!! Crazy Mikey has slashed prices on Infocom's most inspired work, the Enchanter Trilogy! Now save over $60.00 off the individual prices. Enter the world of magic and mystery for only $49.95 and $59.95!

InfoFans

We at Infocom have probably told our readers enough about ourselves. Now it's time to tell you about yourselves, our avid (and sometimes rabid) fans. Below are some stories about you, our fans.

Barbara Razzano bought an Atari ST computer because she couldn't play *A Mind Forever Voyaging* on her Atari 800.

Scott and Darbi Henderson met playing Infocom games, got married, and played *Spellbreaker* on their honeymoon.

David Penny from Australia found a bug in our old CPM interpreter, and he went into the code, found it, and sent us a fix for the bug. Too bad we discontinued making TI-99 disks; we could have used the fix.

Another fan, William Cook, also went into the CPM code and managed to get the light in the Radiation Room in *Planetfall* transferred out of the room by changing one byte in the save file. He discovered that if you take the lamp into the dark areas, all you get is a BUG message.

One of our fans (whose name we are not printing) almost got caught by their boss playing Infocom games at work, and suggested adding a "Boss" key. We liked the idea so much that we are putting a "Boss" key on *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* for the MS/DOS version. (Although it will look like a Cornerstone screen, we hope their boss doesn't take too close a look at it.)

Some people regularly write us letters about the bugs they've found in Infocom games. Among them is Richard Uyeyama. Richard and his brother Robert are among our most avid fans. Robert was one of the winners of the *Cutthroats* True Tales of Adventure contest, and every time Richard finishes a game we get a bug letter from him. The last game he finished was *Spellbreaker*. Some of the bugs that he reported will be fixed in the next version of *Spellbreaker* that will be released.

We interviewed Richard and Robert to get an idea what our most avid fans are like. Robert is a senior and Richard is a sophomore at Willow Glen High School in the San Jose, California, area. Robert is president of the science club at school. He also plays in a local basketball league, takes karate lessons and enjoys skiing. He hopes to go to college at UC Berkeley or Stanford and major in aeronautical engineering. Richard likes to play tennis, and he also takes karate lessons. They both have been taking piano lessons for about ten years, and Robert plays the double bass in his school band. (We were disappointed to hear that he didn't play the piano in a marching band, something one of the Flatheads might have done.)

Robert's and Richard's first computer was a TI-99, but when their father bought an IBM they quickly switched to using that. Since the computer only had a monochrome screen initially, they didn't play arcade games, but instead showed good taste and became addicted to Infocom games. Their first Infocom game was *Zork I*, which their father bought for them. From then on they were hooked. They usually get Infocom games as presents for their birthdays or Christmas. The last game that they finished was *Spellbreaker*, so we guess they haven't had a birthday between them for a while (since they haven't played *Ballyhoo* yet). Robert's favorite games are *Enchanter* and *Planetfall*, and Richard likes the *Enchanter* series and the mysteries. (Richard still owes us bug letters as soon as he finishes *Ballyhoo* and *Trinity*.) Most of their friends have Apple computers, so they have trouble trading games, but they can still talk about Infocom games. They also log on to the local bulletin boards occasionally. Best of luck to Richard and Robert in the future.

We wish to thank all our Infofans for loyally buying and playing our products. We hope you enjoy playing them as much as (or even more then) we enjoy writing them.

H & R Flathead's Tax Tips

As the 15th of Bozbar approaches, many of our readers are concerned about the impact of the ROSTY spell (reform taxes) that was recently cast on the populace. The Underground Revenue Service is issuing confusing new regulations day by day, but our tax advisors are working hard to sort them all out and make them seem absurdly simple. Here are some common questions from our mailbag:

Q. I am a professional puzzle-solver who manipulates objects and talks to characters in order to raise my score. The U.R.S. says that my adventuring is only a hobby. Who is right?

A. Under the effects of the ROSTY spell, it is harder than ever to prove that your motive is to earn points and not just hack and slash. Here's one rule of thumb: if you get points in three out of five (formerly two out of five) attempts to solve a puzzle, then you are a professional, and you can claim a battery-depletion allowance on your brass lantern.

Ideas for the Winter 1987 issue:

Make 150,000 copies of the Beyond Zork/Three Pack sell sheet, but don't cut them. Use these as the cover for TSL, with the sell sheet fronts on the inside. Print cover and last page on back sides. Bind this together with standard 16 page TSL.

Artwork for NEW ZORKER cover.
Use black and white sell sheets of Beyond Zork, Border Zone—if available, and/or Three Packs.

—BEYOND ZORK
Brian will not be able to write it.

Article should focus on:	return to Zork empire	union of interactive fiction/role playing	new features
	creation/idea angle	huge public outcry for a new Zork	

—BORDER ZONE
Marc should be given first opportunity to pen it.

Article should focus on:	story line	three different views of the situations
	real time	Marc's return to the Infocom fold

—LIBRARY SETS
The perfect Christmas gift for anyone, including yourself.

	Cheap!!!!!	Classics!!!

—LURKING SOUND
done

—VISICLUES
hints for Stationfall and Lurking Horror

—CLASSIC REVIEWS

	The WITNESS	SUSPENDED	SEASTALKER????

—THIS IS CRESSKILL
Story on CallCenter Services

—InfoWINGO!
hack of tabloid contests, perhaps Zorkian

Companion piece to the "New Hitchhiker's and Zork I only $14.95" article that appeared in the Winter/Spring 1988 issue:

Let's face it, when you've got a good thing going, you want to spread it around to everyone. It's only natural. We think we have a good thing with our line of interactive fiction, and we want to spread it around so everyone can find out how good it is. Therefore, in the interests of turning the entire world onto the wonders of interactive fiction, two of the best-selling entertainment software products of all-time are available for the spectacular price of $14.95!

When you say *Zork I*, you say interactive fiction. This is the product that started it all. Zork has literally changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people for whom it was the introduction to computers. And at $14.95, not one treasure, not one troll, not even one snappy remark has been removed. This is the original Zork, the one that was this fall certified Platinum by the Software Publishers Association for 250,000 copies sold. For anyone who doesn't own *Zork I*, 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 has been a phenomenal success as a series of books, a radio series, and a television series. It is little wonder that the interactive version has likewise become a runaway success. *Hitchhiker's* also garnered a Platinum award at the SPA ceremonies in October. Douglas Adams's wacky wit and Steve Meretzky's challenging puzzles have made the interactive *Hitchhiker's* a must for any software library. At $14.95, you'd be out of your mind not to pick up this out of this world story.

But before you start saying to yourself that we just dropped the price to unload excess inventory, think again, my friend! Both of these titles in their new packages, will contain on-screen hints, the phenomenally popular feature of recent stories like *Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It, Border Zone,* and *Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels.*

Now unless you're brain-dead, you're probably asking yourself where you can get these unparalleled classics.

Well the answer is easy as 1-2-3! 1. You can go to your local software store (make sure to kick them in the shins if they don't have them). 2. Call 1-800-262-6868 and order over the phone with your favorite credit card. 3. Fill out the order form in the center of this issue (or make a photocopy if you don't want to take away from its natural beauty) and mail it to us. Any way you buy it, you'll be glad you did.

Two Letters to the Editor, for the Winter/Spring 1988 issue:

Dear Infocom,

As a personal computer consultant and tutor, I thought you might be interested in hearing about my using *Zork* in a purely practical manner. I find that there are still people who are tremendously computer-phobic. In this case, I load up *Zork* and allow them to play it, taking them up to the time they discover the hidden trap door. I find that after this experience, they have become comfortable with the keyboard (especially becoming familiar with the function of the "enter" key) and they begin to see that a computer is a machine and tool that responds to human commands and input. I then can more easily continue with teaching them other "practical" software applications in a more relaxed, calm, and productive mode.

You should not be surprised to find out that a great number of these students soon rush out to buy *Zork* (and your other products) as they find themselves dreaming and wondering about what lies in the underground world!

I have your complete library of interactive fiction, have completed most of them and look forward to each new game. My local software dealer knows to call me the day they arrive in stock!

Sincerely Yours,
Mitchell Portnoy
New York, NY

[Your check's in the mail.—Ed.]

Gentlemen,

I thought that Peter Hawkinson's cartoon *What Zaphod Got for Christmas* was rather on the funny side, but being a *Hitchhiker's* addict as I am, I decided to report a gross defect. It seems Mr. Hawkinson put only **two** arms on Zaphod's sweater, however Zaphod, as anyone who knows *Hitchhiker's* and the sequels as I do knows, has **three** arms. I hope Douglas Adams also caught this obvious oversight. Otherwise, another great *Status Line.*

James Lipper
Wichita, KS

[We were unable to reach Mr. Hawkinson, but our money says he'd claim the third arm was in back.—Ed.]

Two Letters to the Editor, for the Fall 1988 issue:

Sirs,

The ad "What's wrong with marketing software?" (TSL Winter/Spring '88) brought up some very valid points. But, it unfairly grouped bulletin-board operators with hackers and software pirates. The ad implied that bulletin-board operators work very hard to "crack" the copy-protection. However, the opposite is true. Most try very hard

to insure that software base is strictly public-domain.

I hope, for the sake of bulletin-board operators, that this ad will be changed in the future.

A Michigan bbs-er

[Dear Michigan,

As you, I'm sure, are well aware, that ad was a hack on a public service ad from the Software Publishers Association. While we meant it to be completely innocent, some bulletin-board operators, like yourself, took umbrage to it. To those honest and conscientious bbs-ers, we humbly apologize. Nonetheless, we believe you are sadly mistaken to overlook the harm being done by some who share your title. Software piracy on bulletin boards or through any other vehicle is hurting Infocom as well as all other software developers and is keeping software prices higher than they need be. If you are aware of any software piracy, please contact the Software Publishers Association at 1101 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite 901, Washington DC 20036, (202) 452-1600. Your confidentiality will be protected. -ed.]

Dear Editor,

Is it my imagination, or did your prices greatly decrease? In your Winter/Spring 88 magazine, Cornerstone was $99.95; now it is only $29.95. Bureaucracy was $39.95 and now its $14.95. Are you guys going out of business? Please confirm. Maybe its a misprint from your new mail-order house (HA!).

Dazed and Confused
Gordon Missimer
Port Charlotte, FL

[Dear Jordan,

Marketing blah blah blah. -ed.]

Cartoon Winners List

Winter/Spring 1988

Published cartoons

"I Like Adventurer, Adventurer Don't Like Me"
[HOLLYWOOD, TYPESET A NEW CAPTION:
"No, Thanks! Adventurer doesn't agree with me!"]
E. Patrick Hartnett
2803 Martha Street
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 325-2541
Mac ???

"Practicing Spells"
Joseph F. Mundy
1531 2nd Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(213) 732-0754
Atari 800 Leather

"Superman's Skeleton"
Brian Tate
10101 Touchwood Place
Raleigh, NC 27612
(919) 847-3197
Apple II Lurking Horror

"Dr. Ruth Plays LGOP"
Bob Prokop
140 Lakeview Terrace
Ramsey, NJ 07446
(201) 825-4835
Apple II Moonmist

Unpublished cartoons

"Invisible InvisiClues"
Mark Cantrell
PO Box 95
Canal Point, FL 33438
(305) 924-3037
???

"In Case of Adventurer, Break Glass"
Bryan Bartee
2615 Partridge Avenue
Arlington, TX 76017
(817) 465-2164
C64 Lurking Horror

"Enchanter Graffiti"
Lori Glickman
16 Troilus Drive
Old Bridge, NJ 08857
(201) 679-5573
C64 Leather

"Cliff Notes and InvisiClues"
Travis Hein
31444 Waltham
Birmingham, MI 48009
(313) 540-3362
IBM Bureaucracy

Summer 1988

Published Cartoons

"Of Course I'm a Grue"
Mark Mills
1326 Mayland Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45230
(513) 232-1504
IBM Leather

— and —

Deke McClelland
1205 Alexandria Drive
Lafayette, CO 80026
Mac Lurking Horror
[ALREADY SENT]

"The Crystal Skeleton's Dilemma"
Sean Donovan
87 Nichols Avenue
Shelton, CT 06484
(203) 929-3326
Apple II Beyond Zork

Unpublished cartoons

"Shopping Mall Adventure"
NOTE: You might want to reset the caption in order to shrink the size of the cartoon without making the text unreadable.
Pat Frey
3050 Lorraine
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(313) 971-7741
Apple II Beyond Zork

"No, Ernie...Towel, not Vowel"
Seth Fisher
147 N. 3rd St.
Custer, SD 57730
(605) 673-2943
Mac Beyond Zork

"Infidel Wheel of Fortune"
John Pearson
3815 Rustic Forest Trail
[City, State not listed]
(817) 457-4131
IBM Border Zone

"Nord and Bert and Arthur Dent"
Chris Turner
3169 NE Regents Drive
Portland, OR 97212
(503) 282-3516
Atari XL/XE Plundered Hearts

"Enchanter Grafitti"
Lori Glickman
16 Troilus Drive
Old Bridge, NJ 08857

"Blowing Up the Screening Door"
Tony Latour
RR#2
Drysdayle

(201) 679-5573
C64 Leather

Zurich, Ontario NOM2TO
(519) 236-4194
C64 Spellbreaker

Fall 1988

Published cartoons

"Infocom's Packaging...Outside Earth"
Andrew Speer
141 Barbara Road
Waltham, MA 02154
(617) 894-7517
Amiga Trinity

"How I Got the Babel Fish"
Eric Blumrich
311 East Washington Street
Fayetteville, TN 37334
(615) 433-6804
Apple II Beyond Zork

Unpublished cartoons

"Johnny's First Words"
Cindy Goff
1314 B
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 445-9560
IBM Sherlock

"Shopping Mall Adventure"
(NOTE: reset caption in larger type to allow reduction of cartoon)
Pat Frey
3050 Lorraine
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(313) 971-7741
Apple II Beyond Zork

"Infidel Wheel of Fortune"
John Pearson
3815 Rustic Forest Trail
[City, State not listed]
(817) 457-4131
IBM Border Zone

"No, Ernie...Towel, not Vowel"
Seth Fisher
147 N. 3rd Street
Custer, SD 57730
(605) 673-2943
Mac Beyond Zork

"Nord and Bert Meet Arthur Dent"
Chris Turner
3169 NE Regents Drive
Portland, OR 97212
(503) 282-3516
Atari XL Plundered Hearts

"Enchanter Grafitti"
Lori Glickman
16 Troilus Drive
Old Bridge, NJ 08857
(201) 679-5573
C64 Leather

"Blowing Up the Screening Door"
Tony Latour
RR#2
Drysdale
Zurich, Ontario NOM2TO
(519) 236-4194
C64 Spellbreaker

Spring 1989

Published Cartoons

"Holmes!"
Charles S. Hayes
414 Coventry Court
Nashville, TN 37211
(615) 834-9903 or 331-5522
Apple II Suspect

"Miss Patella's Rebuttal"
Brad Schenck
62 Dombey Circle
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
C64 Stationfall

Steve's unpublished Punch-Counterpunch article:

Date: 21 Aug 1987 1635-EDT
Subject: TSL Humor Piece
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: KIRSCH, DA, JON, PDL

Please give me suggestions for <SEM>PUNCH-COUNTERPUNCH.TSL

Date: 25 Aug 1987 1614-EDT
Subject: humor article
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: KIRSCH, DA

I wrote a humor article and put it in the TSL directory. It's called PUNCH-COUNTERPUNCH.TSL

Punch-Counterpunch

[This is a transcript of some recent programming on one of the more obscure cable channels.]

Moderator: Good evening, and welcome to Punch Counterpunch. Tonight, our topic is "Fantasy or Mystery: Which Is the Best Interactive Fiction Topic?" Let me introduce our guests. Taking the side of mystery is Sergeant Duffy, a member of the Maitland, Connecticut police department, and just one of a long line of fiercely loyal flatfoots. Duffy, welcome.

Duffy: Thank you. It's a tremendous honor to be here on Punch Counterpunch.

Moderator: Taking the side of fantasy is Lord Dimwit the Excessive, seventh member of the Flathead Dynasty, and ruler of the Great Underground Empire. Dimwit, welcome.

Dimwit: Let's get on with this. I want to get back to the castle and order the defoliation of several continents.

Moderator: Based on a coin toss, Dimwit will start.

Dimwit: Fantasies are best because there are no limits to what you can do! You like strange beings? You've got 'em! Trolls! Elves! Grues! We'll give you dozens of different creatures!!!

Duffy: I'm sure that's fine if you like that sort of stuff, Dimwit. But only in an interactive mystery can you actually step into the shoes of the detective, putting you in that elite pantheon with the likes of Sherlock Holmes and Sam Spade.

Dimwit: You want magic, we've got magic! KLORT spell: makes used carbon paper good as new again! ZORBAX potion: gives you the ability to eat anchovies! Hundreds and hundreds of magic potions and wands! Thousands of spells! Did I say thousands? I meant millions!

Duffy: Stop ranting, you Flathead you! In a mystery, you can match wits with a wily murderer or a cunning kidnapper, subtly sifting for cleverly concealed clues and dauntlessly dodging danger! What are those stains

on the butler's lapel? Whose footprints where those in the muddy rose garden and in the cheesecake? Where in a fantasy can you match wits like that?

Dimwit: Fantasies have more matching of wits than you can shake a Royal Sceptre at! All three *Zorks* have billions of puzzles! Or, at least, they will once I send my guards over to Infocom and enslave a few writers! So just cram it, you stupid flatfoot!

Duffy: Dimwit, you ignorant slut, you've gone too far! (he whips out a rather nasty-looking revolver.) You're under arrest!

Dimwit: I'm under arrest? YOU'RE under arrest! Guards, seize this intruder! (Royal guards stride onto the stage.) Build a prison with walls a trillion feet thick and surrounded by zillions of moats! With alligators! And hellhounds!

Duffy: Not so fast, plateau-top! (He blows a whistle. Thousands of uniformed police officers begin storming the studio.)

Moderator: Perhaps we'd better move on to the portion of our show where we take questions from our studio audience. Will the first questioner state his name?

First Questioner: I be called Floyd! Floyd have two questions! First question: Everyone knows that science fiction be best genre for interactive fiction! Fantasy? Ha! Mystery? Ha! Well, I guess that not actually a question. Second question: Anyone want to play hucka-bucka-beanstalk?

An unused puzzle

You get out of the pot while the Zalagasans are busy cataloguing their missionary and explorer recipe for the upcoming National Geographic article. Stumbling along, you fall into a hole, and end up in a grubby antechamber underground.

Grubby Antechamber
You're in a foul, unkempt antechamber which smells strongly of old socks.
It's not at all clear how you managed to end up here; there's no trace of whatever entrance you used.
Slumped against one wall is a rather dilapitated-looking locker.

>LOOK AT LOCKER
Despite its otherwise downtrodden appearance, this six-foot metal box is guarded by an awesome lock. No less than twenty-two dials, each with a hundred settings, grace the front of the locker, along with a Shnoztek(R) Mark Eight Nostril Recognition Receptacle, a Soxoff(R) Toeprint Confirmation Pad, and a 'B.O. Buddy'(tm) Armpit Odor Matcher. The overall effect is quite intimidating. By far the most advanced security measure, however, is the ghastly smell of crusty sweat-socks which slithers through a crack between the door and the locker's frame.

>UNLOCK LOCKER
Only if you tell me how to.

>TURN THE FOURTEENTH DIAL TO 87
Done. A faint giggling sound is audible from deep within the Shnoztek sensing mechanisms.

>TURN THE SIXTH DIAL TO 32
Done. The giggling, now much more profound, is joined by a few chuckles from within the locker.

>PUT NOSE IN NOSTRIL RECOGNITION RECEPTACLE
Done. Loud guffaws, mixed in with uncontrollable laughter, ensue.

>PUT TOE IN TOEPRINT
Done. The whole locker is quivering with unrestrainable laughter.

>PUT ARMPIT OVER ARMPIT ODOR MATCHER
Done. The locker is now shaking violently, as if it were about to tumble onto the floor.

[Next unlock attempt = JIGS-UP]

>LOOK AT CRACK
In between the locker door and the frame of the locker runs a thin crack, from which nauseating puffs of sweat-sock smell escape. As you peer closer, you can make out a medium-sized latch which appears to be all that's keeping the locker door from opening.
>LIFT LATCH WITH BEEZER CARD
You slide your Beezer card through the crack, lifting the latch. Instantly, the locker door swings open, revealing a card-key.

[Other winning syntaxes:
>PUT CARD IN CRACK >SLIDE CARD THROUGH CRACK
>SLIDE CARD UP CRACK >OPEN LATCH WITH CARD
>UNLOCK LATCH WITH CARD]

YOU SAID IT!

Once again, it's time for YOU SAID IT!, bringing the wisdom and wit from your warranty/registration cards directly to the pages of the Status Line.

A current favorite is *The Riddle of the Crown Jewels*, the first in Infocom's Immortal Legends series. One of you said that it "just might make me a Holmes addict." Join the club!

You had plenty of ideas for other Immortal Legends stories, featuring such historic figures as The Stainless Steel Rat, Luis Mendoza, Mr. Moto, Bonnie & Clyde, Lee Iacocca, The Count of Monte Cristo, and Jaws. The most popular entrants were Charlie Chan, Sam Spade, James Bond, King Arthur, Robin Hood, and more Sherlock Holmes.

You also liked the concept of blending role-playing games with interactive fiction, as we did in *Beyond Zork* which you called "the best idea ever." One of you thought it was "like, really gnarly, dudes. You know?" And you added, "More! More! We want more!"

After nearly four years, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is still a best-seller. It's now out in a $14.95 Solid Gold version. You find it "provocative, funny, challenging, terrific, silly, addictive" and "a painful joy." One of you requested that we "make the character and his actions simultaneously visible." A very interesting concept...

From another *Hitchhiker's* fan came this comment: "It is very interesting and challenging for staff, difficult for clients." What does that mean? We don't know.

When asked how you learned about Infocom software, most of you answered "store displays" or "magazine or newspaper articles." Many of you tried interactive fiction on the recommendation of a friend. And one of you found out about Infocom "by accident."

It's interesting to see where you buy your software. Your local Infocom stores have names like Games-N-Gadgets, Land of Software, Audio Photo, Sam's Wholesale, Software Discounters of America (a noble name), Upgrade!, Friendlyware, Joppa Computers, and Video Variables.

As we've been hearing for awhile now, a lot of you want graphics added to Infocom stories, and you'll all be glad to see our fall lineup of graphic interactive fiction and role-playing games. A frequent comment is, "Your games are great; graphics would make them outstanding."

Well, that's it for this issue. Keep sending in your warranty/registration cards. You, too, can have your comments featured in YOU SAID IT!

Date: 29 Aug 1984 1450-EDT
Subject: REGCARDS

From: Jennifer Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
To: md

How about these to add to your list:

ZORK I:

I found Zork I to be very entertaining and extremely interesting. I want to play it forever. David Samuels, student, age 19, NY

Best game of the century—I love it! Stephen Smith, age 12-17

ENCHANTER:

Phantasmagorical! Lee Ditkowsky, 25-35, IL

No matter how many times I exex my way through it, I can't kulcad the spell of Enchanter. I haven't rezroved all its secrets yet, so I keep it with my most blorbed possessions. A most frotzing game. Steven Fotheringham, cook, age 35, TX

I loved it! Thou shouldst continue the series beyond Zork IV. May Lord Dimwit Flathead rule Frobozz once more! David Martin, computer salesman, age 18, TX

Brain tickler. Mike & Carla Young, Supervisors, ages 28 & 30, CA

Package needs warning label: Use may be injurious to sleep habits. Asenath Hammond, 25-35, CA

INFIDEL:

Great! 3 teenagers now will not allow me on my IBM—I work at 1:00 AM (the mother) Mrs. Hall, CA

Intended for the Fall 1988 issue:

Before you start grumbling about this being a really short issue of TSL and cursing Bruce Davis, read this. We, the editors of The Status Line, would like to go officially on record as being the creators of this short issue. Faced with the option of not sending anything to you until August, we decided to put out a short issue to introduce you to Triton and ZorkQuest II (among other things) rather than leave you wondering what happened to us. Since we don't have any other new products coming out until the Fall, we couldn't write anything about them, but we still wanted to get this to you. So enjoy it, go out and get some sun this summer, and start licking your chops for this Fall's releases.

P.S. If you are the person who wrote in to A CONTEST NAMED DESIRE concerning the Tibetan meaning of "Stella," please identify yourself, and your previous letter, to the Contest Judge, c/o The Status Line.

(Adding the 4-page catalog helped pad out the issue.)

Packaging, Manuals, Catalogs & Hint Books

Date: 19 Jul 1983 0806-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: hintbooks To: jw cc: swg

I've created a file in my account called SAMPLE.RNO for the example questions in the introduction of each hint booklet. Please read the ones that are there and make changes/additions.

Date: 19 Jul 1983 0844-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: hintbooks To: SEM cc: SWG, jw

Cute! I would change "Acme" -> "Frobozz".
I made up a generic example too:

How do I get this game started?
A. You need a computer with the proper equipment.
B. That includes a disk drive of the proper size.
C. Find the program disk and put it in the drive.
D. Follow the directions on your Reference Card.

The grey striped box's inception:

Date: 26 Jan 1984 1920-EST From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Game Manuals To: implementors at ZORK

We are in the process of repackaging many of the games. The new, improved Zork manual will be used in the new Zork packages. What do you folks think about the manuals for the other games? Should they be rewritten with more examples, etc.? Are there other improvements/additions you would suggest for the packages?
The games definitely being re-packaged are Zork I-III, Starcross, and Suspended, and possibly Deadline and Witness.

Date: 27 Jan 1984 0838-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Game Manuals To: MD

My feeling is that the list of common verbs and the sample script are both very useful things to have in the manual. If possible, and not too expensive, I would certainly consider adding these to the updated manuals.

Date: 27 Jan 1984 1016-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Game Manuals To: MD

I think that all they manuals should be updated to reflect new manual-writing technology. Starcross is probably in the worst shape, especially considering it comes with one of our most difficult games.
By the way, is Starcross going to $49.95? If it is, maybe we should put in one or two of those package elements

that G/R originally suggested, but that we rejected because we wanted it to be a $39.95 game. I seem to remember a ship's log...

Date: 27 Jan 1984 1033-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Game Manuals To: MD

More examples are probably a good idea, and the sample scripts that we've been including lately are definitely a good idea.

Date: 27 Jan 1984 1309-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Game Manuals To: MD

Why don't we each take one?

Mark - Deadline	Mike - Suspended	Stevo- Zork I, II, III
Stu - Witness	Dave - Starcross	

Date: 27 Jan 1984 1601-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Game Manuals To: MD

I think it's only a matter of writing the example scripts. Couldn't the testers do this? I don't think it's worth a lot of time - alternatively, couldn't we re-use the Zorkish one, or make minor modifications to it?

Date: 10 May 1984 0956-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Advanced Concepts To: IMPS at ZORK cc: MD at ZORK, DA at ZORK

It seems to be unanimous, so far, that the Advanced Concepts section of the manual (interacting with Containers, Vehicles, Characters) is unnecessary. However, in punting this section, I think we should make sure that the sample transcripts all contain examples of these interactions. (With exceptions, such as Infidel not needing a character interaction since there's none in the game, etc.)

Steve christens the theme portion of the game manual as the "browsie". The additional game items included in the package are later called "feelies".

Date: 10 May 1984 1340-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NEW PACKAGES To: MD

Now that we've had the Great Manual Split-off, the themes of the various front pieces will be less constrained, and in a way more important because they will now be devoted entirely to establishing mood and being a sales piece.

The theme for the Suspended front piece (which I will call the "browsie" henceforth) seems straightforward: the Contra Lottery Commission piece — letter from Ignatz Feroukin and so forth.

The Split-off seems like a great opportunity to re-instate the idea of a ship's log in Starcross.

This brings up the subject of the Zork packages, which is the main reason for this piece of mail. Are we still

going with generic packages? If so, the browsie would be the same for all three Zorks. But what would it be the theme? How about a brief history of the Zork universe, with "classic" portraits of Flathead, Entharion, etc. I'd like to save the map of Frobozz until Z6. Also, what in the world is going to go in the transparent section of the Zork packages?

Concerned that the Right Things Get Done,
Steve

Date: 14 May 1984 1737-EDT
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: MANUALS
To: IMPS at ZORK, TESTERS at ZORK, JENNIFER at ZORK, MD at ZORK

Now that our packages will contain at least two manuals — one (fun and interesting) in the front that can be browsed, another (rather dry) in the back that will serve as a reference guide — I'd like your suggestions for what we should call these manuals. So far I've heard:

"browsie" and "non-browsie"
"front" and "back"
"browsable"
"mood" and "reference"
"nuts and bolts" [for the "non-browsie"]
"inside" [also for the "non-browsie"]
"meat" [for the "browsie"] and "potatoes" [for the "non-browsie"]

Additional suggestions and/or comments welcome.
(I should add that I'm looking for names that we will use when we're talking about the manuals, not for names that will necessarily appear on the manuals themselves.)

-Jon

Date: 22 May 1984 1522-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: NEW SUB-DIRECTORIES
To: IMPS at ZORK, JON at ZORK

I just made three new sub-directories in <INTERLOGIC>. They are:

<INTERLOGIC.MANUALS> <INTERLOGIC.BROWSIES> <INTERLOGIC.HINTBOOKS>

I have moved all the appropriate files into them.

Date: 28 Jun 1984 1158-EDT
From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: VERSION BOX
To: SEM
cc: SWG

I don't feel strongly about putting the difficulty level on the disk, but there are these points against it:

* If the level is revised thru experience, then we have to change the disk as well as the package.
* The level describes the "game" more than the "story". So what do other games have? I'm sure that a board game may have "ages 9 to 90" on the outside of the package, but not on the game board itself. (Probably the publisher recognizes the first point above.)

Date: 20 Dec 1984 1023-EST
Subject: Z1 supply; Tim

From: Joy Pulver <JOY at ZORK>
To: MD

Just FYI: a friend of mine came by last night bemoaning the lack of a single Zork I for the PC in the greater Boston area.

Also, Tim seemed really pleased when he told me that you had called him Chomper and Zork Historian in the NZT. I said "That was sweet of Mike" and he said "I'm sure glad people like Mike are still around." (I think he always felt a little sad about not being in the biographies, but he understands the reason.)

I hope you hire a DM manager soon! Maybe I should apply in some capacity and you could supervise....I like shirtsleeve operations. Hope you get to see your whole family for Christmas. -Joy

Date: 6 Dec 1985 1117-EST
Subject: MEMO

From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: Imps at ZORK

"As soon as it is reasonable ... to switch over the line," we will stop shrink-wrapping the trays and begin shrink-wrapping the entire package. Labels will be applied to the package before shrink-wrapping.

We will encourage retailers to remove the shrink-wrap on at least 1 package, so that at least 1 package is browsable. Therefore, the instruction manual will still have marketing info ("An Overview," etc.).

Date: 19 Jun 1986 1515-EDT
Subject: All sorts of stuff

From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

I have all sorts of interesting info that I acquired at meetings today. Here is some of it, in no particular order of importance. I certainly have more details about most of this stuff, so see me if you're interested.

Five games (Seastalker, Infidel, Suspended, Starcross, and Deadline) will soon be available only by direct mail. We will encourage all retailers to stock the following 10 games: Hitchhiker's, Zork 1, LGOP, Moonmist, Wishbringer, Cutthroats (surprising still selling "well"), Planetfall, Ballyhoo, Trinity, and Enchanter, and only encourage the particularly-well-stocked stores to carry the others (Zorks 2 and 3, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, AMFV, Suspect, and Witness.) A very few stores only want to carry 5 titles, not 10; and to those stores we recommend Hitchhiker's, Zork 1, LGOP, Moonmist, and Wishbringer. (Most of this has been done informally in the past, and will actually change very little.)

Later this year Infocom will release a package containing the Zork trilogy on as few disks as possible (one package) for $69.95. Also an Enchanter trilogy gift pack (3 packages in a boxed set or some such) for $80 or $90. If these do well, then Zorks 2 and 3 will join the by-mail-order-only list.

Stickermania comes to Infocom: Planetfall will have a label that mentions Hitchhiker's, LGOP, and Steve. AMFV will also have a label that will mention Steve and also conveniently obscure the words "advanced level." Suspect's label will mention Dave and also cover up the difficulty rating.

For those of you who care about Marc's company (Record Group) and its relationship with Phillips, AIM, etc.: Phillips completely owns Polygram, and Polygram completely owns the Record Group. The Record Group's research into CDI is mostly financed by AIM. AIM is partly owned by Phillips and partly owned by Polygram. Somehow Warner fits into all this, but we're not sure how.

Joel, Chris, and I met with Byron Preiss, who is interested in books based on our games. It looks pretty good. They are most interested in doing a series of books for a given game, and the games they are most interested in now are Wishbringer, Planetfall, and The Witness. We would have some involvement, but nothing very time-consuming.

A series of books called Robot City will be coming out in a year to a year and a half. Preiss said there are many ideas for a game in the series, and if we'd like to collaborate with the authors (who include Isaac Asimov), that was certainly possible.

Date: 26 Jun 1986 1846-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Quotes To: Imps at FRED

A new catalog is in the works. Spen, Gayle, and I will be looking for particularly good game-specific quotes, both from the media and from end-users. Some of you have received fan mail: if you have good quotes on file, please give them to me soon (within the next few days). Thanks.

Date: 21 Aug 1986 1513-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: G.R. ... oops, I mean Ingalls To: SEM cc: SWG, JON

Our ad agency asked Susan for a description of the Stellar Patrol ship, the "mutant wild kingdom," and Floyd, from Planetfall, and the troll with the axe, the Wizard of Frobozz, and the Dungeon Master from the Zorks, and the detective from The Witness. Susan hasn't played our games so knows about as much as Ingalls.

Susan thinks a very short (1-2 sentence) description is all that's needed. Can you help?

Stellar Patrol ship: A very large starship (part of a fleet of starships). Crewed by the more-advanced life forms that form the Third Gallactic Union. In Planetfall, you happen to be near the emergency escape pod when the ship blows up, enabling you to escape. The Stellar Patrol ship has many decks.

Floyd: A small multi-purpose robot, found on a deserted planet. Very friendly, playful, and helpful.

Troll: Violent. Doesn't say much; just tries to kill you with his axe. Must be killed.

Wizard of Frobozz: A wizard of the Great Underground Empire, still powerful but a little senile. [Mention that his spells begin with "f"?] What else?

Detective: Standard no-nonsense 1930's L.A. cop. Serious and professional.

Mutant wild kingdom: ???

Dungeon Master: ???

Any help you can provide would be most appreciated. Thanks.

Date: 21 Aug 1986 1645-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: G.R. ... oops, I mean Ingalls To: JON cc: SWG

My only comment is that the detective in "The Witness" is YOU! Your one-liner is fine, as long as they don't assume age, gender, etc.

Date: 28 Aug 1986 2226-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: LGOP HINTBOOK SIZE To: JON, MD cc: SEM

The first draft of the Leather Goddesses hintbook, compared to the final versions of recent hintbooks:

AMFV	39,240
LGOP	43,989
Wishbringer	45,564
Spellbreaker	54,510
Ballyhoo	57,729

Date: 20 Nov 1986 1427-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: hint book To: swg

I think the "Thanks" page in the Moonmist hint booklet is a very thoughtful, generous gesture. So... thanks.

Date: 24 Nov 1986 1338-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: More generic … To: Testers at FRED

As an additional cost-saving measure, a generic hint booklet has been proposed.

> How do I solve the puzzle?
> A. Do the right thing.

Suggestions welcome.

Date: 24 Nov 1986 0956-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: A Generic Instruction Manual To: Imps at FRED

I'm going to try to assemble a Genuinely Generic (tm) instruction manual, possibly for use in games that'll be in our new (but still undesigned) package. For economy and friendliness, the manual should be no longer than necessary. I'm inclined to remove the "Common Complaints" section entirely (I think our defaults are sufficiently self-explanatory); pare down wherever possible; and possibly combine the Table of Contents and the Quick Reference Guide. I'll distribute copies of my draft when I'm done ... but does anyone have any comments or ideas before I begin?

Inception of the slipcase packaging:

Date: 26 May 1987 1039-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: FYI To: Imps at FRED

Later this year we'll be marketing a science fiction 3-pack containing Hitchhiker's Planetfall, and AMFV. We'll also be marketing a mystery 3-pack, probably containing Witness, Suspect, and Moonmist. Mike was thinking of a $59.95 price, though that's not final or definite.

Date: 16 Jul 1987 1354-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Stuff To: SEM, Amy, SWG, PDL, Jeff, Prof cc: jon

Activision made a $500,000 profit for the first fiscal quarter. Activision had predicted a $960,000 loss. This info may not yet be public (at least officially), but it certainly will be public (officially) no later than Monday.

Harry gave me this morning several pages of numbers which claim to be an analysis of Q1 performance. See me if you want to look at these pages.

Price changes: Zork I will sell for $24.95 (Commodore) and $29.95 (all others). The Zork Trilogy will sell for $44.95 and $49.95. The other "value packs" (Enchanter Trilogy, Sci-Fi Trilogy, and Mystery Trilogy) will sell for $49.95 and $59.95. See me if you want to know why, or if you want to know where I or other managers stand on this issue.

Date: 17 Sep 1987 1424-EDT From: Hal Japan At Once <JON at FRED>
Subject: Hintbooks To: DA

Most hintbooks used to number (or letter) the answers, like this:

How do I do whatever?
A. Have you tried this?
B. Have you tried that?
C. Here's the answer.

The box rule went in between the A. B. C. (or 1. 2. 3.) and the answers.

I found it easier, and also more space saving, to omit the numbers (or letters), like this:

How do I do whatever?
Have you tried this?
Have you tried that?
Here's the answer.

The box rule went to the left-hand margin, aligning with the left-hand margin of the question.

How would you like the hint booklet copy? With or without numbers (or letters)? (Once, when I gave them to Carl without them, he put them in.)

Z

Working Titles & Nicknames List

A Mind Forever Voyaging
- PRISM
- S5
- In Worlds Not Realized
- A Mine Forever Ticking

Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur
- (none on record)

Ballyhoo
- (none on record)

Beyond Zork: The Coconut of Quendor
- (none on record)

Border Zone
- Saboteur
- Spy
- Steam and Variations
- Checkpoint
- Chickpeas

Bureaucracy
- (none on record)

Cutthroats
- (none on record)

Deadline
- Was It Murder?

Enchanter
- Zork IV
- The Big Enchilada

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
- S4

Hollywood Hijinx
- Aunt Hildegarde's Secrets
- Playland
- Anthill
- Hollywood Hijinx: The Walton Mountain Years

Infidel
- Pyramid

Leather Goddesses of Phobos
- (none on record)

The Lurking Horror
- (none on record)

Moonmist
- Nancy Grue

Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It
- Farmers in the Deli
- Wordplay
- Words at Play

Planetfall
- Sole Survivor
- Survivor
- Lost Planet
- Pratfall

Solid Gold Planetfall
- Soiled-Gold Planetfall

Plundered Hearts
- Swashbuckler
- Canvas Caresses
- Ribbons and Rapiers
- Rubbers and Rapers

Seastalker
- Tom Swift
- Tom Swift's Ultramarine Bio-ceptor
- Tim Quick
- Seafrotzer

Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels
- (none on record)

James Clavell's Shogun
- (none on record)

Sorcerer
- Z5
- Enchanter II
- Possessed
- Spellbound
- Spellbreaker
- Spellstalker
- Spiritsaver
- Transporter

Spellbreaker
- Z6
- Enchanter III
- Mage
- Spellcrafter

Starcross
- A Gift From Space
- Celestus
- The Linking
- Alien Intercept
- Stardate: 2186

Stationfall
- (none on record)

Suspect
- (none on record)

Suspended
- Suspension
- Suspenders

Trinity
- Trim-A-Tree

Wishbringer
- (none on record)

The Witness
- Witless
- Invitation to Murder

Zork I: The Great Underground Empire
- (none on record)

Zork II: The Wizard of Frobozz
- (none on record)

Zork III: The Dungeon Master
- (none on record)

Solid Gold Zork I
- Nzork
- Cheap Zork

The Zork Trilogy
(none on record)

German Zork
(none on record)

Mini-Zork
(none on record)

Zork Zero: The Revenge of Megaboz
Mega-Zork

Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception
(none on record)

Fooblitzky
Mongrolia

Infocom's Books
(none on record)

Journey: The Quest Begins
Journeyvision
Journeymen (given to the game testers)

Infocomics
(none on record)

Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2: Gas Pump Girls Meet the Pulsating Inconvenience From Planet X
Gas Pump
Gas Pump Girls
Leather Goddesses of Hollywood
Gas Pump Girls Meet the Pulsating Inconvenience From Planet X
Hollywood Hot Tubs
Leather 2

Quarterstaff: The Tomb of Setmoth
(none on record)

The Unreleased Games

Animal House
(none on record)

The Abyss
(none on record)

Arena
Arena II: The Monster Strikes Back
Arena II, the day after

The Wizard of Oz parody
Leather Goddesses of Oz
Assault on Oz
Wizard of Bob
Godzilla meets the Wizard of Oz
Attack of the Killer Oz-moids
Fast Times at Oz High
Invasion of the Oz-snatchers
Dorothy Does Oz
Ozzie Dearest

Chameleon
Confetti

Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.
Rager
enRAGERed
Dr. Pimento's Wild P.A.R.T.I.

The Restaurant at the End of the Universe
(none on record)

Timesink
(none on record)

Life at Infocom

InfoDope, Infocom's in-house newsletter

Issue #1:

Tuesday Imp lunches are generally a time of light-hearted talk over nectar and ambrosia. Last week, talk turned tough as the Imps, in their monthly union meeting took a strike vote against Infocom. Union rep Steve Meretzky read a prepared statement to the press explaining the Imps Union disgruntlement with management over such issues as free agency, overtime, benefits, and bagels.

The striking Imps set up picket lines outside 125 CambridgePark Drive carrying signs proclaiming "Info Unfair!" and "More Bagels, More Freedom!" Picket lines by sympathetic Teamsters were set up in Cresskill, NJ, Mountain View, CA, Menlo Park, CA, and Upper Sandusky, OH (just for the hell of it). Back in Cambridge, Infocom's Micro Systems Group and Testing Department refused to cross the picket line in a show of solidarity with the Imps.

Chris Reeve, InfoVice Pres of Development explained that management has been trying to get the Imps to the bargaining table for months, but they refused to come. Dave Lebling, an Imp Union leader, hearing this, exclaimed, "He's full of grueshit. Trying to talk with management is like a bad wizard trying to nitfol. It just doesn't happen. They've been stubborn for months and haven't once even approached anything vaguely resembling a bargaining table."

Mike Dornbrook, InfoMarketing Director, the most vocal of management explained later that Beyond Zork, Border Zone, Sherlock, Infocomics, and a host of other games are in danger. But management has a plan should the Imps stage a long strike.

"Bring on the NURDs!" shouted Gabrielle Accardi, InfoSales Development Manager. NURDs are Non Union Replacement Designers that management plans to employ on a per game basis if the Imps stay on strike. Management plans to bring in the NURDs through the steam tunnels from 150 CambridgePark Drive,, thereby avoiding a possible confrontation with the Imps. Plans are also set to release "replacement games" for those that are endangered by the strike.

"Beyond Bork" would be the tale of a misguided judge, written by Robert Bork, who was a tester at Infocom, but when he couldn't get a job as an Imp, quit and went on to Yale Law School. "Sort of Groan" is a game about East-West Summit meeting in the late 1980's that will be written by Frank Blank, a distant cousin of Marc Blank, the designer of "Border Zone."

Unconfirmed rumors also exist that InfoManagement has contacted Michael Bywater as a potential NURD.

In a flagrant violation of company policy and good taste, the Imps have booby-trapped the 20 with all sorts of witty sayings to disrupt the flow of replacement games, but thus far there has been no violence.

Issue #2:

Triton: A Scandal Waiting To Happen???

As Activision moves ahead with its plans to purchase Triton, the future could look mighty bleak. Triton is a well-known and well-respected mail order house, currently carrying Activision products amongst its extensive product line. The purchase of Triton is intended to strengthen Activision's Direct Sales and to unify Activision's and Infocom's Direct Mail programs. However, stormy weather may be on the horizon.

A member of InfoDope's crack investigative team, penetrated the iron-clad human resources department at Triton, and managed to get hired. Once inside, he sniffed around a lot and nosed his way into things nobody was to know, all-the-while appearing to toe the line. As expected, his reports show that Triton is but a front for a drug and stolen merchandise ring.

Apparently, orders placed on a special 800 number had nothing to do with software. When a "customer" ordered GHOSTBUSTERS on this number, he would be shipped a half gram of heroin and could charge the $100 price to his Visa or Mastercard. Likewise, MINDSHADOW orders were filled with Mescaline, ALTER EGO with Hashish oil, SPINDIZZY with Valium, TASS TIMES IN TONE-TOWN with Barbiturates, and ZOIDS with LSD. TOP FUEL ELIMINATOR seems to be one of many codes for ordering cocaine. The most expensive item on this special order form was HOWARD THE DUCK at $35,000 for a kilo of white powder.

Drug accessories are also sold through Triton. GARRY KITCHEN'S GAMEMAKER KIT is actually a crack laboratory in a box. I AM THE C128 customers receive a collection of drug paraphernalia, including a bong, a coke bullet, and a computer shaped roach clip.

Gamestar products sold through Triton are actually stolen jewelry, and it is still unconfirmed that Infocom boxes shipped from Triton contain counterfeit currency.

Triton apparently uses Activision employees to pick up some of the merchandise when they are "on vacation" in such tourist hotspots as Peru, Ecuador, and Brazil.

The big question, of course, is Does Activision know. Activision honcho Bruce Davis was unavailable for comment. Newly hired Director of Direct Marketing, Luigi "Big Looie" Clamari, was quite broken up at hearing the news, sniffling loudly, obviously in tears, during a brief telephone conversation.

Issue #3:

National Football League players, Chicago teachers, and Boston school bus drivers have just been joined on the picket line by strikers from a different quarter. Infocom, Inc. has announced that the development department, affectionately known as the "imps," has taken a vote to join the Teamsters (Local 42) and has gone out on strike effective immediately.

The striking imps are demanding higher wages, more bagel days, a shorter work week, free agency, better benefits, royalties, and no Friday Party duty. Management has been tough on the imps' demands, looking at bagels as the only point where they might give in.

"Police Reports", by Tomas Bok

These reports, though difficult to understand at times, provide insight into what was going on at Infocom.

Date: 30 Aug 1985 1053-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at ZORK>
Subject: Lloyd — wanted dead or alive. To: Tom, Da, Tomas, Max

That's right. You're not seeing things. Lloyd has been abducted by Mr. and Mrs. T, two abominable, abdominal thugs who dish out the knocks around the clock. Your objective - to find Lloyd at all costs. This is Land Ho's last mission with the Five-0. He's going back to police academy, although there are rumours that he might be convinced to come out of retirement to run one last mission, later this year, if the risks are great. Anyhow, meet at the elevators at noon, prompt. We can't wait any longer, this time, because limo's will be waiting at 2:00 to escort Land Ho to a Circus alpha meeting. (Read your code manuals. "Circus alpha meeting" is actually police lingo for an all-night drunk.)

12:00, elevators!
This is the big Ho Ho Over and out, from Chief Mai Tai.

Date: 20 Jun 1986 1009-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: drugs To: DA, TOMAS, VELDRAN, MAX

MESSRS. HO HO, LAND HO, CHIN HO, MAX HO:

We've received an emergency transmission from Slo Mo, our window on the drug subculture. Apparently, the world-wide drug vendor, ActiHo International, a firm which operates mostly out of the L.A. area, has dug in right here in Boston. There scam is this: free samples of Coke, Horse, Dust, and a new drug that my assistant, Dr. Funk (from Tahiti) has identified as "Diet Dr. Pepper." Once their targets are hooked, they cut them off, and start charging ridiculous prices. These sick activities must be curtailed at once. We scramble from the elevators at noon. Joses or bust. Boys, it is with zeal that I say these words:

"Welcome back to the force."

-Chief Mai Tai

P.S. A few minor points:

1. I talked to the Governor yesterday, and asked him about getting those Ferarris that you boys asked for. To quote, "Have another Tiki bowl, Chief." As usual, I followed orders.
2. Our dental benefit package is changing slightly next month. In order to be eligible for comprehensive protection under the new plan, you must have dentures by July 1.

Date: 27 Jun 1986 1009-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA, VELDRAN, MAX, TOMAS

Okay boys,

It's the case of the vivisected VP. What led to the downfall of the Bink. Boys, I know this sounds like some sort of nutty encounter group discussion, but believe me when I say these words: 'Foul Play.' Why is it then in our hands? Because one John Q. O'Leary was seen here in Hawaii only a few short hours before his (un)timely

demise. Myself and Dr. Funk have evidence proving that John was forced out of his job and his life in order to meet the payments of local drug lords. I call on you, the men of the Five O, to find the connection between John and these underworld chieftains. I suggest you pick up the scent at the elevators at noon. And Ho Ho, the next time you scathe the force by not showing up on schedule, I'll assign you 50 demerits, and I'll see to it that you spend YOUR July 4th in a damp canoe!!

-CMT (10:07 ETM)

Date: 2 Jul 1986 2303-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Villain To: da, veldran, max, tomas

Boys, you may not believe these words. You remember that syrupy sit-com about suburban life, entitled "Leave it to Beaver." Well, unbelievable as it may sound to you, "Lumpy" is back in town. Lumpy, once a pudgy ball of confusion, is running the largest crack syndicate in the islands. They gross millions every day. Boys - we must stop this menace before it stops us. I know it's thursday, but it JUST CAN'T WAIT.

- CMT

P.S. > I don't want Jerry Mathers to be disturbed, at his rest home in Fresno. We've already been getting complaints. Look for clues elsewhere. Also, I want you boys to be accountable for the dope you confiscate!!

12:00, elevators.

Date: 11 Jul 1986 1147-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: No, not again!!! To: MAX, DA, VELDRAN, TOMAS

Boys, I know that you may all be tired and overworked and down-in-the-dumps, but I've just received an emergency transmission from our man in Oahu, Boo Ho. According to Boo, a team of pint-sized villains are terrorizing local lemonade stands and backyard car-washes in order to squeeze out the competition. Dr. Funk suggests that drugs may be the crux of the so-called issue here, especially as far as the Kool-Aid (tm) stands are concerned. Boys, I must ask you to meet at the elevators at noon, and to scramble from there. We may have to visit PCU before we run the mission.

CMT, DFT

P.S. > Mo Ho at the motorpool has informed me that Chin Ho has totaled his eleventh squad car this week. The Le Squad Car will not be available for service, therefore. We may have to take Land Ho's V.W., christened the 'Mobile Dick.'

Date: 18 Jul 1986 1112-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Mr P To: DA, MAX, VELDRAN, TOMAS

Unbelievable as it may sound to you boys, Mr. PotatoHead has been abducted. Dr. Funk is certain that he is doomed to become a piece of drug paraphenalia for some lowlife. Mr. P was a friend to us all. He helped my son Piwi do his homework on several occasions, and without P's help there would have been no potato salad at last years five-o picnic. Let's do a friend a favor and find him, before those scum "rearrange his face" like they've threatened on so many occasions.

T.T.'s?? Something new and exciting?? Elevators, noon
Hoho over and out,
CMT

Date: 25 Jul 1986 0901-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
To: da

Chin, believe me when I say this: We need to recruit a new Five-0 force. Tom's away for the second week in a row, and you know what they say about Max. Any ideas for people to bring up from the police academy?

CMT

Date: 1 Aug 1986 0952-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
To: da, veldran, max, tomas

Dr. Funk and I have a special assignment for you boys this week. Supreme Court Justice Rehnquist was seen late last night, refilling his medium Pepsi at the Burger King self-service area. As you boys know, this process is illegal. Let's make this arrest as painless and by-the-textbook, even though we are dealing with one of the seven most important men in the country. This means temporarily forgetting his sixty-two moving violations. Scramble at noon.

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 8 Aug 1986 1123-EDT From: Bok Choy <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA, VELDRAN, TOMAS, MAX, JEFF

THEY SAVED LLOYD'S BRAIN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Details at noon. (Meet at the elevators. We go in style (my car).
BYOMusic

11:23 and have you checked the donuts?
CMT, DFT

Date: 22 Aug 1986 1018-EDT From: [Space for Rent] <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Five-0 To: da, veldran, max, tomas

First, boys, let me apologize for last weeks headline, reading, "They Saved Lloyd's Brain." The guy in the office next door was eating oysters, and one thing led to another. My mistake. (Although, I've heard the medical examiner whisper, "They saved Lloyd's liver!" to one of his associates — but no conclusive evidence yet.)

Second, we've received some sort of coded message from Radi-Ho, our communications man. It goes like this:

Miller's made the American way
Born and brewed in the USA
It's what you do and what you say
Miller's made the American way.

What could this mean? All of our best cypher analysts have pored over this one for hours, but nobody could make any sense out of it. They think it might be some kind of warning from the communists.

Let's discuss it over lunch. Meet for a PCU run at noon, elevators.

Guys with names like:
Chief Mai Tai Quasimodo Dr. Funk of Tahiti

Date: 22 Aug 1986 1117-EDT From: Lobby Shop 4 Candy <TOMAS at FRED>
To: max, da, veldran, tomas

Okay, since you boys are begging for it:

We leave at 12:30 from the elevators.
Chin Ho - No more excuses
Land Ho - No more Major Motion
Ho Ho - No more groveling and whining
Max Ho - No more Chernobyl meltdown accidents on the john.

Ho ho over and out

Date: 22 Aug 1986 1132-EDT From: Ed McMahon's liver <TOMAS at FRED>
To: da

No— Tom V. has to go at 12:30, that hetero!!!!!

Date: 29 Aug 1986 1024-EDT From: Ed McMahon's liver <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA, VELDRAN, MAX, TOMAS

Max Ho and Land Ho were on special assignment yesterday - they went to a local burger shack to pick up what's labelled (by the top crimelords of the island) the "Ho Bots." — Just an update. But this activity must take second string to a new flash up crime which I have only been aware of for the last two hours: in a tragic string of events, Larry Bud Mellman has gone berserk. Larry, noted as being "always very close to that thin line between humor and insanity" has finally crossed over the border, never to return. In a rash of killings, Mellman has slaughtered all of the grown-ups in the islands. Luckily, the force was unaffected. Let's be at those elevators at noon to roll to TT's to discuss our options. (PCU first.)

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 5 Sep 1986 1038-EDT From: Ed McMahon's liver <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Police Academy To: da, tomas, veldran, max

Boys, I know you may poo-poo on this idea, but what can I do? My good friend TJ Hooker has sent over four rookies from LA police academy. You must all be on your best behavior while we take these fresh new cops around. This means no excess violence, police brutality, or chemical abuse ... if anybody else is looking. I know I can trust you boys on this important mission. And if any of you boys owns a copy of the police manual in good condition (I'd use mine, but it looks like it fell in blender on margarita night, last week) I'd appreciate it if the rookies could borrow it.

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 12 Sep 1986 1107-EDT From: Ed McMahon's liver <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Aaiigghh To: DA, VELDRAN, TOMAS

...were the last words of Boze Ho before he passed out at the police ball last night. By the way, where were you boys?

In other news, 200 Elvis impersonators have swept through the islands, wreaking havoc and destruction. Some overheard comments of theirs, as they shot up Oahu:

"Get the fuck off my shoulder"
"You ain't nothin' but a hounddog. A DEAD hounddog."
"Love me tender, muthafucka!!"
"You step on my blue suede shoe again, and I'll put this M-16 up your ass!!!"

These impersonators MUST BE STOPPED!!!!!
12:00, Vators.

Date: 19 Sep 1986 0947-EDT From: Ferris Von Bulow <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Apologies To: DA, VELDRAN

...are in order. I regret that Mssr. Land Ho will not be able to join you boys today. I'm sending him to the dentist with Dr. Funk. Therefore, you boys will have to choose the weekly watering-hole yourselves.
(Cafeteria is right out, however.)
CMT, DFT

Ho ho over and out.

Date: 26 Sep 1986 1015-EDT From: About-face <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Five-O week in Review To: DA, MAX, VELDRAN, TOMAS

The rumors have been confirmed. Richard Nixon is now the Maui chapter president of that infamous organization the Man-Boy love society. To quote this once-sane man, "Soon the whole Island will be a slave to my mastery." This organization of sicks must be whacked, even if it means that Max Ho's membership might be jeapordized. Let's get these fuckers before the state song gets changed from "Roll over Beethoven" to "Bend over Beethoven."

Chief Mai Tai

P.S.: Season opener of Miami Vice tonite. Let's all be in my office with notepads and a trinitron at ten o'clock sharp.

Date: 1 Oct 1986 0851-EDT From: Chief Mai Tai <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: DA.ALM To: DA

Did you see the message? It's ALM's first b-day!! It doesn't even know how to talk yet. (MR. T, HI —> "You can't see any here.")

We know ho French Toast Sticks should be,
tom

Date: 3 Oct 1986 0956-EDT From: Chief Mai Tai <TOMAS at FRED>
To: FIVE-O: ; cc: JEFF

Boys, your attention, please. In response to the sanctions imposed by the Federal government on South Africa last night, Myself and Dr. Funk (from Tahiti) have decided to cancel tonight's policeman's ball/Miami Vice

note-taking session. Instead, there will be an IBM-burning up at the police academy. Everybody should show up with an IBM at 8. (No Compaqs, they've got enough problems on their own)

We'll discuss this gala event at noon.
Chief

PS: Jeff, are you a regular?

Date: 17 Oct 1986 1016-EDT From: Chief Mai Tai <TOMAS at FRED>
To: FIVE-O: ;

Boys, Dr. Funk reports that our ugly suspicions are correct. As some of you may know, the hit series 'Pee Wees Playhouse' was displaced last Saturday by little known 'Galaxy High School.' After nearly ninety man-hours in the lab, our cartoon specialists determined that 'Galaxy High' is a front for a plan to transmit scrambled messages to the Russians via the airwaves. (The scrambling sequence is the reason that you didn't get any of the jokes.) We've found that the mastermind for the plan is actually, (you guessed it) — Shagg from Scooby Doo. We've suspected Shaggy of being a closet pot-head for years now — those hours spent with Scoob in the so-called Mystery Machine;' those visits to the kitchen involving the consumption of twelve-foot-high sandwich; and did you notice that he's always got the hots for Velma? Let's track him down at Rathskellers. Should we bring Daphne Korn or Velma Goldman?

Aloha,
Chief Mai Tai

Date: 24 Oct 1986 1115-EDT From: Chief Mai Tai <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Ooohh Yeeaaahh. To: FIVE-O: ;

Boys, our special agents on the mainland are reporting wholescale vending of pieces of product to "Dealers" and "Distributors" here on the islands. These are scams that would stop at nothing in order to "pass the pit" and to "see some black ink." (Dr. Funk is unsure of the nomenclature involved here, but has traced this 'black ink' to certain illicit banana boats running out of Cuban waters.) A tapped phone conversation with one Jim Levy reveals:

"We're starting to get excited about... our European operation. We think that our third quarter [probably means quarter kilo — ed] is going to make dollars excess of our forecast [hazy, overcast — ed], now that we've acquired Infocom [notorious liquid which stimulates euphoria complex — ed] and electric dreams [no explanation necessary — ed], ...and we think we'll see no more red [red hawaiian shake — ed] until next season."

Obviously, these poi vendors must be stopped, even if it means our badges.

Ho ho over and out,
Deputy Chief Foo Too Many,
by order of Chief Mai Tai

P.S. — I hoped you boys watched Crime Story, as per orders, night. If anybody saw "Alf," he's off the force.

Date: 27 Oct 1986 1117-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA

You know what this week's five-o mail is going to be about. As Dr. Funk will tell you every time, "This police force ain't big enough for more than one O'Leary." I'll keep you posted as the details roll in.

Date: 31 Oct 1986 1045-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: FIVE-O: ;

A New York gang known only as the "Spark Plugs" has been sighted on Oahu. These guys think they're heavy hitters, but they're really just a bunch of lightweights, like most New Yorkians. Lets make this a routine roundup. Elevators, noon.

Chief Met Tai

Date: 7 Nov 1986 1014-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Cranes on the skyline To: FIVE-O: ;

Just sighted on the islands: that infamous king-pin of below-level finance. We think he's running a numbers game somewhere. Dr. Funk (now broke) is absolutely positive of it. Let's stop this demonic presence before the whole state has to pay. (In large bills, thank you)

Chief Mai Tai
Hawaii Five-0

P.S.: The police celtics pool will officially start tomorrow. I should be able to do well with the money I won from Megabucks last night.

Date: 14 Nov 1986 1104-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: FIVE-O: ;

(A clarification: I forgot to mention last week that the man we were seeking was Bob "Cranes on the horizon" Crane.)

Boys, it may take a few moments, maybe more, for you to digest the news that I am about to relay. The body of our old, deceased pal, bartender Lloyd Spigot, has just been sold to the Nicaraguans for liver research. We can't let an old chum get desecrated by those below-the-border bumpkins. I know I speak for the whole force, maybe all of mankind, when I say these words: (notebooks open, pencils ready please) We can't let Lloyd go to those 'noid's. (Well, I guess it sounded more dramatic buzzing around my head than it looked on paper.)

Elevators, noon,
Chief Mai Tai

P.S.: This time let's control our bowels. Max, your movements, with the force of Krakatoa, will have to wait until 3. Just joking, just joking...

Date: 14 Nov 1986 1107-EST From: bunk rot <MAX at FRED>
Subject: Yo yo, five-o To: tomas cc: veldran, da

Chief! What's all this I'm hearing in the news about the Iranian Connection? Is our cover blown? All those weeks of undercover police work with those greasy Iranians shot to hell because the Prez went soft over a few HOSTAGES?!! Fill us in boss! What's the truth?

-max ho

Date: 26 Nov 1986 1013-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: FIVE-O: ;

Gentlemen of the force:

We have received some very disappointing news. Activision has for months been funneling profits from Little Computer People to the Contras in Nicaragua. Jim Levy revealed in a press conference yesterday:

"Well, we're not sure what was sent where, but it seems that we've been funding the production of at least six pieces of helicopter. I guess we just forgot where the furniture was, and now we're going to see some cutbacks in our worldwide operation."

While staff from 'Activision America' and 'Activision U.K.' spoke extensively with our detectives, the board of directors of 'Activision Nicaragua' was unavailable for comment. I want you boys on the case, and let's see some heads a'rollin. 10-4.

Chief Mai Tai

P.S. -> The Hoodoo is down for the count, according to Ho Made, our insider in the french fries underworld. Let's all think about where we'd like to go.

Date: 5 Dec 1986 1111-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: In cold blood… To: FIVE-O: ;

...The Hoodoo barbecue has officially expired in pithy and sorrow. Boys, let it be from the bottom of my heart that I speak these words:

IT'S ABOUT FUCKING TIME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! HA HA HA HA HA!!!!!!

Sorry, I lost control there for a moment. It won't happen again. Anyhow, does anybody have any good ideas for a place to eat? (Not the brewery, please.) Anyhow, on to the case! ...

There is a new form of pollution, here in Honolulu. A low-life brand of scum that I had thought only existed deep underground, (or New York City.) A new group of "Heavy Metal" "musicians" has banded together under the name 'Suicidal Aquatic Bug-Fuckers.' Unable to promote the band's sick, unwholesome image on stage, the band has taken to the streets, and has instituted a new breed of violence and corruption here in the city. Here's a list of band members, so that you boys can be on the lookout:

Che Guevara : Lead Guitar, skittering sound effects, guerilla warfare
Bobby Vinton : Lead Vocals, gargling noises.
Dick Van Patton : Bass Guitar, groin thrusts
Julio Iglesias : Rhythm guitar, backup vocals, flamethrower
Mr. T : Drums, grunts, threats
Charo : Synthesizers, Prophets, vomiting

You boys had better be on-guard; it may take every man on the force to put these Ho's away.

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 9 Dec 1986 1459-EST From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: DA

Party Boys: Case of the mystery terrorist acts at Infocom.
Do we kick into action tonite with a formal investigation, or what??

Mysteriously,
Joe

Date: 12 Dec 1986 1006-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: A whale of a good time To: da, veldran, tomas, max

Boys, I know that you've been working hard around the clock for the whole season. I realize that there has been grumblings within the force, from Ho Ho about the commissary food; from Max Ho about the long hours and short paychecks; from Chin Ho's stomach at mealtime. So, to help you wind down and relax as we approach this holiday season, I visited Ma Jong Ho's house of joy, and hired two dates to come along on today's lunch. I hope that you boys know the importance of sharing, and that you have fun. Just kick back and let "Jello-lovin'" Josie and "Lengthwise" Lorri show you a good time.

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 9 Jan 1987 0919-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: Hallucinations To: FIVE-0 at FRED

Boys, two hallucinations on the force have come to my attention:

1) Some queer-bait cop says Land Ho is still on the force. As we all well know, Land Ho is a new cop on the Orlando Vice.

2) Someone overheard Joel-Ho saying, "Squeeze me you flaming hell-mama! Drink my seething blood and spew hot death on my Cartier tie!" We've got to stop drug use on the force, before more of these hallucinations appear.

Today's mission is a tough one. We've learned that some motley band of rip-off artists has sprung up on the islands. Known only by the pseudonym "Aldus Support Hotline," these criminals pray on the weak and destitute. Deception, subversion, frustration, this gang uses all the latest in psychological combat. But the five-0 is stronger, quicker, and badder. So go get 'em boys, and to Judy, Cindy and Alan (probably all the same person), I give these words: "Hey you bunch of total jerk-heads! Look out, because we're the bad boys of the force, and we've got your number (1-800...)."

Okay boys, you've learned your lines, and you know where the furniture is... so get the fuck on stage and kick some hind-quarters!!!!

Chief Mai Tai
Chief, Hawaii Five 0
Head 'Est' trainer, People Express

Date: 30 Jan 1987 1155-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: Mission To: five-0 at FRED

Wo Fat has been spotted at a nearby dive. His number's up (It's a figure of speech, Max, put away your lighter!) and his ass is ours! (Don't get excited, Chin Ho, Sodomy is a crime nowadays.) Let's roll from the elevators, we'll nab him at that dive, The Crossroads.

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 20 Feb 1987 1045-EST From: beyond murk syntax <MAX at FRED>
Subject: bok choy To: veldran at FRED cc: hollywood at FRED

Well team, it looks like the rumors are true. Chief MaiTai left the station last night in search of some of BK fix. He never returned. This morning we learned that the score must have been laced. With what we don't know. The boys in the lab are working on it now. Anyway, while the chief is detoxing, we've got a mission. I think the

culprits are wise to us anyway, so hitting up the King for some answers will be futile. This is gonna call for some real investigative drinking ... uh, thinking! We roll at noon.

And remember - Mai Tai is counting on us to do him proud.

max Ho

Date: 6 Mar 1987 1150-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: Today's scam To: FIVE-0 at FRED cc: JEFF at FRED

I just got a wire from the entomologist. Tom Veldran won't be with us this week. We've brought in a crack substitute from Indo-China — Jeff Fan. Don't give him grief, he's not an 'Ass Ho.'

This week's case:

A close friend in Oahu sent me a telegram late last night. Apparently, Oliver North, the ex security adviser, has turned up in the islands. He's using the income from an illegally-fixed hermit crab racing outfit to fuel the war on drugs. We must stop this man before he's run all the good drugs out of town. The next thing you know, smoking cigarettes will be outlawed in the workplace!! Anyhow, let's react to this hot wire and kick North's ass south!

Speaking of hot wires, we need a heater for today's crab race.

The ho ho over and out,
Chief Mai Tai

Date: 20 Mar 1987 1054-EST From: beyond murk syntax <MAX at FRED>
Subject: Squad Car To: five-0 at FRED

Bad news fellas - the new Five-0 vehicle, the Lambourghini Contach is in the shop this week. One of the mag wheels chipped during a 180mph+ chase last night. So until we get that baby back on the road, the Service Dept. has given us a loaner to make due. It's the same popped-cherry-red finish as the LC, with the black-out sport trim, but it just isn't the same as far as the gonads are concerned. All in all, it'll do until we get the cream puff back. Max-ho has the keys. Roll at noon!

Motor Pool

Date: 30 Apr 1987 1008-EDT From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: join us To: da, tomas, veldran

Special Five-0 meeting. 11:00 at vators. Yow.

Date: 22 May 1987 1124-EDT From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Escort Service To: veldran, max, da, tomas

Men, I don't have to tell how much flak I took last week when you arrested Kitty Dukakias (greek to me), the first lady of the Islands, for street walking. Now I'm sure it was a clean bust, but I'm still wiping egg off my face.

Anyway, to keep you pineapples in shape and far away from the action I'm assigning you to escort a shipment of Hawaiian shirts to the docks for shipment to the mainland. As you know recently the japanese have been dumping Hawaiian shirts on to the world market, flooding the distribution channels in an attempt to take over the market. It is imperative that these shirts reach the docks.

Now get to work you coconut rats!

Chief Mai Tai

Z

Babies and Birthdays

Date: 4 Apr 1983 1715-EST
Subject: GABBY'S B-DAY

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: CONSUMERS at ZORK

7-16-83

Date: 5 Apr 1985 1030-EST
Subject: InfoBaby 2

From: Tom Veldran <TOM at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

And so it came to pass on April 4, 1985, at 5:14 pm, at Beth Israel Hospital, Mother MEO begat Mitchell Thornton O'Connor, weighin g in at 7 lbs. 13.5 oz, 19.75" long. Mother and child are in terrific health. Amen.

Date: 1 Apr 1986 1428-EST
Subject: confusion

From: HEIDI KORN <HEIDI at FRED>
To: swg

George and Martha have eloped. Abigail is pregnant by Cecil, and Naomi was last seen on the Cote d'Azur with Wagner. Remember, NO hints to Sun City! Hope all is well with you.

Date: 12 Feb 1987 1019-EST
Subject: Another Horn

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Ariel Cezanne Horn. Female. Born 10 February 1987 at 6:16 PM to Dan and Lori Horn of Fern Park, Florida. Weight 7 lbs 7 oz. Mother and child doing fine.

Date: 5 Dec 1987 1216-EST
Subject: Birth Announcement

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Blair Elizabeth Feehan, a 7 pound 14 ounce baby girl, born December 3rd.

Date: 30 Jan 1988 2214-EST
Subje ct: For The Record

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Daniel Rock Meretzky
born on January 30, 1988
at 2:27 a.m
weight: 7 pounds, 2.5 ounces
length: 21 inches

[please post]

Date: 2 Feb 1988 1125-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: update
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Betty and Danny are both home and doing splendidly. Danny is feeding excellently, sleeping moderately well, soiling diapers at a record pace, and has 425 out of 600 points in Spellbreaker.

Visitors are most welcome, but call first.

Re: work. Feel free to call me with any major issues, and send mail about any minor issues. I'll be logging in a few times and day, and I hope to be in for a few hours every few days.

Date: 6 Feb 1988 1300-EST
From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: hi!
To: MARC

Hi! We just got your card/book in the mail, and got a big kick out of it! And we'll be sending photos with the birth announcement, probably in about a week.

Betty's doing fine; it looked like she was about to get a cold but then she changed her mind. A little bit of cramping as the uterus shrinks, a little bit of pain from the episiotomy, but nothing out of the ordinary. She's having the time of her life breast-feeding. Danny's great, he's so well-behaved it's scary. Sure, he cries when he's hungry, and when he's cold (i.e. bathing), but not too loudly and he's even cute when he cries.

I, on the other hand, am exhausted. Laundry, cooking, cleaning, diapering, shopping... I tell you, this week certainly gives me a vast new respect for my mother.

Stu's coming over any minute; we're going x-c skiing while Betty and Fritzi gurgle over Danny.

Please give our love to Cezanne.

Date: 18 Jul 1988 0848-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: it's a boy!
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

ALEX ILSON
Born 7/18/88, 5:00 am
7 1/2 pounds
The mother is doing great;
The father is still unconscious.
Other names considered: Magellan, Gulliver.

Date: 29 Jul 1988 1144-EDT
From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Lunch
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Okay, it'll be 18 people at Yangtze at 12:30. Meet around the reception area in the 12:00-12:10 range to carpool.

Note: it's also a birthday lunch for Nancy—she's 21 today.

The reservation is in the name of Infocom.

Date: 15 Aug 1988 1021-EDT
From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: It's a girl
To: everybody at FRED

Gabrielle Reeve, born 8/14/88. Chris couldn't provide any other details, due to severe lack of sleep.

Date: 18 Aug 1988 2223-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: baby report To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I just met the youngest Lebling-Rothrock. She's much cuter than Dave, has more hair than I've ever seen on a baby, and is still nameless. Dave sends his regrets that he'll be missing the picnic.

Date: 29 Aug 1988 1336-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Scott's settlement, etc. To: MARC

Baby is Kathleen Rothrock Lebling, aka Kate or Katie (Katy?). Fatherhood is pretty reasonable so far; from what I hear I'm having an easier time of it than Chris is: Kate tends to tank up before bedtime and sleep 3-4 hours at a stretch during the night. She only cries when she's hungry (with maybe a 10% probability of boredom or gas or other random causes). She's really a lot of fun, and she doesn't really do all that much yet, so she'll presumably be even more fun later.

Vis a vis Scot: Sigh. I think basically all he's done is make the settlement that we all thought we could more or less make at any time. I know I felt all along that they would be willing to settle for about half the original demand. All Scot has done is confirm that. It makes it very difficult to negotiate a lower number (but admittedly also more difficult for them to insist on a higher one). I think it would have been better to wait until their lawyers respond to Joel and Herb's points, since that was underway anyway. If Bruce et al really think their case is so air-tight, lawyers being lawyers they are going to get a surprise when the response comes back; no lawyer ever says a case is airtight. Scot seemed to think that both you and Joel were willing to settle on substantially the same terms. He also made a veiled warning (threat?) about any attempt by Activision to compensate those of us who are still associated with the company if they did it "obviously," such as by a one-time bonus. Scot has always been conservative and risk-averse, so this all doesn't surprise me too much, but I think his timing is very bad.

Date: Tue, 2 May 89 10:01:58 EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
To: joseph@glenfiddich Subject: Hi

Yay! Then you will have more free time than you know what to do with. (Somehow that sentence seems strange but I can't figure out what's wrong with it.)

As for me, I have two more days until my birthday! But I will be spending it in this marathon meeting they are having. At least the meeting is about my job (so to speak), so it won't be too bad. I hope not, anyway.

I kind of like this foggy weather. It is very mysterious.

Famous babies:

(NEWS)
Baby M - 2 mothers, 2 names
Baby Faye - Loma Linda baboon heart
Jessica McClure - Midland Texas well

(FICTION)
Baby Bear - Goldilocks
Roo - Winnie the Pooh
Pearl Prynne - The Scarlet Letter
Duchess's Baby - Alice in Wonderland
Winken, Blinken, & Nod

(COMICS)
Baby Huey - Caspar & Wendy series
Baby Dumpling - Blondie
Sweetpea - Popeye
Jor-El - Superman
Nick Newman - Adam
Jeffrey Caucus-Redfern - Doonesbury

(NAME ONLY)
Baby Watson - cheesecake
Baby Doc - Duvalier of Haiti
Babe the Blue Ox - Paul Bunyan

(MOVIES/TV)
Baby LeRoy - W.C. Fields
Henry Pu Yi - The Last Emperor (of China)
Andrew Keaton - Family Ties
Little Ricky Ricardo - I Love Lucy
Rosemary's Baby
Damien - The Omen
Satchel Farrow-Allen
Baby Jane - Whatever Happened to
Dumbo

(INFOCOM)
Christopher Genatossio
Jacqueline & Mitchell O'Connor
Baby Robot - Leather Goddesses
Baby Grue - Wishbringer

(SONG TITLES)
Baby Face
Baby It's Cold Outside
Baby the Rain Must Fall
Walkin' My Baby Back Home
Sweet Baby James

Baseball/Softball info

The All-Great Underground Empire Team
==========

C - Johnny Wrench
1B - Grue Gehrig
2B - Manny Trollo
SS - Ernie Bank
3B - Frank "Gnome Run" Laker
Mgrs. - Chalice Green, Connie Sack

LF - Ty Frobb
CF - Willie Maze
RF - Babe Flathead
P - Cyclops Young, Tube Waddell
rp - Tug McGrue
... and, of course, the commissioner is Buoy Kuhn.

Welcome to the Info-Roto-League-O!

First, the most important fact: draft day is Saturday, April 15, beginning precisely at 11:00 AM (or thereabouts). Plan on an all day (and probably into the evening) event, here at the beautiful headquarters of the world famous game cartel, Infocom.

Enclosed is the following information:

Rotisserie League Stats from 1988
Roster of available players and positions (hopefully)
A copy of the (simplified) rules
Copy of the Opening day injury list (you may draft from it)
Copy of USA Today's quick team previews

A few more salient facts:

The roster budget is $26. That means you have $26 to spend on 23 players, as follows:
5 outfielders
1 second baseman
1 shortstop
1 middle infielder (shortstop or second baseman)
1 third baseman
1 first baseman
1 corner man (first or third baseman)
1 designated hitter
9 pitchers

No money is needed on draft day. All money gets collected after the season, and the various people get paid off. Also, a small surcharge ($5?) will probably be added, as we are getting our statistics from USA Today computer. Figure on a cost of about $30-50 (if you don't win of course!). The player who comes in first gets 50% of the pot, second place gets 25%, third place 15%, and fourth get 10%. All prices in the handout and in the books in the Bibliography should be divided by 10, to get our prices. The Current Commissioner-for-Life for the Info-Roto-League-O is Tim Anderson. Any and all rule decisions, suspensions, and general police actions will be handle by him. I, Jon Arnold, am your Data General. I will keep statistics and other such mundane and incredibly boring details as handy as I can.

Okay, let's have some fun out there!

Jonathan Arnold

Bibliography:

Rotisserie League Baseball - The Official Rulebook and Complete Guide to Player Values, by Glen Waggoner and Robert Sklar, Bantam Books $7.95. A must have; contains the official rules (no kidding) as well as invaluable player ratings, strategies and history.

Patton's 1989 Fantasy Baseball Price Guide, by Alex Patton, Simon & Schuster (Fireside), $8.95. Slight mis-named (really gives what he feels players were worth last year), but contains many insights into players and strategies.

The Fantasy Baseball Abstract, by Wayne M. Welch, Perigee Books, $8.95. Rates players from zero to 5 stars, looks at the teams, and covers plenty of Rotisserie strategy.

The Sporting News Official Baseball Register, Ed. Barry Siegel, The Sporting News, $10.95. Complete register and statistics of everyone on a major league roster. Invaluable for deciding on that little known phenom from Arkansas.

Magazines:

Baseball America's Baseball '89 - Baseball America, a baseball biweekly newsletter, is the acknowledge expert on the minor leagues. Much useful discussion on young players. Two articles for Fantasy League owners (that's you!)

Street & Smith's Baseball - Team, season, and minor league reviews. All the stats.

The Sporting News 1989 Baseball Yearbook - Team reviews, stats.

Bill Mazeroski's Baseball '89 - Complete team reviews, fun reading and the best minor league coverage. Also, 1 good article on Fantasy League drafting.

Computer and Employee Nicknames

InfoComputers:

Fred Spike Zork Zork II "the 20": DEC-20 "the 11": PDP-11

Date: 19 Feb 1985 0819-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Uptime To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

I think the Zork II machine has broken its previous uptime record and is either nearing or passing the record of the old Zork machine (now Fred). It's been up for over 745 hours (over 31 days) since the last crash.

Employee Nicknames used in their e-mail

Steve, a tester
- Assertive Klan Newt
- Rankest Evil Newt
- Venereal Task Twins
- Lord Wat
- Mickey Hatcher=HERO

Max
- Eat at Joe's
- Bunk Rot
- Beyond murk syntax
- Buxom Tyranny Desk

David G. Anderson
- Hollywood Dave Anderson
- Frank Booth

Timothy A. Anderson
- Chomper
- Zork Historian

J.D. Arnold
- John Delilah
- aJoltRanOnHand

Bob Bates
- Challenge, Inc.
- Eat At Robber's
- Best rare boat

Joel M. Berez
- Mr. O'Jezebel

Brian T. Berkowitz
- Spike Berkowitz

Marc Samuel Blank
- Umbrellas: A Snack?
- General Blank (Ret.)

Tomas Bok
- Bok Choy
- Chief Mai Tai
- Bokster
- Bokkles

Gary Brennan
- Angry Banner
- Captain Bug
- Lurkin' USA

Amy Briggs
- Har-har 'n Avast Me!
- Cordelia Braithwaite
- Shiver me timbers
- Bright Gray Sum
- Could be worse
- Amelia
- A Musical Yak
- Homebody Briggs
- Babberley Briggs
- Pollyantha Briggs
- Amaranthine Briggs
- My Bright Sugar
- This Margy Burg
- Mirth Gas Rugby

Ernie Brogmus
- Burnin' Ernie Brogmus

Michael Dornbrook
- In-Basket Mike

Suzanne C. Frank
- Skiff

Scott Fray
- GANDALF

Stu Wilbur Galley
- Noisome Stu Galley
- Teary Lust Gal
- Salty Rug Tale
- Sultry Gelata
- Etuart Galli
- Least ugly rat
- Gutsy lateral
- A trusty legal
- Gray Lust Tale
- Surly teat gal
- Ultra Sly Gate
- WritesGreatLulaby
- Steal ugly art!
- Late Lt. Sugary
- Truly Gas Tale
- Truly eat slag!
- Stray ale glut
- I RegretWallabyLust
- YearsWillGetBrutal!
- Wally'sBuglerAttire

Stu Wilbur Galley (cont.)
- Screen Writer Guild
- Try Algae Lust!
- Sultry Gelata
- Beyond Stu Galley
- Straight White Grue
- "Read my bits!"

Paul H. Gross
- P. Henry Hoppy
- The Sieve

Stuart Kirsch
- Risk Such Tart
- Stella
- Cut Skirt Rash
- Ick! Trash Rust!
- Trust Sir Hack
- Risk Hurts Cat
- Shinghatsubai
- Rick as Thrust
- Ask Cris Truth
- Curtis T. Shark

Elizabeth Langosy
- A toy English blaze
- She ate lazy goblin
- Eliz
- Elitzna Langizi
- Style H Zabaglione
- Zany Ghost Label

P. David Lebling
- Buckets o' Blood
- Big Land Devil
- Avg. Bill Need
- Lend Big Veal

Steve Meretzky
- EverestEnzymeTrick
- Men Try Zeke's Vet
- Call Me Ishmael
- Melvin of Arabia

Brian Moriarty
- Prof
- Professor

John O'Leary
- Binky

Jon Palace
- Pleasure Palace
- Chat on a jean lap
- Japan Hath No Lace
- Piece of Manager
- Banana fan a
- No tern unstoned
- Jon: a nyce pal
- An Opec Taj Nahal
- Chaaa on Planet J
- Hal Japan At Once
- a cap no jel
- Cajan Lope
- Alan J. Cope
- Al J. Capone

Brad Sagarin
- Dragon

Linde Simpson
- Le

Tom Veldran
- Inhalation Booth

Employees that didn't use any nicknames:

Donna
Gabrielle
Lisa
Tom
Dean G. Agnew
Michael S. Berlyn
Duncan Blanchard
Kurt Boutin
Liz Cyr-Jones
Christopher O. Erhardt
Craig A. Fields
Jennifer L. Fine
Jacob Galley
Tyler C. Gore
Dan Horn
Richard Ilson
Mike Kawahara
Andy S. Kaluzniacki
Heidi Korn
Jim Lawrence
Poh C. Lim
Jeff O'Neill
Joseph Prosser
Joy Pulver
Michael G. Quinn
Chris L. Reeve
Mark C. Sawtelle
Barry L. Starr
Kenneth Story
Tom Veldran
Jerry Wolper
Albert Vezza

Games they played

Diplomacy:

Date: 3 Apr 1984 1450-EST
Subject: Players, rules

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: DIPLOMACY at ZORK

I have replaced Ernie as the gamesmaster for the Diplomacy game. Brian Moriarty has replaced me as Turkey (although to most of you I'll always be Turkey). The players are:

Steve Meretzky	- France	Poh Lim	- Austria	Tom Veldran	- England
Mike Dornbrook	- Russia	Dave Anderson	- Germany	Dan Horn	- Italy
Brian Moriarty	- Turkey				

I have posted a set of the rules on the bulletin board outside of Gabrielle's office for reference. Please don't remove it for too long.

The first move is Thursday at 5:30 PM. I would like to change the game to two moves per week, Monday at 5:30 and Thursday at 5:30. I think the game will proceed better this way, especially since there are so many newcomers to Diplomacy - the second game, in which everyone will be experienced, will come sooner.

Please read your mail daily for news about the Game. I have set up a mailing list called DIPLOMACY which includes all of the players, me, and Ernie (who is interested). Let me know what you think about the Monday move.

Date: 3 Apr 1984 1501-EST
Subject: Rules

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: DIPLOMACY at ZORK

Steve explained some of the rules to you on Monday, but let me just say a few things:

1) Moves should be given to me in person or sealed in my mailbox. After hours, moves can be placed under my door.
2) Remember that you can submit any number of alternate moves, including moves that supercede others. If you submit a move that says 'Ignore all future moves', I will dutifully ignore any others received after that one, EXCEPT if instructions are altered ALONE and IN PERSON.
3) If you contemplate turning in more than one move, you should ALWAYS put a date and time on it so that I can tell which is the most recent. This is especially important if the moves are made after hours.
4) I don't care who does what with the game board which is located in the 1st floor conference room. The ONLY official representation of the board will be the xerox-copy posted on the Diplomacy bulletin board across from Gabrielle's office. This map will be updated after each move to reflect the current situation. I will post the first one soon for Winter 1900.
5) Ambiguous or contradictory moves will be ignored. Please be specific. For the countries with two coasts, you should specify which is meant. If you have any questions, ask.
6) I am not around until about 6:15 on Mondays, so the Monday move (if it exists) can't be made until about 6:30. The Thursday move will be processed at 5:30. In the event that some players must make a retreat, I will attempt to contact them as soon as possible for their decision, in the worst cast by computer mail. If all retreats are obtained on Monday and Thursday afternoons, I will post the new map immediately. If someone isn't around, I will wait until NOON the following day to hear their decision. Decisions can be given personally, in a note, or by computer mail. Maps for all moves will be posted AT THE LATEST at NOON on the following day.

Date: 3 Apr 1984 1725-EST
Subject: Retreats

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: DIPLOMACY at ZORK

Remember the following concerning retreats:

There is NO consultation between players. PLEASE be honest about this when the retreats don't happen 'til the next morning.

Also remember that you may choose to disband an army/fleet rather than retreating it. You cannot convoy a retreating army.

Date: 3 Apr 1984 1726-EST
Subject: Examples

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: diplomacy at ZORK

I have posted maps illustrating the examples in the rule book. It would be useful for the new players to sit down with the rules and the examples to 1) understand the rules and 2) understand the way the maps are written.

Date: 27 Apr 1986 1254-EDT
Subject: Diplomacy?

From: SWG.J at FRED
To: system

To All:

I remember a few months ago I saw a Diplomacy map showing the latest moves up on a bulletin board. Then I wondered if and when another game would start. Well now I'd like to invite you to sign up for a game that I would run. I need six and only six people. One drawback: You might need access to a real board, because I am not at the office too much. I'm not willing to post the results. Instead, I will send the players the moves of the season along with the new locations of the pieces. I'd appreciate it if someone else would set up a board in the kitchen or someplace.

Anyway, the turns would be due every week or twice a week depending on what the majority of the players prefers. If you are interested, write me. please include a list of the positions in the order that you would like to play them. (France, England, Germany means that you would rather play England than Germany, but you'd rather play France over everything.)

Thanks for reading ...
Jacob Galley

InfoPoker:

It's a little before midnight on a rainy Tuesday night in Cambridge. Deep within the Infocomplex a ragged group of Microhackers, Marketeers and Testers huddle around a table, intent on the happenings in the table's center. The struggle for a comprehensive creative focus for the next release? The decision-making process about compatibility label copy? Late night crab races? Planning Committee for a surprise birthday party for Steve Meretzky? Nay, nay, a million times nay! This could only be one thing—InfoPoker!!!

Of course no money changes hands—this is Massachusetts, remember, not Nevada—that would be quite illegal. The chips used are valued similarly to places that use real money, white chips worth 5 Zm., red ones worth 10 Zm., and those cute little blue ones valued at a hefty 25 Zm. But even though the currency (Zorkmids, for the uninitiated) has not been legal tender since shortly after the Age of Magick, the intensity remains high.

Rather than bore you with all the details of the many marvelous games that are played over the course of the night—most of which were chronicled by that most famous of gamblers, Scarne Flathead (a distant cousin to his excellency Dimwit Flathead the Excessive)—we'll take you to the heart of the matter, the last hand of the night: ZORKIAN HIGH-LOW-BALL SPIT IN THE POOL ROLL-EM OVERUNTIL THEY REACH UPPER

SANDUSKY BY PASSING THE TRASH, GRUES WILD.

General Info

Hands, Ranked

Pair	
2 Pair	
3 of a Kind	
Straight	5-4-3-2-A = "Wheel"
Flush (any five, same suit)	
Full House (3-2)	"Boat"
4 of a Kind	
Straight Flush	
5 of a Kind	

Terms

Draw - discard up to 3 cards (4 with ace), face down, receive replacements from deck.
Replace (Swoop) - like Draw but simultaneous, 1 card maximum, up or down card.
Roll - [arrange 5 cards face down, any order,] round of betting after each one exposed.

House Rules

Nickel-Dime-Quarter, 3 raises max, dime limit
Low low is 5-4-3-2-A (straights, flushes don't count)
Can't split a swing

Games

	5 Card Draw	deal 5, draw, HIGH ONLY
	5 Card Stud	deal 1/1, HIGH ONLY, [replace at end]
/	7-2	deal 2/1
\	Low-Ball	... low *hole* card wild for high hands only
	Anaconda	deal 7, pass (left/right) 3-2-1, roll
	Cannonball	deal 5, bet, draw, roll
/	Poor Boy	deal 7, discard 2, roll
\	Mike Boy	... HIGH ONLY
	Mexican (Malaysian)	deal 2, hole card wild, 5 total, (HI LO)
/	Infocom 7-card	deal 2/1, 4 simul up pushes, 1 simul down push
\	Infocom 5-card	deal 1/1, 4 simul up pushes, replace at end
/	Quigley Push	deal 2 down, 4 up pushes (any), 1 down push
\	Brennan Push	deal 1 down, 4 up pushes (any), replace at end
/	Lower Sanduski	deal 4, 1 up center, discard 1, 4 up center
\	Upper Sanduski	... last up card wild
	(Texas) Hold-em	deal 2 down, 3-1-1 center, HIGH ONLY
	Six Pack	deal 2/1, 6 down center in circle, 1 down card

Z

NetHack:

```
      Welcome to NetHack!              ( description of version 1.0 )

      NetHack is a Dungeons and Dragons like game where you (the adventurer)
descend into the depths of the dungeon in search of the Amulet of Yendor
(reputed to be hidden on the twentieth level).  You are accompanied by a
little dog that can help you in many ways and can be trained to do all
sorts of things. On the way you will find useful (or useless) items, (quite
possibly with magic properties) and assorted monsters.      You attack a monster
by trying to move into the space a monster is in (but often it is much
wiser to leave it alone).

      Unlike most adventure games, which give you a verbal description of
your location, hack gives you a visual image of the dungeon level you are on.

      Hack uses the following symbols:
            A to Z and a to z:  monsters.  You can find out what a letter
represents by saying "/ (letter)", as in "/A", which will tell you that 'A'
is a giant ant.
            - and |      These form the walls of a room (or maze).
            .  this is the floor of a room.
            #  this is a corridor.
            >  this is the staircase to the next level.
            <  the staircase to the previous level.
            `  A large boulder.
            @  You (usually).
            ^  A trap.
            )  A weapon of some sort.
            (  Some other useful object (key, rope, dynamite, camera, ...)
            [  A suit of armor.
            %  A piece of food (not necessarily healthy ...).
            /  A wand.
            =  A ring.
            ?  A scroll.
            !  A magic potion.
            +  A spellbook containing a spell you can learn;
               (but usually a doorway).
            }  A pool of water
            {  A fountain (your dungeon may not have these).
            \  An opulent throne (You may not have this either).
            $  A pile or pot of gold.

Commands:
      Hack knows the following commands:
      ?     help: print this list.
      Q     Quit the game.
      S     Save the game.
      !     Escape to a shell.
      ^Z    Suspend the game.
      <     up: go up the staircase (if you are standing on it).
      >     down: go down (just like up).
      kjhlyubn - go one step in the direction indicated.
            k: north (i.e., to the top of the screen),
            j: south, h: west, l: east, y: ne, u: nw, b: se, n: sw.
      KJHLYUBN - Go in that direction until you hit a wall or run
            into something.
      m     (followed by one of kjhlyubn): move without picking up
            any objects.
```

```
M     (followed by one of KJHLYUBN): Move far, no pickup.
g     (followed by one of kjhlyubn): move until something
      interesting is found.
G     (followed by one of KJHLYUBN): as previous, but forking
      of corridors is not considered interesting.
i     print your inventory.
I     print selected parts of your inventory, like in
      I* - print all gems in inventory;
      IU - print all unpaid items;
      IX - print all used up items that are on your shopping bill;
      I$ - count your money.
s     search for secret doors and traps around you.
^     ask for the type of a trap you found earlier.
)     ask for current wielded weapon.
[     ask for current armor.
=     ask for current rings.
$     count how many gold pieces you are carrying.
.     rest, do nothing.
,     pick up some things.
:     look at what is here.
^T    teleport.
^R    redraw the screen.
^P    repeat last message
      (subsequent ^P's repeat earlier messages).
/     (followed by any symbol): tell what this symbol represents.
      If you see fancy graphics on your screen it may ask you to
      specify a location rather than taking a symbol argument.
\     tell what has been discovered.
e     eat food.
w     wield weapon. w- means: wield nothing, use bare hands.
q     drink (quaff) a potion.
r     read a scroll.
P     Put on a ring.
R     Remove Ring.
W     Wear armor.
T     Takeoff armor.
A     Remove some or all armor.
X     transcribe (learn) a spell.
x     print a list of know spells.
z     zap a wand.
Z     cast a spell.
t     throw an object or shoot an arrow.
p     pay your shopping bill.
d     drop something. d7a: drop seven items of object a.
D     Drop several things.
      In answer to the question "What kinds of things do you
      want to drop? [!%= au]" you should give zero or more
      object symbols possibly followed by 'a' and/or 'u'.
      'a' means: drop all such objects, without asking for
            confirmation.
      'u' means: drop only unpaid objects (when in a shop).
a     use, apply - Generic command for using a key to lock
      or unlock a door, using a camera, using a rope, etc.
c     call: name a certain object or class of objects.
C     Call: Name an individual monster.
E     Engrave: Write a message in the dust on the floor.
      E- means: use fingers for writing.
O     Set options. You will be asked to enter an option line.
      If this is empty, the current options are reported.
      Otherwise it should be a list of options separated by commas.
```

Possible boolean options are: oneline, time, news, tombstone,
rest_on_space, fixinvlet, beginner, male, female.
They can be negated by prefixing them with '!' or "no".
A string option is name; it supplies the answer to the question
"Who are you?"; it may have a suffix.
A compound option is endgame; it is followed by a description
of what parts of the list of topscorers should be printed
when the game is finished.
Usually one will not want to use the 'O' command, but instead
put a HACKOPTIONS="...." line in one's environment.

v prints the version number.

V prints a longer identification of the version, including the history of the game.

introduces one of the "extended" commands. To get a list of the commands you can use with "#" type "#?". The extended commands you can use depends upon what options the game was compiled with, along with your class and what type of monster you most closely resemble at a given moment.

You can put a number before a command to repeat it that many times, as in "20s" or "40.".

At present, some information is displayed on the bottom line. You see on what dungeon level you are, how many hit points you have now (and will have when fully recovered), what your armor class is (the lower the better), your strength, experience level and the state of your stomach. Optionally, you may or may not see other information such as magical energy, how much gold you have, etc.

Have Fun, and Good Hacking!

NetHack: A Guide to the Mazes of Menace

Eric S. Raymond
Thyrsus Enterprises
Malvern, PA 19355

1. Introduction

You have just finished your years as a student at the local adventurer's guild. After much practice and sweat you have finally completed your training and are ready to embark upon a perilous adventure. As a test of your skills, the local guildmasters have sent you into the Dungeons of Doom. Your task is to return with the Amulet of Yendor. Your reward for the completion of this task will be a full membership in the local guild. In addition, you are allowed to keep all the loot you bring back from the dungeons.

You have abilities and strengths for dealing with the hazards of adventure that will vary depending on your background and training. Here is a summary of the character classes:

Cavemen and Cavewomen start with exceptional strength and neolithic weapons.

Tourists start out with lots of gold (suitable for shopping with) and an expensive camera. Most monsters don't like being photographed.

Wizards start out with a fair selection of magical goodies and a particular affinity for things thaumaturgical.

Archeologists understand dungeons pretty well. This makes them able to move quickly and sneak up on dungeon nasties. They start equipped with proper tools for a scientific expedition.

Elves are agile and quick and have keen senses; very little of what goes on around an Elf will escape him or her. The quality of Elven craftsmanship often gives them an advantage in weapons and armor.

Valkyries are hardy warrior women. Their upbringing in the harsh Northlands makes them strong and inures them to extremes of cold, and instills stealth and cunning in them.

Healers are wise in the apothecary and medical arts. They know the herbs and simples that can restore vitality and ease pain and neutralize poisons, and they can divine a being's state of health or sickness.

Knights are distinguished from the common run of fighter by their devotion to the ideal of chivalry and the surpassing excellence of their armor.

Barbarians are warriors out of the hinterland, hardened to battle. They begin their quests with naught but uncommon strength, a trusty hauberk, and a great two-handed sword.

Samurai are the elite warriors of feudal Nippon. They are lightly armored and quick, and wear the dai-sho, two swords of the deadliest sharpness.

Ninja are the spy-assassins of Japan. They are quick and stealthy, though not as strong as fighters. Their characteristic weapon is the deadly shuriken or throwing-star.

Priests and Priestesses are clerics militant, armed and armored to advance the cause of righteousness but also equipped with some skills in arts thaumaturgic. Their ability to commune with deities via prayer occasionally extricates them from peril -- but can also put them in it.

You set out on your way to the dungeons and after several days of uneventful travel, you see the ancient ruins that mark the entrance to the Mazes of Menace. It is late at night, so you make camp at the entrance and spend the night sleeping under the open skies. In the morning you gather your weapons and devices, eat what is almost your last food, and enter the dungeons.

2. What is going on here?

You have just begun a game of nethack. Your goal is to grab as much treasure as you can, find the Amulet of Yendor, and get out of the Mazes of Menace alive. On the screen, a map of where you have been and what you have seen on the current dungeon level is kept. As you explore more of the level, it appears on the screen in front of you.

Nethack differs from most computer fantasy games (other than its ancestors hack and rogue and its cousin larn) in that it is screen oriented. Commands are all one or two keystrokes (as opposed to sentences in some losing parser's notion of English) and the results of your commands are displayed graphically on the screen rather than being explained in words (a minimum screen size of 24 lines by 80 columns is required; if the screen is larger, only a 24x80 section will be used for the map).

Another major difference between nethack and other computer fantasy games is that once you have solved all the puzzles in a standard fantasy game, it has lost most of its excitement and it ceases to be fun. Nethack, on the other hand, generates a new dungeon every time you play it and even the authors still find it an entertaining and exciting game.

3. What do all those things on the screen mean?

In order to understand what is going on in nethack you have to first get some grasp of what nethack is doing with the screen. The nethack screen is intended to replace the "You can see ..." descriptions of text fantasy games. Figure 1 is a sample of what a nethack screen might look like.

3.1. The bottom line

At the bottom line of the screen are a few pieces of cryptic information describing your current status. Here is an explanation of what these things mean:

Level
This number indicates how deep you have gone in the dungeon. It starts at one and goes up as you go deeper into the dungeon.

Gold The number of gold pieces you have managed to find and keep with you so far.

Hp Your current and maximum health points. Health points indicate how much damage you can take before you die. The more you get hit in a fight, the lower they get. You can regain health points by resting. The number in parentheses is the maximum number your health points can reach.

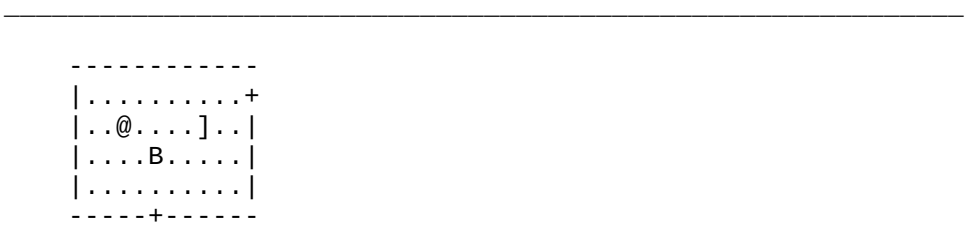


Figure 1

Ep Energy points. This tells you the level of mystic energy you have available for spell casting. When you type `x' to list your spells, each will have a spell point cost beside it in parentheses. You will not see this if your site's version of the game has been configured to omit spells.

Ac Your current armor protection. This number indicates how effective your armor is in stopping blows from unfriendly creatures. The lower this number is, the more effective the armor.

Str Your current strength and maximum ever strength. This can be any integer less than or equal to 18, or greater than or equal to three (occasionally you may get super-strengths of the form 18/xx). The higher the number, the stronger you are. The number in the parentheses is the maximum strength you have attained so far this game.

Exp These two numbers give your current experience level and experience points. As you do things, you gain experience points. At certain experience point totals, you gain an experience level. The more experienced you are, the better you are able to fight and to withstand magical attacks.

3.2. The top line

The top line of the screen is reserved for printing messages that describe things that are impossible to represent visually. If you see a "--More--" on the top line, this means that

nethack wants to print another message on the screen, but it wants to make certain that you have read the one that is there first. To read the next message, just type a space.

3.3. The rest of the screen

The rest of the screen is the map of the level as you have explored it so far. Each symbol on the screen represents something. Here is a list of what the various symbols mean:

- and |
  These form the walls of a room (or maze).

. this is the floor of a room.

this is a corridor.

> this is the staircase to the next level.

< the staircase to the previous level.

` A large boulder.

@ You (usually) or another human.

^ A trap.

) A weapon of some sort.

(Some other useful object (key, rope, dynamite, camera...)

[A suit of armor.

% A piece of food (not necessarily healthy...).

/ A wand.

= A ring.

? A scroll.

! A magic potion.

+ A spellbook containing a spell you can learn; (but usually a doorway).

} A pool of water

{ A fountain (your dungeon may not have these).

\ An opulent throne (You may not have this either).

$ A pile or pot of gold.

a-zA-Z
  The uppercase letters represent the various inhabitants of the Mazes of Menace. Watch out, they can be nasty and vicious. Sometimes, however, they can be helpful.

4. Commands

Commands are given to nethack by typing one or two characters. Most commands can be preceded by a count to repeat them (e.g. typing "10s" will do ten searches). Commands for which counts make no sense have the count ignored. To cancel a count or a prefix, type <ESCAPE>. The list of commands is rather long, but it can be read at any time during the game with the "?" command. Here it is for reference, with a short explanation of each command.

? help: print a help list.

Q Quit the game.

S Save the game.

! Escape to a shell.

^Z Suspend the game (UNIX versions with job control only).

< up: go up the staircase (if you are standing on it).

> down: go down (just like up).

[kjhlyubn]
go one step in the direction indicated.

k: north (i.e., to the top of the screen),
j: south, h: west, l: east, y: ne, u: nw, b: se, n: sw.

KJHLYUBN
Go in that direction until you hit a wall or run into something.

m[kjhlyubn]
prefix: move without picking up any objects.

M[kjhlyubn]
prefix: move far, no pickup.

g[kjhlyubn]
prefix: move until something interesting is found.

G[kjhlyubn]
as previous, but forking of corridors is not considered interesting.

i print your inventory.

I print selected parts of your inventory, like in

I* - all gems in inventory;
IU - all unpaid items;
IX - all used up items that are on your shopping bill;
I$ - count your money.

s search for secret doors and traps around you.

^ ask for the type of a trap you found earlier.

) ask for current wielded weapon.

[ask for current armor.

= ask for current rings.

$ count how many gold pieces you are carrying.

. rest, do nothing.

, pick up some things.

: look at what is here.

^T teleport.

^R redraw the screen.

^P repeat last message (subsequent ^P's repeat earlier messages).

/ (followed by any symbol) tell what this symbol represents.If you see fancy graphics on your screen it may ask you to specify a location rather than taking a symbol argument.

\ tell what has been discovered.

e eat food.

w wield weapon. w- means: wield nothing, use bare hands.

q drink (quaff) a potion.

r read a scroll.

T Takeoff armor. Remove Ring.

W Wear armor.

P Put on a ring.

X transcribe (learn) a spell.

x print a list of know spells.

z zap a wand.

Z zap a spell; same as the `# cast' extended command

t throw an object or shoot an arrow.

p pay your shopping bill.

d drop something. d7a: drop seven items of object a.

D Drop several things. In answer to the question "What kinds of things do you want to drop? [!%= au]" you should give zero or more object symbols possibly followed by 'a' and/or 'u'.

a apply - Generic command for using a key to lock or unlock a

door, using a camera, using a rope, etc.

c call: name a certain object or class of objects.

C Call: Name an individual monster.

E Engrave: Write a message in the dust on the floor. E- means: use fingers for writing.

O Set options. You will be asked to enter an option line. If this is empty, the current options are reported. Otherwise it should be a list of options separated by commas. Possible boolean options are: oneline, time, news, tombstone, rest_on_space, fixinvlet, beginner, male, female. They can be negated by prefixing them with answer to the question"Who are you?"; it may have a suffix. A compound option is endgame; it is followed by a description of what parts of the list of topscorers should be printed when the game is finished. There is also a graphics option that sets the characters used for screen displays. Usually one will not want to use the 'O' command, but instead put a HACKOP- TIONS="...." line in one's environment.

v print version number.

V display the game history (about one page).

You can put a number before most commands to repeat them that many times, as in "20s" or "40.".

5. Rooms

Rooms in the dungeons are either lit or dark. If you walk into a lit room, the entire room will be drawn on the screen as soon as you enter. If you walk into a dark room, it will only be displayed as you explore it. Upon leaving a room, all monsters inside the room are erased from the screen. In the darkness you can only see one space in all directions around you. A corridor is always dark.

6. Fighting

If you see a monster and you wish to fight it, just attempt to run into it. Many times a monster you find will mind its own business unless you attack it. It is often the case that discre- tion is the better part of valor.

7. Objects you can find

When you find something in the dungeon, it is common to want to pick the object up. This is accomplished in nethack by walk- ing over the object (unless you use the "m" prefix, see above). If you are carrying too many things, the program will tell you and it won't pick up the object, otherwise it will add it to your pack and tell you what you just picked up.

Many of the commands that operate on objects must prompt you to find out which object you want to use. If you change your mind and don't want to do that command after all, just type an <ESCAPE> and the command will be aborted.

Some objects, like armor and weapons, are easily differentiated. Others, like scrolls and potions, are given labels which vary according to type. During a game, any two of the same kind of object with the same label are the same type. However, the labels will vary from game to game.

When you use one of these labeled objects, if its effect is obvious, nethack will remember what it is for you. If its effect isn't extremely obvious you will be asked what you want to scribble on it so you will recognize it later, or you can use the "call" command (see above).

7.1. Weapons

Some weapons, like arrows, come in bunches, but most come one at a time. In order to use a weapon, you must wield it. To fire an arrow out of a bow, you must first wield the bow, then throw the arrow. You can only wield one weapon at a time, but you can't change weapons if the one you are currently wielding is cursed. The commands to use weapons are "w" (wield) and "t" (throw).

7.2. Armor

There are various sorts of armor lying around in the dungeon. Some of it is enchanted, some is cursed, and some is just normal. Different armor types have different armor protection. The higher the armor protection, the more protection the armor affords against the blows of monsters. Here is a partial list of the various armor types and the level of armor protection each will give.

plate mail	3
splint mail	4
banded mail	4
chain mail	5
scale mail	6
ring mail	7
studded leather armor	7
leather armor	8
elven cloak	9

If a piece of armor is enchanted, its armor protection will be higher than normal. If a suit of armor is cursed, its armor protection will be lower, and you will not be able to remove it. However, not all armor with a protection that is lower than normal is cursed and some enchanted armor is also "cursed" preventing removal.

The commands to use weapons are "W" (wear) and "T" (take off).

7.3. Scrolls

Scrolls come with titles in an unknown tongue. After you read a scroll, it disappears from your pack. The command to use a scroll is "r" (read).

7.4. Potions

Potions are labeled by the color of the liquid inside the flask. They disappear after being quaffed. The command to use a scroll is "q" (quaff).

7.5. Staves and Wands

Staves and wands do the same kinds of things. Staves are identified by a type of wood; wands by a type of metal or bone. They are generally things you want to do to something over a long distance, so you must point them at what you wish to affect to use them. Some staves are not affected by the direction they are pointed, though. Staves come with multiple magic charges, the number being random, and when they are used up, the staff is just a piece of wood or metal.

The command to use a wand or staff is "z" (zap)

7.6. Rings

Rings are very useful items, since they are relatively permanent magic, unlike the usually fleeting effects of potions, scrolls, and staves. Of course, both good and bad rings are more powerful. Most rings also cause you to use up food more rapidly, the rate varying with the type of ring. Rings are differentiated by their stone settings. Some rings are cursed, preventing removal. This can happen to helpful and harmful rings alike.

The commands to use rings are "P" (put on) and "R" (remove).

7.7. Spellbooks

Spellbooks are tomes of mighty magic. When read with the `transcribe' command X, they plant the knowledge of a spell in your head and disappear - unless the attempt backfires. Reading a spellbook can be harmful to your health if it is cursed or the mystic runes are at too high a level for your thaumaturgic skills!

Casting spells can also backfire. If you attempt to cast a spell well above your level, or cast it at a time when your luck is particularly bad, you can end up wasting both the energy and the time required in casting.

The `x' command lists your current spells, each preceded by the spell points they require. to cast a spell, type `Z' and answer the questions.

7.8. Food

Food is necessary to keep you going. If you go too long without eating you will faint, and eventually die of starvation. The command to use food is "e" (eat).

7.9. Options

Due to variations in personal tastes and conceptions of the way nethack should do things, there are a set of options you can set that cause nethack to behave in various different ways.

7.10. Setting the options

There are two ways to set the options. The first is with the "O" command of nethack; the second is with the "HACKOPTIONS" environment variable.

7.11. Using the `O' command

When you type "O" in nethack, it queries you for an option string which is parsed as though it were a HACKOPTIONS value.

7.12. Using the HACKOPTIONS variable

The HACKOPTIONS variable is a string containing a comma-separated list of initial values for the various options. Boolean variables can be turned on by listing their name or turned off by putting a `!' or "no" in front of the name. You can set string variables by following the variable name with a colon (this character was chosen over = to avoid conflict with the ring symbol) and the value of the string. The value is terminated by the next comma or the end of string.

Thus to set up an environment variable so that `female' is on, `pickup' is off, and the name is set to "Blue Meanie", you would enter the command

```
% setenv HACKOPTIONS "female,!pickup,name:Blue Meanie"
```

in csh, or

```
$ HACKOPTIONS="female,!pickup,name:Blue Meanie"
$ export HACKOPTIONS
```

in sh or ksh.

7.13. Customization options

Here is a list of the options and an explanation of what each one is for. The default value for each is enclosed in square brackets. For character string options, input over fifty characters will be ignored.

Note: some of the options listed may be inactive if the game has been subsetted.

standout
: (default on) use standout where appropriate in display lists.

null
: (default off) don't send padding nulls to the tty.

tombstone
: (default on) display tombstone graphic on death.

news
: (default on) read hack news if present.

conf
: (default on) have user confirm attacks on dogs and shopkeepers.

silent
     (default on) suppress terminal beeps.

pick
     (default on) pick up things you move onto by default.

IBMB
     (default off, PC-HACK only) for machines with an IBM-PC compatible BIOS ROM.

DECR
     (default off, PC-HACK only) for machines with DEC Rainbow compatible BIOS ROMs.

rawi
     (default off) force raw (not cbreak mode) input.

sort
     (default on) sort the pack contents by type when displaying inventory.

packorder
     (default `)[%?+/=!(*0)') specify order to list object types in. The value of this option should be a string containing the symbols for the various object types.

dogname
     give your (first) dog a name (eg. dogname:Fang).

time
     (default off) show game time in turns on bottom line.

restonspace
     (default off) make spacebar a synonym for `.'.

fixinv
     (default on) an object's inventory letter sticks to it until it's dropped. If this is off, everything after a dropped object shifts letters.

male
     (default on, most hackers are male) sets the player-character's sex.

female
     (default off) sets the player-character's sex (equal-opportunity feature :-)).

name
     (defaults to player's username) Set the player-character's name.

graphics
     (default ` |-++++.:<>^{}\"') set the graphics symbols for screen displays. The graphics option (if used) should be last, followed by a string of up to ", 17 chars to be used instead of the default map-drawing chars. Replacing for any of these chars causes it to be replaced in the dungeon level displays, except that the five instances of + are used for top left, top right, bottom left, bottom right and door

squares respectively. The last four characters are required only if the corresponding options are configured in.

endgame
Endgame is followed by a description of what parts of the scorelist you want to see. You might for example say:

`endgame:own scores/5 top scores/4 around my score'.

In the PC-HACK version, options may be set in a configuration file on disk as well as from the hack options.

7.14. Scoring

Nethack usually maintains a list of the top scoring people or scores on your machine. Depending on how it is set up, it can post either the top scores or the top players. In the latter case, each account on the machine can post only one non-winning score on this list. If you score higher than someone else on this list, or better your previous score on the list, you will be inserted in the proper place under your current name. How many scores are kept can also be set up by whoever installs it on your machine.

If you quit the game, you get out with all of your gold intact. If, however, you get killed in the Dungeons of Doom, your body is forwarded to your next-of-kin, along with 90% of your gold; ten percent of your gold is kept by the Dungeons' wizard as a fee. This should make you consider whether you want to take one last hit at that monster and possibly live, or quit and thus stop with whatever you have. If you quit, you do get all your gold, but if you swing and live, you might find more.

If you just want to see what the current top players/ games list is, you can type

```
% nethack -s
```

8. Credits

The original hack game was modeled on the Berkeley UNIX `rogue' game. Large portions of this paper were shamelessly cribbed from A Guide to the Dungeons of Doom, by Michael C. Toy and Kenneth C. R. C. Arnold.

NetHack is the product of literally dozens of people's work. A list of some of those who made major additions to the game appears below:

Jay Fenlason
wrote the original release of "Hack", with helpfrom Kenny Woodland, Mike Thome and Jon Payne.

Andries Brouwer
did a major re-write on the program andpublshed (at least) two versions to the Usenet.

Don G. Kneller
ported the 1.0.3 version of Hack to the PC, creating PC-Hack.

The following folks didn't actually re-write the game, or port it to a new machine, but have made significant contributions to the playability of the game:

ins_akaa@jhunix.UUCP (Ken Arromdee)
: New character classes. New weapons code. Armor weights implemented. New tools code. Polymorph Self code. Bug fixes.

srt@ucla-cs (Scott R. Turner)
: Rockmole & Keystone Kops code. Squeaky Board & Magic traps. Fountain code. More bug fixes.

gil@cornell.UUCP (Gil Neiger)
: Magic Marker code. Fountain code enhancements. Enhancements to dozens of routines. More bug fixes (esp. in hack.zap.c).

ericb@hplsla.UUCP (Eric Backus)
: The #dip mods to fountain code. Yet more bug fixes.

mike@genat.UUCP (Mike Stephenson)
: New character classes and traps. Throne Rooms. Spellbooks and spellcasting. Praying. Endgame enhancements. Nethack release and coordination.

eric@snark (Eric S. Raymond)
: The GRAPHICS option. Changes to make character classes more individual and mythohistorically authentic. Better random-number generation. The blindfold tool. The 'Z' spellcasting command synonym. General cleanup of much grotty code, removal of magic numbers. More bug fixes. This Guide you're reading.

You too can enhance this game and join the hallowed ranks of the net.benefactors. Happy hacking!

Appendix A: Weapon Types in Hack

This material is adapted from a digest of email replies to Carole Chang (carole@uhcc.uhccux.ha). Major sources were:

Paul Anderson	pha@net1.ucsd.edu
Vernon Lee	scorpion@rice.edu
Bryan Ewbank	ihlph!bdewbank

Some terminological corrections (notably the correct set of distinctions for the great mace/morningstar/flail controversy) were made by your editor (eric@snark), and a good bit of historical context added.

8.1. Polearms

The following weapons are all "pole arms", meaning that they are wooden shafts (5-9' long) capped with a particular weapon-head. We list these first as they are most likely to mystify a novice hacker.

glaive
: a short polearm with a straight blade at the end of the shaft. Rare in Europe; more popular in non-Western cultures under other names, as in the Zulu war assegai and Japanese

ashigaru's pike.

halberd
: a long (typically 6' or more) polearm ending with a single axe-head, backed by a spike and tipped by a spear-head. An extremely popular weapon in Europe from the Dark Ages to as late as 1650. You can see them in pictures of royal or elite Spanish, English, and French troops or the Vatican's Swiss Guards.

bill-guisarme
: a polearm, ends in a spear-head with a spike on one side and a hook on the other.

fauchard
: a polearm topped by a curved sickle-blade.

bec-de-corbin
: (literally "crow's-beak") a polearm ending in a stout spear-point, with a small axe-head on one side and a beak-shaped spike on the other. This weapon was designed to act like a can-opener for infantry fighting plate-armored knights.

guisarme
: a polearm, ends with a sharpened pruning hook.

spetum
: a polearm, ends with a spear-blade that has a smaller blade jutting at an angle from either side; the idea was to catch an opponent's weapon between two blades and disarm him with a twist of the shaft. Compare the japanese sai.

partisan
: a polearm, has a spear-head with a small axe-head to either side. Peasant levies often carried these; hence our modern usage of `partisans' to describe guerilla or irregular troops.

lucern
: a polearm, ends in a forward-pointing and one or more curved, downward-pointing (i.e.perpendicular) spikes. Named after the Swiss city and canton of Lucerne.

voulge
: a polearm, with a straight single-edged blade depending from one side of the shaft's end.

ranseur
: a polearm, ends with a broad spear-head with a flat base, and a broader "hilt" (often a straight piece with sharpened ends) behind it. As with the spetum, the idea was to catch weapons between the blade and "hilt".

8.2. Blade weapons

Blades were, in most pre-gunpowder martial cultures, the preferred weapon for one-on-one combat. Nethack includes several kinds:

dagger
broadly speaking, could describe any blade less than about two feet long. But `dagger' tends to suggest a hilted, double-edged weapon.

short
are 2-3' long and used for stabbing. The Roman legionary's gladius and the American frontiersman's Bowie knife were both short swords.

broad
are 3-4' long; they have sharpened edged for chopping and cleaving.

long are also 3-4' long; they are narrower with sharpened tips for stabbing and slashing.

two-handed
are 5-6' long, with long handles because they require both hands to use.

bastard
a cleaving weapon 4-5' long, which can be wielded with one or (more effectively) two hands.

scimitar
a type of curved, single-edged blade popular since ancient times in the Near East, designed for slashing and drawing strokes. Recent European weapons modeled on it include the sabre and cutlass.

katana
the long, slender, sabre-like swords of the Japanese samurai, often considered the finest blade weapons ever made. Japanese forging techniques produced what was in effect a micro-layered composite of high and low carbon steels, giving the blade its unique razor-sharpness and flexibility.

8.3. Missile weapons

These are all weapons meant to transfer kinetic energy to a target via a rigid thrown projectile.

bow in nethack, probably represents the 'self bow', a smaller single-piece or composite bow firing short feather-quilled arrows (rather than the classic Robin Hood longbow with its yard-long shafts).

crossbow
a mechanically-cranked bow firing stubby conical-profile bolts, sometimes finned. Had a lower rate of fire than the self- or long-bow but fearsome penetrating power.

javelin
a lightweight, flexible throwing spear.

dart not the three-inch, needle-pointed pub dart associated with ale and tweed caps; rather, its progenitor, a shorter javelin-like projectile that was mostly soft-iron head. Bar-

rages of these were thrown as first volleys in infantry skirmishes to foul the opponents' shields.

shuriken
: a flat, spiked wheel designed to be thrown with a wrist-flick so the blades spin like a buzz-saw in flight. Also called a `throwing star' or (in India) the `chakram'.

8.4. Miscellaneous strange weapons

bardiche
: (literally, "bearded axe") a short shaft (5') with an enormous long axe-head, connected at at least two places. Basically a huge axe (or a short voulge).

morning-star
: usually a spiked ball attached by a chain to a truncheon-like handle. The term is sometimes used to describe maces with spiked heads.

flail
: several chains, possibly spiked and possibly with small balls on the ends, stapled to a truncheon.

crysknife
: a fantasy weapon adapted from Frank Herbert's "Dune" books. On Herbert's Arrakis, the fierce Fremen made their personal weapons from the scimitar teeth of the shai hulud, the great sandworms of the Dune deserts.

aklys
: a long thong with a weight at the end. Holding the other end of the thong, you throw the weight; the thong entangles the target, and the weight whaps it.

Life at Infocom

Miscellaneous non-game things they talked about

To: SWG at ZORK
Subject: SUBJECT From: SWG at ZORK

```
Key: <> bracket sunrise/set
     () bracket moonrise/set

    0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
05  |  (  |  |  |  |  |  <  |  |  |  )  |  |  |  |  |  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
06  |  |  |( |  |  |  |  <  |  |  |  | )|  |  |  |  |  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
07  |  |  |  (  |  |  |  <  |  |  |  |  |) |  |  |  |  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
08  |  |  |  |  (  |  |  <  |  |  |  |  |  |) |  |  |  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
09  |  |  |  |  | (|  |  <  |  |  |  |  |  |  )  |  |  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
10  |  |  |  |  |  |( |  <  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  )  |  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
11  |  |  |  |  |  |  (  <  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  )  >  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
    Sunrises: 06:59:02 06:57:52 06:56:40 06:55:27 06:54:13 06:52:56 06:51:40
    Sunsets:  16:58:14 16:59:33 17:00:52 17:02:13 17:03:31 17:04:50 17:06:09
```

Date: 5 Jun 1987 0949-EDT From: A toy English blaze <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Sun and Moon To: SWG

While I'm thinking of it, I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate your sun and moon charts. It really gives me a feeling of the changing seasons to see the progression of sunrise and sunsets week to week. Friday morning wouldn't be the same without it.

Date: 11 May 1983 1014-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: AmEx called (for the record) To: Berez cc: Blank, SWG

I fielded a phone call yesterday afternoon from a John Farese of Shearson-AmericanExpress that went something like this:

Q. I just read about Infocom in the NYT Book Review, and I was wondering if it was publicly held?
A. No, it's not.

Q. Have you thought about going public?
A. Sure, it's always in the back of our minds.

Q. Have you talked to anyone about going public?
A. Yes, I'm sure we have.

Q. Could you hold for a minute?
A. Sure.
...

Q. OK, sorry to keep you waiting. Thanks for your time.

Date: Mon 20 Jun 83 17:20:00-PDT From: Peter G. Neumann <NEUMANN@SRI-AI.ARPA>
Subject: Computer Disasters To: ARPANET-BBOARDS@MIT-ML.ARPA

Review of Computer Problems — Catastrophes and Otherwise As a warmup for an appearance on a SOFTFAIR panel on computers and human safety (28 July 1983, Crystal City, VA), and for a new editorial on the need for high-quality systems, I decided to look back over previous issues of the ACM SIGSOFT SOFTWARE ENGINEERING NOTES [SEN] and itemize some of the most interesting computer problems recorded. The list of what I found, plus a few others from the top of the head, may be of interest to many of you. Except for the Garman and Rosen articles, most of the references to SEN [given in the form (SEN Vol No)] are to my editorials.

SYSTEM —
SF Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) disaster [Oct 72]
Three Mile Island (SEN 4 2)
SAC: 50 false alerts in 1979 (SEN 5 3);
simulated attack triggered a live scramble [9 Nov 79] (SEN 5 3);
WWMCCS false alarms triggered scrambles [3-6 Jun 80] (SEN 5 3)
Microwave therapy killed arthritic patient by racing pacemaker (SEN 5 1)
Credit/debit card copying despite encryption (Metro, BART, etc.)
Remote (portable) phones (lots of free calls)

SOFTWARE —
First Space Shuttle launch: backup computer synchronization (SEN 6 5 [Garman])
Second Space Shuttle operational simulation: tight loop on cancellation of early abort required manual intervention (SEN 7 1)
F16 simulation: plane flipped over crossing equator (SEN 5 2)
Mariner 18: abort due to missing NOT (SEN 5 2)
F18: crash due to missing exception condition (SEN 6 2)
El Dorado: brake computer bug causing recall (SEN 4 4)
Nuclear reactor design: bug in Shock II model/program (SEN 4 2)
Various system intrusions ...

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE —
ARPAnet: collapse [27 Oct 1980] (SEN 6 5 [Rosen], 6 1)
FAA Air Traffic Control: many outages (e.g., SEN 5 3)
SF Muni Metro: Ghost Train (SEN 8 3)

COMPUTER AS CATALYST —
Air New Zealand: crash; pilots not told of new course data (SEN 6 3 & 6 5)
Human frailties:
Embezzlements, e.g., Muhammed Ali swindle [$23.2 Million],
Security Pacific [$10.2 Million],
City National, Beverly Hills CA [$1.1 Million, 23 Mar 1979]
Wizards altering software or critical data (various cases)

SEE ALSO A COLLECTION OF COMPUTER ANECDOTES SUBMITTED FOR the 7th SOSP (SEN 5 1 and SEN 7 1) for some of your favorite operating system and other problems...

As you may by now know, I am always very interested in hearing about problems involving computers (not just software) and human well being, both for SOFTWARE ENGINEERING NOTES and generally. John Shore (Shore@NRL-CSS) is also compiling a list (and has circulated a prior BBOARD notice to some of your BBOARDS), and I will forward anything you send me to him. If you wish, we will try to keep you informed as well...

Date: 13 Jul 1983 1143-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Steve To: swg

I don't really understand why Steve seems to arrive at 11-12 and leave at 6-7. Do you? You might try to ascertain what, if any, hours he expects to be here. Similarly with Jerry, at least until Mikie comes here.

Date: 13 Jul 1983 1202-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Steve To: BLANK cc: SWG

Are you bothered because they're not here to give hints before about noon? Or because you think they're not working full time? (Steve checked with me before taking only today off. I figured it's good to be lenient about that in the aftermath of finishing a game.)

I don't know what, if anything, they were told when hired about normal hours here. I don't remember being told anything.

Date: 13 Jul 1983 1206-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Steve To: SWG

I told them that they were expected to work normal hours, where normal could be relatively loosely defined, i.e. 10-11 to 6-7. As far as taking days off, they should also speak to Gabrielle or whoever is in personnel regarding vacation days. Also, it's absurd for Steve to have taken today off when we desperately need Enchanter tested before gamma at the end of this week. This places a big load on Jerry, wherever he is.

Date: 19 Jul 1983 1123-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: JW To: SWG

Please do something to ensure that Jerry has some reasonable hours. It's not fair for him to come in after 10 if the 'hint department' is open. Also, it's causing me a royal pain this morning, since I have no names for gamma-testers.

Date: 13 Oct 1983 1108-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: ride? To: SWG

Okey.

("What is Galley's plan?"
A. Have you read his mail?
B. Have you tried hanging around the repair shop?
C. Like a true implementor, Galley has no plan…)

Date: 13 Oct 1983 1116-EDT From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: Input wanted… To: testers at ZORK

If you have a few free minutes, please send me some questions. For example:

Who was that lady I saw you with last night? Why is a duck?
How many pancakes cover a doghouse? What's all this then?

Thanks. Dave

Date: 13 Oct 1983 1156-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Input wanted… To: PDL cc: SWG

Aha! Will it ever work? How good will it be? Can you imagine my excitement? Who was that ladle I saw you spooning with last night? Etc...

Some anagrams:

Date: 30 Oct 1983 1111-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Throw Canteen To: IMPS at ZORK

Some additional ones for your evaluation:

OH, RECENT WANT! (poetic lament)
WON TENTH RACE (headline, etc.)
CANE WORTH TEN (sign at bazaar)
THREE-CAN TOWN (a tad better than one-horse)
TENTH RAW CONE (hmmm...)

Date: 30 Oct 1983 1151-EST: From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: New Hornet Act To: IMPS at ZORK

Self-help book for politicians: WHEN TO RECANT

More anagrams from Marc, based off of his name. (Marc Samuel Blank):

aka Mumbler's Clan
Mac's Llama Bunker
A Man Lacks Lumber
Scramble: Am a Lunk
Alaskan Elm Crumb
An All-Summer Back
Ran Slum Clambake
Caulk Man Rambles
Sulk,Ramble->CA Man
Kabul Can Slammer
M. Ran Kabul Camels
A Bank Mulls Cream
Small Cuban Maker
Mal's Mule Can Bark
Umbrellas: A Snack
An Umbrella's Sack
Alan Blacker's Mum
UN Blames Ma Clark
Sun Meal: Lamb Rack
Uncle M. Bans Alarm
A&R Man Blames Luck
Rank Camel Albums
Mr. Lubek's Alamanac
Nuclear Mask: Blam!
Ack! A Small Number

More acronyms:

Date: 23 May 1984 1733-EDT From: blank
Subject: Acronym Contest To: IMPS at ZORK, TESTERS at ZORK

There is a new program called ZEBRA which is used by the implementers and we need some words to make it an acronym. Here are some suggested ones:

ZEBRA Elected Best Recursive Acronym!
Zork Emitter of Binary Runtime Assembly-code
ZEBRA Embodies Badly Ritten Acronyms

Can you do better (or is it worse...?)

Date: 14 Aug 1984 1139-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: TWO NITE To: SWG

Bruce has an interesting history. I first invented him when I was LSC secretary. When I typed up the minutes each month I used only initials of people to save space, and put an initials key at the beginning. I'd throw in Bruce as part of the initials key, even though he was fictional and didn't appear anywhere in the minutes. Each month I'd give him a new nickname — Bruce "Splices" Quarnsboggle, for example.

That year we also had a Sunday [Film Series] Director who was not entirely aware, and I filled out a Blue [membership] Form for Bruce Quarnsboggle as a returning member of the Sunday Sub-committee. He was approved as a returning member, which caused much hilarity when the truth was revealed.

Anyway, when we moved to Wellesley, we decided to put the phone in Bruce's name rather than any of our names, partly because it avoided having to decide who got to have the listing under their name, but mostly because it seemed like a funny idea.

Date: 17 Aug 1984 1605-EDT From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at ZORK>
Subject: MISSING PERSONS To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

HAS ANYONE SEEN HOLLYWOOD AND LIZ CYR? IF SO, PLEASE CONTACT THE A.S.P.C.A., C/O TESTING DEP'T.
(ext. 58)
Thank you,
THEIR PARENTS. (TESTING DEP'T.)

Date: 22 Aug 1984 1049-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: BARBEQUE To: IMPS at ZORK

Okay, the Implementor's Barbeque at historic Quarnsboggle mansion is a definite go for Sunday, September 9. 3:00pm. I'll xerox a sheet of directions.

RAIN DATE: Sunday, September 8, 1985.
JW, PDL: Sorry.

Date: 22 Aug 1984 1102-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: BBQ at BQ
To: IMPS at ZORK

By the way, wives, POSSLQs, children, sheep, etc. all welcome.

Date: 27 Aug 1984 2236-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: MD IS DRUNK
To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

Dornbrook says "This is the closest I have been to [hic] drunk since 1972 [hic]." He keeps vehemently insisting that I acknowledge this fact since "I'm an inveterate keeper of trivia." Since I'm not, I thought I'd pass the fact along in case someone else out there is.

Date: 1 Oct 1984 1553-EDT
From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: interesting quote
To: everybody at ZORK

From COMPUTER MODELS OF PERSONALITY
by John C. Loehlin, psychologist, University of Texas
(Random House, 1968)

Esthetic implications

What's in computer personality models for the art lover? Let us speculate for a moment concerning the possibilities of the computer model as a new art form.

Novelists, dramatists, and painters construct representations of imagined or real persons in their various media, and these productions are sometimes judged to be hack work, sometimes superb art. Presumably, representations of real and imagined persons in computers vary in esthetic merit, too, if one chooses to look at them in this way. Furthermore, these representations have some interesting properties. It is only in a metaphorical sense that one speaks of a literary characterization taking on a life of its own; for the most part, characters do what their authors tell them to do. But a computer model's actions flow directly from its character; if the character doesn't fit the plot, the plot doesn't stand a chance. Work in such a strong-minded medium will not delight every artist, but it should appeal to some.

Also, computer art has a certain level of built-in self-criticism, like sculpture. If a sculptor becomes too careless with the strength of his materials or the distribution of his masses, he doesn't have to wait for the reviews to come out; his statue collapses. Likewise, a sloppily conceived computer drama just won't run. In neither case does a solution to the basic technical problems guarantee esthetic merit, but at least it provides a minimum level of discipline.

Certainly I would not want to suggest that the moment has come for everyone to dash out and start writing novels or plays for computers. (There are a few small problems to solve first, such as who the audience is and how this audience is to be exposed to the artistic work.) But I also would not want to bet that it cannot — or won't — be done.

Date: 7 Nov 1984 1645-EST
From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
Subject: Surprise Party
To: msb, sem, pdl, dan, jon, da, swg, jw, prof, lim, taa

Marc's sister, Paula, is running a surprise party for Marc at Yangtse River restaurant in Lexington Saturday night at 7:00. You are cordially invited (but please don't talk about it here - we want to give him an unexpected surprise).

Please RSVP (today if possible, this is a very tight schedule). You are welcome to bring a guest. Please indicate the number attending when you respond.

Date: 7 Nov 1984 1652-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Surprise Party To: MD

I guess it's been sufficiently long since I've eaten Chinese food to say "yes (one person)", assuming I can get a ride. -JW

Date: 7 Nov 1984 1702-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: "Yangtse, beautiful Yangtse. River full of Fish." To: MD

I'll be there. Alone (sniff).

What do we call ourselves?

Date: 4 Dec 1984 1821-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Info_____ To: Imps at ZORK cc: Testers at ZORK, MD at ZORK

In a NZT article, Steve calls us "Infocommies." In a different NZT article, Dave calls us "Infocomites." What are we?

Date: 4 Dec 1984 1840-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Info_____ To: JON at ZORK cc: Imps at ZORK, Testers at ZORK, MD at ZORK

"Infocommies" has been standard in-house usage for as long as I can remember, and it certainly beats "Infocomites". Unless Marketing is worried about offending the right wingers, "Infocommies" is fine.

Date: 5 Dec 1984 0916-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Info_____ To: JON at ZORK cc: imps at ZORK, testers at ZORK, md at ZORK

I like "Infocommies", but if that's too pejorative we should consider "Infocomrades", "Infocompanions", "Infocommandos", etc.

Date: 5 Dec 1984 0958-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: INFO_____ To: JON at ZORK cc: IMPS at ZORK

I think they're both pretty awful. I'd like to see us continue to use lots of different terms, to prevent any one from becoming dominant, and also to keep the readers guessing. Let's compile a list of several dozen terms, and then cycle through them.

I remember Lois Ardito always used to call us Zorkonians [second "o" is long].

Date: 5 Dec 1984 1931-EST From: David Lebling <PDL at ZORK>
Subject: info_____ To: imps at ZORK

I agree with Steve (that's why I used "Infocomites"). Of course, there's always "Infostuds," from one of the classic InfoSundays memos.

Whaddayasay, Infoimps?

Jennifer sees problems ahead and tries to correct them:

Date: 15 Jan 1985 1944-EST From: Jennifer L. Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
Subject: Workload To: da, md, heidi, jenNIFER

I've decided that we are truly in a crisis situation—we are months behind in our work, and have to rethink what we're doing in order to get anything done. I think we need to pay less attention to details right now— quantity is our goal, not quality. If you have some ideas on how to lessen our workload, please let me know. These are my ideas.

Please do the following, and have Heidi do it as well:

Collect all NZT mail—bugs, comments, contest entries, EVERYTHING, in one place. I don't want any of us spending time trying to deal with any of it, including sorting into different categories. I have proposed to Mike that dealing with it falls under whoever runs NZT, not under Support. I've told him that from now on we will only collect it, not try to do anything with it.

Give all letters on current bugs to the testers. Don't pass them to me, don't try to deal with them.

Comments or suggestions on games—pass to the Imps (implementers, or the authors of the games). They solicit this mail in the packaging—WE (in support) don't. For now, let them deal with it. When they see how much there is, they may just want to reprint the packaging!

Put warranty cards aside—don't try to deal with them now. We will pick them up again at some point, but now is not the time.

Fan mail—if it's really good and original, put it up on the bulletin board. If it's run-of-the-mil, throw it away.

Hint calls, with the exception of Hitchhiker's: connect them directly to x263. Don't waste any of your time explaining this to them. This also goes for anyone who calls for information about how to get hintbooks, since all that info is on the recording. The less time we can spend on the phone, the more time we can devote to getting mail handled, and ultimately, getting caught up.

Send all sales calls back to the switchboard. Don't waste time taking messages, or even explaining that this is a technical hotline. Let administration worry about sending calls to the right place. To make this fair for administration, we have to be very careful that there is ALWAYS someone in this office answering phones from 8:30 or 9:00 until 5:00. We must make an effort to handle the calls that belong to us. (I know I am the worst offender in this area, as I tend to wander off. We'll all need to let others know where we are.)

Further, I think it's a good idea for each of us to have an hour (at least) a day when we are not expected to answer phones. I think we should each get one hour of the morning when the other two answer phones, so we can do one solid hour of uninterrupted paperwork.

We should also collect things that Joanne might be able to help us with, since she's often wandering down here asking for work. Typing, filing (especially cards), whatever. If the work we have warrants it, collect things for a temp to do, and I will simply insist that we have one.

Comments on Infocom's new address:

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1535-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Yuck To: Testers at ZORK

Our new address will be 125 CambridgePark Drive. "CambridgePark" is one word, with a capital P in the middle of it.

Is this really acceptable? Why wasn't this caught earlier? Who's responsible?

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1541-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: CambridgePark To: TESTERS at ZORK

If it's good enough for CinemaScope, it's good enough for us.

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1546-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Yuck To: JON at ZORK cc: Testers at ZORK

Actually, there might be good potential for variety here. I'll bet the P.O. and other carriers would find us at "Cambridge Park" or "Park Drive" or "Cambridge ParkDrive" or .... Product Support even has mail to "Infocom, Cambridge, Mass."!

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1554-EST From: Jenni <JENNIFER at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Yuck To: SWG

We actually even received mail addressed only to "Infocom, Cambridge"!! Considering that we also have "Infocom" in Farmingdale (DM), Connecticut (for Sampler rebates), 6 Faneuil Hall, and Kendall Square, we ought to have a lot of fun.

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1553-EST From: Dean G. Agnew <DA at ZORK>
Subject: yuck To: testers at ZORK

It's done now. We will have to live with ThisShit.

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1558-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Yuck To: JON at ZORK cc: Testers at ZORK

Here's another idea: let's claim that our address is

125 Cambridge Park Reverse Neutral Drive.

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1556-EST
Subject: Yuck
From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

Is it too late to change the game to WishBringer?

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1602-EST
Subject: Re: Yuck
From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: PROF cc: SWG

Hey, great! "From InfoCom, makers of SeaStalker, PlanetFall, CutThroats, etc."

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1601-EST
Subject: CambridgePark
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: Testers at ZORK

It'sapparentfromtheresponsesI'vebeengettingthatmanypeopledon'tcareaboutthelackofaspaceinthename "CambridgePark."Still,Ikindofgrewfoundoftheemptinessbetweenwords.Ishallssthenothingness.

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1602-EST
Subject: Re: Yuck
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: PROF at ZORK cc: TESTERS at ZORK

Yuck.

Date: 20 Feb 1985 1607-EST
Subject: Re: Yuck
From: Gary T. Brennan <GARY at ZORK>
To: JON at ZORK cc: PROF at ZORK, TESTERS at ZORK

DOUBLE YUCK!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Date: 21 Feb 1985 0949-EST
Subject: Yuck?
From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: testers at ZORK, imps at ZORK

As the originator of InvisiClues, I object to the biased parochialism evident in the discussion of Cambridge-Park. Where is your sense of adventure? Aren't you thrilled to be a part of the evolution of language? You sound like a bunch of old English teachers (and probably dangerous reactionaries to boot)!

Date: 22 Feb 1985 0931-EST
Subject: FLOORPLANSKY
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

Jerry and I played a game of Floorplansky last night, and we decided that many more Memo Cards are needed. Please send suggestions.

Date: 26 Feb 1985 1016-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: QUOTE OF THE DAY To: IMPS at ZORK

"Boston runs to brains as well as to beans and brown bread. But she is cursed with an army of cranks whom nothing short of a straight-jacket or a swamp-elm club will ever control."

— William Cowper Brann (1855-1898)
from "The Iconoclast"

Date: 19 Feb 1985 0925-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Time Machine To: SWG

Ah, yes! I know that version. It starred John Beck, better known as "The Winston Man," and featured several members of the University of Colorado football team as Morlocks. The Machine looked like a triangular platform with a VT100 attached. Hilarious.

What kind of tape did you make? I already have a copy of the soundtrack, but if you made a VHS I'd love to steal it from you. Thanks for remembering.

Having fun deciding on a new phone number:

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1044-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: phone puzzle To: everybody at ZORK

OK, gang! Here's today's puzzle!

When we move to the Infobuilding, we can retain the same main telephone number (492-1031), or we can ask for a new one that's easier to remember, or at least more fun. New England Telephone hasn't found any "round" numbers available for us (like 492-1000), but we could ask for one that spells a word.

So, what relevant seven-letter words can be formed in the following available exchanges?

354- 491- 492- 497- 498- 547- 576- 661- 864- 868- 876-

For your convenience, here are the letters that go with them:

DJG	GW1	GWA	GWP	GWT	JGP	JPM	MM1	TMG	TMT	TPM
EKH	HX1	HXB	HXR	HXU	KHR	KRN	NN1	UNH	UNU	URN
FLI	IY1	IYC	IYS	IYV	LIS	LSO	OO1	VOI	VOV	VSO

Remember, you choose one letter from each column to start a word, then add four more (excluding Q and Z) to finish a word. (Example: start with TRO for the 876- exchange and get TROUBLE, which I wouldn't call relevant enough.) Deadline for entries: Thursday!

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1120-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: phone puzzle To: SWG

Here are a few:

864-4643 (UNHINGE) for obvious reasons

576-7633 (KISSOFF) we should probably reserve this for Customer Support

868-8379 (TOTTERY) unless some other software company has already taken it

547-8464 (LISTING) for our "grocer's mentality"

876-7476 (TROPISM) for our involuntary movement toward any venture capital

876-5544 (TROLL, HI) to dramatically show how improvements, such as talking to characters, are constantly being retrofitted into our older games which didn't originally have them

876-5432 doesn't spell anything, but easy to remember.

I wouldn't absolutely rule out TROUBLE.

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1145-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at ZORK>
Subject: Re: phone puzzle To: SWG

Excluding "Z"? Well why don't we chuck the whole thing and not have phones then.
Yet...

354 Delwood 497 Prisons 497 Phil-who? 498 Thy-Home 498 Whimsey / Whisper 864 Ghostly

My favorite: 354 Jeffery

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1204-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: phone puzzle To: SWG, everybody at ZORK

Here are some telephone ideas (depending on your idea of relevant).

My personal incoming line:
354-4487 (FLIGHTS)

Zork II:
868-2676 (UNICORN)

Computerish:
547-7377 (LISPERS)
864-9789 (UNIX SUX)

Customer Support:
876-8253 (TROUBLE)
864-5833 (UNGLUED)

Silly:
547-7377 (KISSERS)

Scenic:
492-6647 (HYANNIS)

That's it for now, but I'm sure others will come...

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1206-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: phone puzzle To: BLANK cc: swg

Are you sure that Faces doesn't already have KISSERS?

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1212-EST
Subject: Re: phone puzzle

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: SWG

If you want something unusual, there's 868-7825.

Date: 21 Mar 1985 1149-EST
Subject: Re: phone puzzle

From: Gary T. Brennan <GARY at ZORK>
To: SWG

HITCHIKERS	VOG-UISH	VOG-ONPO(ETRY)		
ZORK	TRO-GLOD	TRO-LLER		
RANDOM	UNG-LUED	UNG-ODLY	UNH-APPY	UNH-INGE
ZORK	UNI-CORN			
PLANETFALL	UNI-FORM	UNI-VERS(E)		
RANDOM	UNU-SUAL	UNT-WINE	UNT-WIST	
SORCEROR	ELI-XIRS			
RANDOM	GYR-ATES	HYB-RIDS		

UNICORN is clearly the best. I still say let's move to south Boston and use INF-OCOM.

Date: 21 Mar 1985 1649-EST
Subject: phone number

From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

Linda Mazzotta told me today that we CAN get a "round" number, namely 492-6000, so any other suggestion had better be really good. The best I've seen so far: UNUSUAL and LISPxxx.

Date: 21 Mar 1985 1724-EST
Subject: Re: phone number

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: SWG

If those are the best you've seen so far, I'd definitely vote for 492-6000.

Date: 1 Aug 1988 1513-EDT
Subject: Anagrams

From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
To: everybody at FRED

Does anybody know what happened to the Mac anagram-finder program that was floating around last summer? I've got some gibberish that needs processing.

Date: 20 Mar 1985 0944-EST
Subject: John O'Leary

From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: SEM, Prof, JW, SWG, PDL, Jeff

John would like to meet with you all (lunch Friday?) to discuss marketing's plans and overall approach to '85 and '86. Is Friday OK?

Date: 29 Mar 1985 1630-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Common Sense To: Imps at ZORK

Professor Moriarty recommends a book entitled "What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School." I have Brian's copy in my office if you're interested.

Date: 1 Apr 1985 0800-EST From: The April Fool's Gremlin <GREMLIN at ZORK>
Subject: April Fool's To: ALL

****

This is just to welcome you all back to planet Earth after a wonderful week on the carrot planet, Alpha-Carotene. I hope you all had a great 4-day vacation, and that you didn't eat too many... well... you know... Just remember, Easter is coming fast. You need to be good little info-workers or the Easter Bunny won't stop and give you any eggs, or jelly beans, or anything. And if you're really good, he just might give you... oops, I almost spoiled the surprise.

Have a Hoppy Day !!!
Bugs.

Date: 5 Apr 1985 1442-EST From: Tim Anderson <ANDERSON at ZORK>
Subject: Zork vs. The Move To: everybody at ZORK

Zork will be down starting late Sunday (4/7) night, until at least sometime Monday morning; during this time, our 10-ton air conditioner will be removed from the computer room.

If we're lucky, the air conditioning that remains will be adequate to keep both 20s running until Friday, 4/12, when Zork will be shut down and moved. If not, either Zork won't come back at all Monday morning, or it will go down with no notice sometime during the week. Once Zork goes down for the count, those of you who need access to a 20 will be moved to Fred for the duration.

Date: 10 Apr 1985 1143-EST From: Tim Anderson <ANDERSON at ZORK>
Subject: Zork vs. Move, Part II To: everybody at ZORK

Assuming the weather holds, Zork will shut down tomorrow (Thursday) at 4PM. At that time, various directories will be moved to Fred, and ten of Fred's terminal lines will be connected to terminals that used to be on Zork.

De-installation of Zork will begin Friday morning at 8:30; it will be installed in the new building next week. Those of you whose accounts get moved to Fred will be able to use it through next Thursday at 6PM, when it will get shut down as well.

Before the machines are made available for use in the new building, any directories that got moved from Zork to Fred will be moved back. The following users will be moved; if you're not on the list, and have an urgent need to continue using the 20 next week, talk to your supervisor (i.e., don't send mail to me, because I won't read it in time): LIM, BLANK, PDL, SEM, SWG, PROF, JEFF, DA, SCF, GARY, LIZ, TOM, JW.

Date: 24 Apr 1985 1316-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: THOUGHT FOR THE DAY To: IMPS at ZORK

"As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn't there.

He wasn't there again today.
I wish, I wish he'd go away."
— Hughes Mearns ("The Psychoed")

Date: 30 Apr 1985 0940-EDT
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: SUN & MOON
To: SWG

An interstellar traveler landing on Earth and seeing last week's Sun & Moon would certainly be confused by it. True, there was an hour shift in both the graph and sunrise/sunset times, but why? When trivial events like Albanian Arbor Day are listed, but no explanation of such a drastic astronomical event, how could our alien fail to attribute this discontinuity to anything but a programming error? While the phrase "Beginning of Daylight Savings Time" might not have immediate meaning for our alien visitor, it would definitely provide enough clues for any creature from a race intelligent enough to invent interstellar travel! Because of your omission, Earth could be branded as the bad-programming capital of the galaxy!!!

Date: 23 Jun 1985 1833-EDT
From: Tomas Bok <TOMAS at ZORK>
Subject: Go Get 'em!
To: SWG, SCF, SEM, HEIDI, JON, TOMAS, DA, MAX, DAN, JOSH, TOM, GARY, PAUL

Hey Hey Hey! InfoPong is underway!
Go check out the ladder in the ping-pong room, and start challengin'!
-> Tom Bok

P.S.>> If you know any latecomers who want to be on the ladder, let Liz or me know.

Date: 26 Jun 1985 1713-EDT
From: Dean G. Agnew <DA at ZORK>
Subject: Gone but not forgotten.
To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

Today is the one year anniversary of the Flower/Fruit Basket Arrangement Request.

Date: 22 Jul 1985 1136-EDT
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: BBC
To: Imps at ZORK

The BBC will be prowling around the floor this afternoon.

Date: 26 Jul 1985 0935-EDT
From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: BBC
To: Imps at ZORK

The BBC will be here again Thursday, August 1. They would like us to stage a mock Imp lunch. I think I can get Spen to pay for it out of PR's budget. Let's also have our usual Imp lunch on Tuesday.

Date: 30 Jul 1985 1500-EDT
Subject: ANOTHER Imps Lunch

From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: Imps at ZORK

The BBC will be here tomorrow, Wednesday. So we'll have our mock Imp lunch tomorrow at noon.

Date: 16 Aug 1985 1053-EDT
Subject: PICNIC

From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at ZORK>
To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

Reminder!!! If you want to "swim and get trashed at the annual picnic bash," today is the day to pay. For a paltry $5 and that's all it takes folks, you'll be able to swim, play tennis, drink a beer, eat a hot dog. Doesn't that sound like fun? But there's more. You'll be able to do all this with your buddies from work, except you won't be working. Yay!!!

So, head on down to Donna McCarron's office and hand over that $5 because you'll want to be at that great bash.

Date: 15 Oct 1985 0955-EDT
Subject: Amazing BBQ Photos

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

I have pictures of the InfoCookout in my office if you want to see them. Ho-hum, you say? More poses of Marc wielding a spatula, you yawn? Well, perhaps ... but THESE pictures are in AMAZING 3D! One day only!

Date: 22 Oct 1985 1028-EDT
Subject: quote of the day

From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at ZORK>
To: imps at ZORK

"Type A personalities got less than the highest marks in a recent academic study correlating CEOs and their companies. Extremely competitive, workaholic executives—-type A personalities—-directed companies with lower five-year profit trends than companies run by individuals with less aggressive personality types. The findings, from 471 small business CEOs in New England, surprised the two business professors running the survey. —-Northeastern University"

Quoted in Boston Business Journal, Oct. 21-27, p. 21B

Date: 28 Oct 1985 1040-EST
Subject: BARBIE, etc.

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

I have a tape of Barbarella to screen sometime today. Anyone who's interested in attending should let me know their time restrictions.

P.S. I left some yummo danishes on the windowsill in the Alley.

P.P.S. I have a new Thing Your Roommate Gave You Which You Don't Know What It Is.

Date: 25 Oct 1985 1352-EDT
Subject: punkins

From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at ZORK>
To: FUNCOM at ZORK cc: SWG

I have five small pumpkins here, already gutted and cleaned, just waiting to be carved into jack-o'-lanterns at Friday party.

They could just sit by the punch bowl and wait for carvers, first come first served. Or maybe you want something more organized.

In any case, we have Fritzi to thank for the idea and the work.

Date: 4 Dec 1985 0931-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Halloween To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

SEE Betty and her Talking Ape!
SEE Jeff O'Neill and Dave Lebling in cahoots with Ronnie!
SEE Linda C. belly dancing!
SEE Mike Dornbrook in an embarassing pose!
You guessed it! It's InfoHalloween '85, in AMAZING Three Dimensions!

The Galleys in Maine

This story begins with our desire for a little peace and quiet, for a bit of the country where we could spend time away from the city with a minimum of hassle, and for "an investment for our souls," as a friend called it. We had spent time in the past at a farm house in central Vermont and at a cabin in central Maine (but they were both too far away) and at a cottage on Cape Cod (but that was too crowded). We had some savings that kept accumulating, our car loan was just paid off, and our bank offered a line of credit against the equity in our home; so we knew roughly what our budget was for this undertaking.

We started in September '85 with a map of New England and drew a circle on it through all places a hundred miles from our home in Arlington——from Portland, Maine, through Lebanon, New Hampshire, to Adams, Massachusetts. We figured that about two hours' drive is the most that we want between here and there, so that we could spend a weekend there without too much time on the road, or we could manage a one-day trip if necessary. We ruled out New Hampshire for its regressive politics, and we began looking in Maine because of both its rural character and its excellent sea food. Our hundred-mile rule proved to be a good one: during trips from morning to evening looking at real estate, we enjoyed driving to and around York County in Maine, but going farther made the trip too long.

One of the ads in the Boston Globe that we answered was this: "PARSONSFIELD: 100 acres of woodland w/ 800' frontage on paved rd. Yr-round brook, exc. hunting, ideal loc. for retirement. 2 hrs. from Boston. $50,000. Call …" It was over our budget, but the other parts sounded about right, so we decided to look at it and at the town. It was a sunny Sunday, October 6, with autumn foliage abundant and the water table low after a comparatively dry summer. The owners were a working couple in their fifties, who harvested firewood from the lot to heat their house and had hoped to build at least one house on it for themselves or some of their seven children, but that dream was no longer operative.

What we found was the north side of a hill, descending in terraces from an old stone wall to a bog and the brook that drains it. The wall was typical New England: grey granite stones stacked up without mortar, after moving them to the edge of the lot from the middle. It means that someone in the past had cleared the land of trees and farmed it as pasture or cropland. The bog separates the lot from the village of Parsonsfield, which consists of a church, burying ground, "town house," and no more than a dozen houses. The lot is now covered thickly with a mix of hardwoods and evergreens, except for a small clearing and a "tote road" that winds through from the paved road to the far boundaries of the lot. The paved road has electric and telephone lines, though we may not use either of them for a long time. The next lot up the road is the wooded portion of a farm, and it sports a spring by the road that gushes pure tasty water every time we've seen it; we've already found an undeveloped spring on our lot, too.

The whole town of Parsonsfield harbors about a thousand souls in the northwest corner of York County, which is in the southwest corner of Maine. The town is on the New Hampshire border, about midway between Portland

and the southern White Mountains. Or, you could say it's between Sebago Lake in Maine and Lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire. Some maps don't even show it, or they show only its largest village, Kezar Falls, where state highway 25 crosses the Ossipee River on its way from Portland to Montpelier, and where a waterfall supplies power for a woolen mill. About five other villages lie within the town, each marked by its church. Along the paved roads between villages are numerous burying grounds and farms, some still producing apples or cattle or timber.

Now that we had a benchmark for comparison with other properties, we looked for something just as pleasant but cheaper. Instead we found lots on busy highways, lots that we couldn't even drive to, and lots too small to protect us from noisy neighbors. Each time we drove north to look at another lot, we came back to look again at our favorite one. By late November, we decided to make a written offer on it that we thought we could afford, and we were delighted when the owners phoned us with a counter offer, and then we all agreed on a price. We closed the deal and passed papers just two days ago.

When we visited the lot in early December, we tried to walk all the way around it, but we now think that we didn't reach the back boundary. We did pick some evergreen branches for holiday decorating. Last week we visited the area for two days just after Christmas Day. With our new Nordic ski equipment, we skied along the tote road and back, then up the frozen brook through the bog and back. There seem to be plenty of bird nests and rabbit tracks in the snow, but so far no definite sign of bigger animals.

Our plans for the future? The short-term plan is to camp on the lot until we can select a building site, then put up a small rustic cabin so that we can visit in any weather or season. The long-term plan is vague, but it could include building a larger cabin and eventually retiring there. For the moment, we are just looking forward to getting to know the place, enjoying the trees and wildlife and stars, and trying to rescue ourselves from the rush-rush of city life.

Stu Galley New Year's Day 1986

Date: 10 Jan 1986 1335-EST
From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sigh.
To: Imps at ZORK

Overheard in the cafeteria:
Customer, returning from table, to cashier: "I asked for a cup of seafood chowder, and I got potato leek instead."
Cashier: "That's all right. They're the same."

Date: 20 Feb 1986 1007-EST
From: Hollywood <DA at FRED>
Subject: JOKE
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

What's the difference between a used car salesman and a computer salesman?
The used car salesman knows when he's lying to you!

Date: 12 Mar 1986 1059-EST
From: Hollywood <DA at FRED>
Subject: WALLYBALL
To: WALLYBALLERS at FRED

I have good news and bad news. The good news is we have a court for next Wednesday (3/19 7-9 p.m.). The bad news is, as of March 1, the racquetball club instituted a fee of $5 for non-members who want to use the locker room.

Well, I guess we could just get dressed before going over there. Also we are looking for another place to play. If anybody knows of such a place, let me know!

Dave "Ain't gonna use no locker room in Sun City" Anderson

Date: 10 Apr 1986 1256-EST From: Hollywood <DA at FRED>
Subject: HOLLYWOOD'S SERVING CLINIC To: WALLYBALLERS at FRED

Cambridge Racquet Club has ask Hollywood to hold a clinic next Wednesday evening to demonstrate his awesome serving style. All wallyballers are invited to attend.

The clinic will begin at 8:30 p.m. and end around 8:31 or when ever the ball leaves the court (Which ever comes first). Then our usual free-for-all until 10:30.

Be there!

Date: 28 Aug 1986 2058-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Wallyball is Back! To: WALLYBALLERS at FRED

Wallyball, this Wednesday from 7:30 to 9:30. This is the kickoff of the fall season; our TV contract is dependent on the ratings during this crucial fall "sweeps" period, so please turn out in full force.

Date: 9 Apr 1987 1417-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: WALLYBALL To: DA

Interested in wallyball tonight 8-10?

Date: 12 Mar 1986 1241-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Speaker(s) wanted To: Imps at FRED

The Boston Chapter of the International Interactive Communications Society would like an Infocommie to be a guest speaker at an upcoming meeting (April 10, or if we can't make it then, around June 12). They've only had 4 meetings so far, with 75 people at the worst-attended meeting and about 175 at the best. (At least, those are the numbers the president gave me.) The society was started (in California) by people primarily interested in interactive videodisks. The Boston chapter meetings draw both technical and non-technical people and are held at Vizwhiz (sp?), a television production company near the Brookline/Boston line. The "doors open" at 6; there's a half-hour of "playtime" (equipment is set up so people can get their hands dirty if they want) and socializing; then the "formal" presentation, which should last about an hour; questions and answers; and then more playtime. The president suggested we talk about our development process, and also what we consider "meaningful interaction" (pressing the space bar when prompted, for instance).

Is someone willing to go? I'll go along with someone, but I don't wish to go by myself.

Date: 7 Apr 1986 1828-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: IBIFI To: IMPS at FRED

That's it. As the result of the meeting with Levy, a proposal to join IBIFI, the International Brotherhood of Interactive Fiction Implementers, Local FOO.

Unite today!

Date: 9 Apr 1986 1149-EST From: Hollywood <DA at FRED>
Subject: ELECTION MONITORING To: SWG

Honorable Judge (and Rabbi) Stuart W. Galley,

We the members of the Shoe Factory Liberation Army (SFLA) do hereby plead and request you over see this year's employee parking card lottery. Last year's was a shame which ultimately lead to the down fall of our CEO Ferdinand Vezza. Many car owners names were left out of last year's lottery and never had a chance to win. Please help us.

Also, we would like you to go on national television at a Friday Party and draw the names of the winners so every citizen/employee can see it is a fair lottery.

What a ya say judge, how 'bout it?
Hollywood Aquino

Date: 9 Apr 1986 1211-EST From: Hollywood <DA at FRED>
Subject: Re: ELECTION MONITORING To: SWG

I have spoken to Linda C. She claims everyone who wants to be in it will be "register". As in — she will ask everyone individually. It sounds good but a judge to over see it will eliminate any doubts about fairness. (Besides she used to work for Ferdinand.) It will also make for a good Friday Party!!!

Date: 14 Apr 1986 1202-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: LETTER OF THE DAY To: Everybody at FRED

Dear Infocom People:

Could you somehow tell me what Infocom stands for? (If it's not just some hopeless jabber name that some kook made up — sorry if YOU are the kook that made it up.) Thanks for reading this letter (if you really read this stuff ... or do you let a computer do everything for you?) Sincerely, Becky Arnold

Date: 14 Apr 1986 1502-EST From: Ames <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Autographs To: Imps at FRED

Testing (I, actually) wants to change the current mode of thanking outside testers (one free game of your choice, or a credit against a future game or product) to the old and simple method of sending each of them a final copy of whatever game they tested. To help our well-loved testers swallow this pill (such as Bellyacher, Kimmel, Ingley and Frenchu) we would like to add the perk of a (personalized?) autograph on each tester's copy ... umm, what do ya say, guys?

1. Would you be willing to autograph up to or around 50 copies of your latest game (starting with Leather Gamma)?
2. Would you be willing to personalize up to or around 50 of them?
3. Would you be willing to personalize a game for those especially good testers? This would not be advertized as such, merely up to your whim?

Thanks, Amy.

Date: 14 Apr 1986 1514-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Autographs To: AMY cc: SWG

If there's really any value in my autograph, I'll use it however you want.

Date: 22 Apr 1986 1819-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: CES To: Imps at FRED

Binky would like any suggestions or ideas we might have for what we should do at CES.

-Should we feature one product only? (If so, Trinity, I assume?)
-Or should we feature 3 products? (Trinity, LGOP, and Moonmist)
-Or 4 products? (add Ballyhoo to list)

Factors to keep in mind:

-Our most successful events have been at trade shows (though that may be a little misleading, since other factors also affect the success of any event).
-LGOP may distract everyone from the other games, and may seem particularly incongruous with Moonmist.
-A separate event for LGOP, and then a separate event for Moonmist, is time-consuming, expensive, etc. We did nothing for Ballyhoo; do we want to risk doing nothing for other games?

We have at our disposal (should we want it) a large 2-room suite at the Ritz-Carlton for one night (Activision will use it for their products two other nights). If we introduced only 2 games, we could easily set up "theme" rooms (like a "theme train" once discussed: a mystery car, a fantasy car, etc.). Possibilities?

Renata is indeed our consultant in Chicago and will be visiting the suite tonight, I think (no, it's not what you're thinking). She'll be available to help us plan whatever we do. (Oops, I see I misspelled "incongruous.") We can talk about this with or without Binky, or not at all. What d'ya think?

Date: 25 Apr 1986 1217-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: "Hackers": the TV show To: everybody at FRED

Steven Levy ("Hackers": the book) and Stewart Brand ("Whole Earth …") begat a weekend conference about a year ago, featuring many of the personalities from the early days of computer hacking.

Now there's a half-hour TV show with footage from the conference, shown on WGBH yesterday and to be shown on VCR at Friday Party today.

SEE! The notorious "Captain Crunch," who did time for phone hacking.
SEE! Doug Carlston, who chucked lawyerdom to form Broderbund.
SEE! Richard Greenblatt, the canonical MIT hacker.
SEE! Richard Stallman, the Last of the True Hackers.

Pass the word.

Date: 13 May 1986 1142-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Quote of the day To: everybody at FRED

'Who would've thought that the squiggles in a cartoon that indicate various actions all have names? The coil showing drunkenness is a spurl, running feet are blurgits, sweat drops are plewds, an odor line is a waftarom and

the dust cloud left by someone running is a briffit. The @, #, * and ! of a "maladicta balloon" carry names like grawlix, nittles, jarns and quimp, which have even more zip than the words they replace.'

— Doug Cumming,
referring to "What's What: A Visual Glossary of the Physical World"
in Newsweek, May 12.

Reverse-engineering common phrases. See what happens when programmers have too much time on their hands?

Date: 15 Jul 1986 0922-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Thoughts for the Day To: IMPS at FRED

Consolidated, you and I maintain ourselves erect; separated, we defer to the law of gravity.
Fondness for notes of exchange constitutes the tuberous structure of all satanically inspired principles.

One cannot estimate the value of the contents of a bound, printed narrative or record from its exterior vesture.

One may address a member of the Equine family toward aqueous liquid, but one is incapable of compelling him to quaff.

Date: 15 Jul 1986 0928-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Thoughts for the Day To: JON at FRED cc: imps at FRED

Even the lowliest unit of currency, when deposited with a fiduciary institution or otherwise not squandered on material goods and services, contributes to one's balance sheet as if it were revenue.

Date: 15 Jul 1986 1103-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Thoughts for the Day To: SWG

Partake an abundantly lengthy stroll beyond the distant terminus of an undersized dock-like object.

Date: 17 Jul 1986 0835-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Thoughts for the Day To: Imps at FRED

Tenants of vitreous abodes ought to hurl no lithoidal fragments.

Cleave gramineous matter for fodder during the period that the orb of the day is refulgent.

Compute not your immature gallinaceans prior to their being produced.

A feathered creature clasped in the manual members is equal in value to a brace in the bosky growth.

Date: 17 Jul 1986 0907-EDT From: Dave Lebling <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Thoughts for the Day To: JON at FRED cc: Imps at FRED

Spheroidal granitic or basaltic fragments seeking a new equilibrium point under the influence of gravitic accel-

eration rarely harbor plant growths.

Where fabric garments are under stress or in constant use, it is often the case that the effort, materials, and time expended in terms of the number of loops of thread necessary is approximately ten percent of those required if the stress and wear are allowed to continue.

Date: 4 Sep 1986 1417-EDT From: Noisome Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: QUESTIONS To: SEM cc: SWG

1. What is the largest city south of the equator?
   A. Buenos Aires
   B. Jakarta
   C. Sao Paulo
   D. Sydney

2. What is the largest city north of the Arctic Circle?
   A. Fairbanks
   B. Murmansk
   C. Nome
   D. Thule

3. What U.S. National Park receives the most visitors?
   A. Acadia
   B. Everglades
   C. Great Smoky Mountains
   D. Yellowstone

Date: 14 Oct 1986 1405-EDT From: Japan Hath No Lace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Interactive Movie To: Everybody at FRED

I received the following announcement today:

> Participate in the interactive movie:
> A Different Train of Thought
> by Carol Strohecker
>
> This is a story about a woman and a man on a train. You're there too ... with all the other passengers. Their thoughts, and your thoughts, tell the story — in many ways — But what's the real story?
>
> In the Lower Lobby of the Wiesner Building (E15), MIT, 20 Ames St., Cambridge
>
> Budapest * the Videodisc * a Cast of Dozens
> Anytime between 10 AM and 10 PM, Friday 10/17 & Saturday 10/18
> Program approx. 20 mins.

Carol Strohecker made an "interactive movie" for Expo 67. I dunno if this is the same movie.

Date: 27 Oct 1986 1118-EST From: Amy <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Halloween Skit To: TESTERS at FRED, VELDRAN at FRED

There will be a final summing-up-and-delegating meeting today in the Library at 4:30. Final, until Friday, that is. If you haven't been involved before, and would like to read all about it, it's <SEM>SKIT.TXT. Please come, helping hands in hand (so to speak).

Date: 29 Oct 1986 1307-EST
From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
Subject: Skit
To: MAX, SEM, PDL, JON, TOMAS, GARY, AMY, SWG, DA

Okay, you all have your parts (theatrical, that is). Here's what to do now:

1. Read <SEM>SKIT.TXT.4 (contains in-depth explanation of the crime, and how to go about solving it.)

2. Think over how much your character knows, and how he will interact with the other characters in the skit.

3. Keep interactive fiction default responses in mind. These will be the bulk portion of your speaking lines. Example:

```
>CHUGGO, BEAT IT
Chuggo: (looking confused) "Be specific: what should I beat?"
>CHUGGO, GO AWAY
Chuggo: "Please use compass directions."
```

4. Think of how your character will react to off-the-wall requests like >ELMIRA, FOLLOW ME. Will she actually follow you, or just say some catch-all default to get her out of following.

5. Think of how your character will react to requests directly pertaining to the plot, where defaults just won't do.

6. Lebs and Max: If necessary, brush up on the usual IF responses to things:

```
>UNLOCK CABINET
Lebs: "What do you want to unlock the wood-tone cabinet with?"
>KEY
Lebs: "Which key do you mean, the oversized key or the cabinet key?"
>CABINET
Max: "Unlocked."
```

7. Rehearsal Friday 4:30

8. Spend no more than 15 mins. on all the above. They key phrase here is 'ad lib.'

Date: 29 Oct 1986 1400-EST
From: Bokster <TOMAS at FRED>
To: max, sem, pdl, jon, tomas, gary, amy, swg, da

In response to Jon's request, here's a cast list:

Max..... You, The Main Character	Stevo..... Jedediah, You's friend
Tara..... Zebulon, You's friend	Dave Lebling..... Uncle Parser, the narrator
Jon..... Doctor Goodbody	Tomas..... Elmira, the spinster
Gary..... Mayor Slimebucket	Curtis & Debbie..... Mr. Zeke (the horse)
Amy..... Reverend McGee	Stu..... Abdul
Hollywood Chuggo, the town bully	

A prophetic quote:

Date: 13 Nov 1986 1846-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: Quote To: Imps at FRED

"If this company is sold, the buyer will say to us: 'You will be the jewel in our crown and we won't change a thing.' I think anyone who believes that is brain-damaged." —Roger Straus III of Farrar, Straus

Date: 21 Nov 1986 1027-EST From: bunk rot <MAX at FRED>
Subject: beer again To: everybody at FRED

Mystery solved! Linda C., that demure little souse, has been there and gave me all the info, including the little tidbit of dirt she uses to black mail the bartender for free pitchers. Anyhow, here's the basics:

Commonwealth Brewery
85 Merrimack St.
523-8383

(You'll have to grill LC yourself for the really good stuff)
Thanks for the help, everyone.

Date: 21 Nov 1986 1006-EST From: bunk rot <MAX at FRED>
Subject: beer To: everybody at FRED

There has been word in the hop-vine lately of a brewery that recently opened near North Station that serves the beer it brews. I'm interested in finding out more, but I don't know how to find the place. If anyone has any news regarding this establishment, please lemme know. I'm thirsty.

Yours in foam, max

Date: 21 Nov 1986 1244-EST From: Amy <AMY at FRED>
Subject: The refrigerator To: Imps at FRED

There's a nice chunk of salami in there being nibbled away at by various molds and fungi. If it belongs to you, you might want to put it out of its misery.

For S.T.O.A.S. (Stop Torture on all Salamis)
Amy.

Date: 26 Nov 1986 0949-EST From: Amy <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Refrigerator To: IMPS at FRED

I was spelunking in the fridge this morning and noticed that some of the meats and cheeses of last week's lunch are still left, and not yet growing moss. I doubt if any will survive to next week un-green, so if you're interested, eat up — a pre-Thanksgiving feast!

Date: 1 Dec 1986 0853-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: MWA To: PDL, Jeff, SWG

You are eligible for membership in the Mystery Writers of America. I have applications in my office; please fill one out and return it to me.

Date: 1 Dec 1986 1709-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: cats To: swg

I read somewhere about planting catnip and other cat-edible plants for your indoor cat to munch on, rather than precious houseplants. Supposedly they really go for this stuff and will ignore the struggling african violet. Have you ever heard of this, and if so, where do you suppose I would find it?

Date: 2 Dec 1986 1134-EST From: Salty rug tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: cats To: LIZ cc: SWG, linde, jon

Here's some info from my reference books:

"Grass in pots provides indoor cats with the greenery they seem to need. Pre-sown trays of cock's-foot or lawn grass may be bought from pet stores, or you can sow the seeds of these or cereal grasses such as wheat or oats in potting mixture.... If your cat enjoys catnip, you can also grow this in a pot on a sunny window-sill.... Some houseplants and cut flowers and foliage (fresh or dried) are also poisonous — notably philodendrons, dumb cane (Dieffenbachia), true ivies (Hedera), caladiums, poinsettias, winter cherry (Solanun capsicastrum), oleander, rhododendrons and azaleas, common or cherry laurel (Prunus laurocerasus) and mistletoe.... The smell of certain plants can arouse intense interest in cats.... It seems that a true psychedelic state is induced by [catnip] reaching the brain. Cats have been observed sitting and staring at infinity, or seen chasing phantom mice. The same biochemical pathways are affected by the smell of catnip as by marijuana or LSD, though fortunately the effect is short-lived, non-addictive and quite harmless."

— Wright and Walters, "The Book of the Cat"

"A staggering number of plants are poisonous. Poinsettias head the list, with azaleas and dieffenbachia running a close second. Here is a list of some others: philodendron, ivy, chrysanthemums, mistletoe berries, rhubarb leaves, cherry (fruit, bark, stones, and leaves), iris leaves and roots, most bulbs (such as daffodil, jonquil, narcissus, and Star of Bethlehem), poison ivy, privet, oak (acorns, shoots, and leaves), mushrooms, oleander; sumac, sweet pea, and rosary pea (seeds and pods), uncooked potatoes (eye and sprouts), and apricot and peach pits."

— Frazier and Eckroate, "The Natural Cat"

Both of these books are in my office, if you want to peruse them.

Date: 2 Dec 1986 1228-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: cats To: swg

Thanks. I'd like to look at the books, and probably get a copy for myself and the local shop (being a conscientious pet owner). Will look into growing indoor plants for Nelson and will certainly keep you up on the results.

Date: 19 Dec 1986 1113-EST From: banana fan a <JON at FRED>
Subject: Catfood To: Liz, SWG, Linde

I heard a news story on WEEI about catfood. The phrase "100% nutritionally complete" (or something very similar) can only be printed on the package if the catfood has met certain new criteria. I noticed in my cupboards that Friskies DID have the phrase but Alpo/Tabby and Kitty Kat did NOT have the phrase (Alpo and Kitty Kat said something like "meets NVHA guidelines for nutrition," whatever that is).

Date: 6 Dec 1986 2306-EST From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
To: IMPS at FRED

XAVIER CUGAUT. WHO WAS HE AND IS THAT THE CORRECT SPELLING?

Date: 7 Dec 1986 1700-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

The name sounds familiar, but I don't know who he is or how it's spelled. Why?

Date: 8 Dec 1986 0853-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
To: DA

I don't know about the spelling, but I think Xavier was (is?) a performer whose wife was a more famous performer ... but I can't remember who. Someone like Zsa Zsa.

Date: 8 Dec 1986 0947-EST From: Salty rug tale <SWG at FRED>
To: DA

"Xavier Cugat (1900-). Chubby, beaming Spanish-American bandleader and caricaturist, a feature of many MGM musicals of the forties. Autobiography: Rumba is my Life (1948)." — Halliwell
Desi Arnaz played in his orchestra in the thirties. — Total Television

Date: 8 Dec 1986 0953-EST From: Bald Green Pit Devil <PDL at FRED>
To: DA

Xavier Cugat. He was (is?) a band leader from Brazil. He was also Charo's husband.

Date: 7 Dec 1986 1709-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

I just read brief.dope
Some good stuff. I particularly liked "Liz Cyr-Jones, author of X, Yand Z." The poster could also be a take off on the "Are You A Nurd/Yuppie/Preppie/Etc" series of posters: "Are You a Memo?"

From: bunk rot <MAX at FRED> Subject: fax
To: da cc: veldran, tomas

Has anyone faxed the InfoDope to MV,CA? It should be done!

Date: 16 Dec 1986 1003-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: infodope To: everybody at FRED

Congratulations to all involved for finally bringing Infocom back off its knees!!!!!!!!!! I hope this makes an impression on the mullers who got this new improved reorganization rolling.

Date: 16 Dec 1986 1120-EST From: Gary <GARY at FRED>
Subject: Re: infodope To: LIZ at FRED cc: everybody at FRED

Reviews on Infodope are coming in from outside customers already! Here are a few:

- This should triple Infocom morale 300%
- I loved the poster. It went on the wall next to my "Are You a Nerd?" poster
- I can't wait for Activision's new products
- No hablo Ingles. ?Esta basura?

Three cheers for the Great Underground Press.

Date: 15 Jan 1987 1637-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Lunch Monday To: Imps at FRED

Games magazine would like us to stage a mock Imp lunch for them on Monday. I told Cindy that I thought it wasn't at all useful: it would waste our time and not really be anything like a real Imp lunch. Nevertheless, she insisted.

So, I'm asking you all to have lunch with Games magazine on Monday. I'll get stuff from Stop and Shop, etc. We probably WON'T have a real lunch on Tuesday.

Date: 23 Jan 1987 1116-EST From: Har-har 'n Avast Me! <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Bruce Davis Day To: DA, SEM

How's this sound?

Bruce Davis Day

On Monday, Jan. 26, our new piece of ActiPrez will be visiting us for the first time. To assure Davis that Infocom is not a bunch of over-paid, under-productive practical jokers, and that Infocom is a smoothly oiled cog in the machine that is Activision, we must don our most professional outfits, our "dressing for success" dresses and our three-piece gray business suits. IBM-land, here we come! To convey to him the message that, although corporate, we are still family, each employee will wear a name tag, depicting his/her name, nickname and department. And to get to know our new prez properly, there will be a reception at 4:30 Monday afternoon.

However, we don't want to give Davis the completely wrong impression of us. Have you ever seen that Star Trek episode, "Return of the Archons," where a community transforms from Victorian prudishness to Bacchanalian anarchy, with a cry of "Festival!" at the stroke of 6:00 pm. Our own festival will start at five exactly, during the

reception. Someone will yell "It's five!" and Infocom will transform into the fun-loving party-down crew we all know and love. Instantly the kitchen lights will flicker off, and a strobe will flicker on. The staid cheese and cracker hors d'oeurves magically convert to pretzels and beernuts, beer will appear from nowhere and the kool-aid punch will be spiked with hard liquor. The muzak playing low in the background will switch to the Pretenders, full volume, and when Infocom rises, as one, to dance, we will throw off our professional clothes to reveal our off-duty personalities. Hawaiian shirts hide under the ties and jackets. Women let down their severely knotted hair. Everyone dons sunglasses. Let the party begin.

So, on Monday dress professional, with a quick change possibility. Even removing one's jacket, kicking off shoes and loosening a tie can make a businessman/woman look like a party animal, but if you can think of a fast and easy transformation, do it.

I must admit, as word by word I wrote this, I got less excited by the idea — will it work? How many people will do it? How many people won't show up at the reception in the first place, to avoid it? Do we care what Joel, or Davis himself, will think? Do I have the guts to go through with it myself?

If I/we/Infocom do (have the guts), or if we need another idea, I have two 5x7 photos of Davis, one color (smiling), the other black and white (straight).

Linda C. has offered help, and also said she will disavow any knowledge of these activities if asked.

Suggestions? Amy

Date: 23 Jan 1987 1244-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: BD DAY To: AMY cc: DA

Here's a second draft based on your first:

Bruce Davis Day

This Monday, January 26, our new piece of CEO will be visiting us for the first time. To dispell any misimpression that Davis may have of Infocom as a bunch of over-paid under-productive practical jokers, and to instead demonstrate that Infocom is a smoothly oiled cog in the machine that is Activision, we will don our most professional outfits. Think IBM. Women should wear their best "dressing for success" dresses, and wear their hair up in a bun like a librarian or Pat Maroni. Men should wear their most conservative suits, the more pieces the better, with blue or white shirts and their nerdiest eyeglasses.

As any businesslike professionals would do, we will all wear "Hello, My Name Is…" tags, saying "Mr. Buxton" or "Ms. Mazzotta." And, in true corporate style, there will be a reception for Davis at 4:30 Monday afternoon (probably following a company meeting.) The reception will feature Unbelievably Dull Hors D'oeuvres (tm), coffee from a huge silver coffee pot, and non-alcoholic punch dispensed by a person stationed behind the bowl. Quiet, tasteful muzak will play in the background.

By 4:59pm, Bruce will be thinking "Hey, where'd these nice folks get such a rowdy reputation?" and Joel will be thinking "Okay, what's coming and when?"

Have you ever seen that Star Trek episode, "Return of the Archons," where a community transforms from Victorian prudishness to Bacchanalian anarchy, with a cry of "Festival!" at the stroke of "The Red Hour"? At exactly 5:00, during our reception, someone will yell "It's five o'clock!" and a nearly instantaneous transformation will take place. The person behind the punch bowl immediately begins dumping a large bottle of rum into the punch. Kegs of beer are wheeled in. The quiet muzak is replaced by a blast of rock. The dining area lights will go out as a strobe flickers on. Popcorn and beer nuts are strewn over the remains of the staid hors d'oeuvres, and as Infocom rises, as one, to dance, we will throw off our professional clothes to reveal our wildest party clothes, preferably featuring lots of Hawaiian shirts. Women let down their hair, and horn-rims are replaced by sunglasses. By 5:00:15, the party has begun.

Everyone will have to pull together to pull this off, but it should be worth it. With your help, this event will go down alongside The Quinn Trial, The Dating Game, The Vezza Masks, and the Joel-Jim Wedding in InfoHistory.

So, on Monday, dress your corporate professional best, with a quick change possibility. Even removing your jacket, kicking off your shoes, and loosening a tie can make a businessman/woman look like a party animal, but if you can think of a fast and easy transformation, do it! Don't forget those hairbuns and sunglasses. And at 5:00, be

ready for the call!

Make sure you don't forget! Take this memo home with you and tape it to your closet door. Don't let the Monday Morning Malaise keep you from remembering!!!

Date: 11 Feb 1987 1113-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Razzie Nominations To: EVERYBODY at FRED

The Golden Raspberry Foundation has also announced its nominations (this is for real, folks).

Prince's "Under the Cherry Moon" earned eight nominations, including worst picture, director (Prince), actor (Prince), song (by Prince) and screenplay (ditto).

"Cobra" got six nominations, including worst picture & screenplay. "Shanghai Surprise" (w/Madonna) also got six. "Howard the Duck" got seven, including the first nomination in a new category for "Worst Special Visual Effects for Terrible Creature Creations." Also in this category are "Invaders From Mars" and "King Kong Lives."

The Golden Raspberry Trophy consists of a golfball-sized raspberry glued to a film reel and spray-painted gold. "It costs about $2.00 to make," remarked Foundation spokesman John Wilson.

Date: 11 Feb 1987 1104-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Oscar Nominations To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Announced at 8:30 this morning! Live from CompuServe!

BEST PICTURE
- Hannah & Sisters
- Platoon
- Children of < God
- Mission
- Room w/View

BEST DIRECTOR
- David Lynch/Blue Velvet (yay)
- Woody Allen/Hannah
- Roland Joffe/Mission
- James Ivory/Room w/View
- Oliver Stone/Spitoon

BEST ACTRESS
- Jane Fonda/Morning After
- Marlee Matlin/Children of < God
- Sissy Spacek/Crimes of the Heart
- Kathleen Turner/Peggy Sue
- Sigourney Weaver/Aliens (snort!)

BEST ACTOR
- Dexter Gordon/Round Midnight
- Bob Hoskins/Mona Lisa
- William Hurt/Children of < God
- Paul Newman/Color o'$
- James Woods/Salvador

Others available on request.

Date: 11 Feb 1987 1129-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Best Supportings To: everybody at FRED

By popular demand (these are Oscars, not Razzies):

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
- Tess Harper/Crimes of the Heart
- Piper Laurie/Children of < God
- Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio/Color o'$
- Maggie Smith/Room w/View
- Dianne Wiest/Hannah

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
- Tom Berenger/Spitoon
- Michael Caine/Hannah
- Willem Dafoe/Spitoon
- Denholm Elliot/Room w/View (he'll get it — Annual Old Man Award)
- Dennis Hopper/Hoosiers (why not Blue Velvet!?!?)

And while I'm at it ...

SCREENPLAY	SCREENPLAY FROM ANOTHER MEDIUM
- Crocodile Dundee	- Children of < God
- Hannah	- Color o'$
- My Beautiful Launderette	- Crimes of the Heart
- Spitoon	- Room w/View
- Salvador	- Stand By Me

Date: 31 Mar 1987 1158-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: More oscar info To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Chris suggested an Oscar scheme where the more important awards are weighted more heavily, and Lebs, Amy, Jon and I came up with the following weightings:

5 points: Best Picture
4 points: Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director
3 points: Best Supporting Actor/Actress, Best Original/Adapted Screenplay
3 points: Best Foreign Film, Best Song
1 point: all the others—Editing, Sound, Art Direction, etc.

We also re-rated everyone based on this weighting scheme:

26	Steve Meretzky	20	Amy Briggs	16	Lorri Fischer
25	Mike Dornbrook		Andy Briggs		Fritzi Galley
	Gordon Haff		Brian Moriarty		Harry Regan
	Dave Lebling	18	Cindy Delfino	15	Jonathan Miller
22	Jon Palace		Katie Kendall		Joe Prosser
	Chris Reeve		Kristin Palace	14	Poh C. Lim
21	Dave Anderson		Debbie Reilly		Jeff O'Neill
	Stu Galley	17	Gabrielle Accardi	13	Janet Rothrock
				9	Betty Rock

Gary and Lebs also report that the consensus vote got 11 out of 15 correct, with a weighted ranking of 31. I guess we'll use the weighted ranking next year, although we'll probably need a Cornerstone to keep track of it.

Date: 12 Feb 1987 1249-EST From: Har-har 'n Avast Me! <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Tomorrow To: DA

They don't sell EKU at Kappy's, so we're going to get Beck's Dark instead. Talk to SEM if you want to get it yourself.

About the games — we got 3 prizes (1 first place, 2 second place) for any contest you might devise. You are in charge of the games/drinking contests. Let me know what you need, if anything — in the table and chairs line.

We selected 6 beers for the tasting (one from each country, Miller — U.S. — as a ringer). For serious drinking there'll be Heineken, Sam Adams and a light beer, not to mention the left-overs from the tasting.

We also got two door prizes. You wanna get the vibrating melon?

I wanted to drop a non-alcoholic beer into the tasting, just to see where people rated it, but SEM fascistly say no. There will be pizza and chips.

Any other suggestions? Squad 2 will be sent with a list of what to buy.

Date: 12 Feb 1987 1214-EST
Subject: Pitchers!

From: Har-har 'n Avast Me! <AMY at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Yes, folks, we need 'em for the party tomorrow. Pitchers! Not softball, not Picasso, but BEER pitchers. Please let Amy or Steve know as soon as possible if you have one to offer, and bring it in tomorrow.

Inception of Hermit Crab Racing, later reported in the Summer 1987 issue:

Date: 3 Mar 1987 1440-EST
Subject: Re: CRABS

From: Har-har 'n Avast Me! <AMY at FRED>
To: DA

Go to it. Buy some paint for their shells, too. Get half a dozen. This Friday we could do a preliminary race (with unmarked shells) and have a draft pick? I've got the remaining cash, by the way.

Date: 6 Mar 1987 1150-EST
Subject: Today's scam

From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
To: FIVE-0 at FRED cc: JEFF at FRED

I just got a wire from the entomologist. Tom Veldran won't be with us this week. We've brought in a crack substitute from Indo-China — Jeff Fan. Don't give him grief, he's not an 'Ass Ho.'

This week's case:

A close friend in Oahu sent me a telegram late last night. Apparently, Oliver North, the ex security adviser, has turned up in the islands. He's using the income from an illegally-fixed hermit crab racing outfit to fuel the war on drugs. We must stop this man before he's run all the good drugs out of town. The next thing you know, smoking cigarettes will be outlawed in the workplace!! Anyhow, let's react to this hot wire and kick North's ass south!

Speaking of hot wires, we need a heater for today's crab race.

The ho ho over and out,

Chief Mai Tai

Date: 9 Mar 1987 1655-EST

From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
To: FIVE-0 at FRED

As part of a special effort to keep you boys informed of new force procedures, I am submitting the following document. -Mai Tai

To: Chief Mai Tai, Hawaii Five-0 commissioner
cc: Ron Reagan, Don Regan, Harry Regan, Dirty Harry, Dennis the Menace
From: Roberta Crane
Re: New Racing Procedure

Beginning Monday March 9th, a new federal police policy governing racing procedures will be enacted. This policy, once enacted, will replace older, obsolete procedures HCR-45V and HCR45-Short. The policy consists of two measures. One, members of police forces at all levels must syndicate and purchase one medium-sized hermit crab, to be raced on Fridays at Drink'em Downs. Two, members of said syndicates must not race said crab unless they, the syndicate members, have imbibed at least enough alcoholic solution to be judged legally shitfaced. Any non-shitfaced policeman will not be permitted to participate in racing, and will be subjugated to three weeks of solitary confinement, in which he must radically reassess personal values and priorities. Any officer who, after the

three week period, has not completely reprioritized his brain tissue will be impacted by at least six, but not more than eleven, tall office buildings, suspended by thick metal wire from cranes. Do I make myself clear?

Roberta Crane
Federal Police Commissionerette

[I expect you boys to respond favorably to this new procedure. We'll discuss crab-purchasing this Friday. — CMT]

Date: 27 Mar 1987 1105-EST
Subject: DRINK'EM DOWNS

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

What's "NLG" ?

Date: 27 Mar 1987 1827-EST
Subject: Racing form

From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
To: da

<taa.crabs>infoprint.mud.1, infoprint.mud.2.

Demise of the Hermit Crab Racing:

Date: 1 Jun 1987 1338-EDT
Subject: All smelly things

From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
To: everybody at FRED

All smelly things must come to an end and so it goes for crabs. Tonight they will be put out to stud at the Boston Pet Farm (Center). But there is a catch....

One of the crabs has outgrown his shell and climbed out of it. We can't take him back until he has a shell. Please search your homes and garages and trunks for a suitable shell.

Date: 1 Jun 1987 1354-EDT
Subject: Re: All smelly things

From: beyond murk syntax <MAX at FRED>
To: DA

Lori has some shells that she picked up on her trip to PR. I had talked to her about this before and she wasn't willing to give up her 'souvenirs'. Maybe I can get her to change her tune for a naked crab. I'll let you know.

Date: 4 Jun 1987 1501-EDT
Subject: shell

From: beyond murk syntax <MAX at FRED>
To: da

I noticed the tank is empty and the offered shell remains. Wha'appened? Did the little naked guy go off to that great racing table in the sky? Or did you flush him down the garbage disposal (crunch-grind-crunch-grind). Don't worry, I promise not to report you to the SPCC. Lemme know.

Date: 11 Mar 1987 0909-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: From the home office… To: DA

Here's tonight's top ten list:

Top ten reasons why Max gets in at 9:00 AM sharp each morning.

10. To make sure the Amiga is free.
9. All the good bagels are still on sale downstairs.
8. So that he can read Rolling Stone for two mellow, low-strung, laid-back, uninterrupted hours.
7. To keep up his corporate image until his resume takes affect.
6. Because he's got nowhere else to go.
5. In case his bulletin board has gotten lonely.
4. He gets buzzed off of those rush-hour exhaust fumes.
3. Just because he's cuddly, fun-to-be-with Max Buxton.
2. Because he's really Satan.
1. (drum roll) To let his car air out for a few hours before lunch.

Dave L.

Date: 27 Mar 1987 1308-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: The Plan To: Liz, SWG, SEM

Liz, please come to my office at 2:55 and tell me it's time for the meeting. Please be sure to disturb us, even if the door is closed (as it's bound to be).

Steve, please do the same at 3:00.

Stu, please call me at 3:05.

Thanks very much. If you all do your jobs right, I won't give the salesman your names.

Date: 9 Apr 1987 0946-EST From: Inhalation Booth <VELDRAN at FRED>
Subject: INFORMATION To: CLR cc: PDL, TAA, SWG

I am writing a paper on the folkloric aspects of the computer community. I would really appreciate it if you could give some information about the following:

I am interested in the genesis of the words foo, bar, and frob. Along with your answer could you give me examples of how you would use the word both inside and outside of the context of computing. Also, if you know of any other words that might fit what I'm looking for, I would like to know about them too.

I am also interested in a hacking story. A story that would be of most interest to me is one that was told to you by someone else. However, if you can't think of a good second hand story I would still like to hear about one that you have direct knowledge of.

Date: 10 Apr 1987 1649-EST From: Gray lust tale <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: INFORMATION To: VELDRAN cc: CLR, PDL, TAA, SWG

These words are probably explained in the MIT/Stanford hackers' JARGON file — if only we had a copy here! You can see about half of that file in "Computer Slang", CoEvolution Quarterly, Spring 1981, in my office. It claims that FROB is a back-clipped form of both FROBNICATE (verb, "to manipulate or adjust") and FROBNITZ (noun, not further explained).

I'm convinced that FOO & BAR come from FUBAR = Fucked Up Beyond All Recognition. (See "Dictionary of American Slang," 1967 edition, page 685, in my office.) I often use FOO! or FOOEY! as euphemisms for FUCK! i.e. an exclamation of dismay. (The same book says that these, without BAR, come from Yiddish, reinforced by German "pfui.")

I first encountered these words at M.I.T. Project MAC, where computer hackers would use them as nonsense names, usually temporary names. Logo hackers have observed that children sometimes have trouble giving names to programs that they create; maybe hackers do too, and in a hurry they fall back on these standard meaningless names.

Other words: CRUFT, KLUDGE, FROTZ, ZORK. Prof. Danny Cohen claims that TOTO is French for FOO.

A hacking story: Once upon a time, hackers at the M.I.T. Artificial Intelligence Lab built a robot arm of novel design. Other hackers built a robot eye and vision system that could quickly find a light object against a dark background. The two groups decided to demonstrate their experiments by combining them into a robot table-tennis player. And it worked — it played a decent rally for a while against a human opponent! Then suddenly the arm froze in mid-air. Hackers rushed in to check the arm and eye, but found no apparent damage. Then someone checked the controlling console and discovered that the LISP system had run out of free storage and had paused for garbage collection. I guess no one had expected the thing to play for that long!

Date: 10 Apr 1987 1657-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: INFORMATION To: SWG cc: VELDRAN, CLR, PDL

Actually, I seem to recall that FROB originated at TMRC, where it meant 'a small protruding arm or trunnion'. Whence its current use, where it's just about anything. [The counter on top of my terminal, which used to be at LSC, has FROB inscribed on its arm. It was made by a TMRC hacker, who naturally used the original meaning.]

Date: 30 Jun 1987 1711-EDT From: EverestEnzymeTrick <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Quote of the Week To: IMPS at FRED

> PROF: Anita Sinclair forced me to read "Dragon's Egg."
> SEM: How did she force you...did she sit on you while you read it?
> PROF: One can only hope!

Date: 29 Jul 1987 1216-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: kitchen To: everybody at FRED

I can't believe that people here don't know how to clean up after themselves. The microwave is filthy! It's covered with splotches of tomato sauce and other yucky things. Piggies take note: this is not a hotel, nor is your mother here to clean up after you. The kitchen is a common area for everyone's use - not just yours. If you're unfamiliar with cleaning techniques or for some ignorant reason, not inclined to practice them, I'll personally lend you a dime and you can call your mother to come clean up after you. (This applies to people in here on the weekends as well!)

p.s Sure, I'll clean up after you - give me your toothbrush, and I'll scrub.

Date: 4 Aug 1987 1338-EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <ELIZ at FRED>
Subject: Believe it or not To: Everybody at FRED

DID YOU KNOW.....that at this very moment homeless kittens roam the earth? And not only homeless kittens, but kittens that have been kicked around so badly that they're actually bruised and battered? Yes, while you sit there in air-conditioned comfort, helpless animals seek protection from the blazing sun and the mean streets. But don't despair. YOU CAN HELP! Now, for a limited time only, YOU have the opportunity to offer a home to just such a battered, wandering little kitten. Time is limited because life on the streets is tough. Think about it. Wouldn't you like to be the Good Guy in an otherwise horrible life? Contact Carl for all the details.

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1450-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Money To: DA

We could print up $9 million dollars worth of fake money and burn it.

Date: 6 Aug 1987 1519-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Money To: DA

Sounds good. Or 9 one million dollar bills. Dollars? Zorkmids? InfoMids? InfoDollars? VezzaBucks?

Date: 14 Aug 1987 1453-EDT From: Steal ugly art! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: invitation To: forum cc: swg

Hot muggy weather got you down?
Need to pound away your frustrations with a hammer?
Dying to see how a kit house gets assembled?

Then drive up north for a couple hours and visit the Galleys' cabin-in-the-making! For the next week only, you can hoist a joist or flail at a nail in the beauteous Maine woods. After that time, you can only sit on the porch, sip your drink, and listen to the silence.

A map and written directions are at my office for copying.
All contributions of cold food or drink will be reimbursed.

Date: 27 Aug 1987 0945-EDT From: Alert salt guy <SWG at FRED>
Subject: many thanks To: forum cc: swg

... to you who came north last week to help us construct our cabin. You have first priority in reserving it for a getaway in the woods!

Progress report: The whole frame is complete, as well as the floors and most of the siding. We plan to spend the next few weekends finishing the siding, shingles, and doors & windows. Then, with luck, the porch and the wood stove before winter. Help is still welcome!

Date: 2 Sep 1987 1510-EDT From: Alert salt guy <SWG at FRED>
Subject: invitation To: forum cc: swg

To celebrate the end of summer vacation and the imminent completion (we hope!) of our cabin at Dragonfly Bog, we Galleys invite one and all to a cookout this Sunday, the middle of Labor Day weekend. Rain date: same, but bring a jacket or a can of propane (Gaz).

We'll begin the day with some sawing, hammering, and caulking; then start some serious partying. We'll have simple but plentiful food and drink; if you want something COLD, you'll have to bring it. If you want to come early or stay late, just bring extra food and bedding. (Tents are optional but not required!)

A map and written directions are at my office for copying. The place is about two hours' drive from here, in southern Maine.

Date: 29 Sep 1987 1150-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: You may already have won! To: Jeff, Jon, SEM, DA, Tomas, Veldran cc: SWG

Yes, Mr./Ms. Fred-user, you may already have won one of the fabulous prizes listed below. Because you were demographically selected by our incredibly powerful Main-Frame computer, you are eligible to claim as many as one of these prizes:

* a free fun-filled weekend in Upper Sandusky
* a V.I.P. tour of famous haunted Tresyllian Castle
* a fabulous night on the town in a Malibu beach mansion
* eight fun-filled excursions in the Punster region

All you have to do to claim your prize is to be our guest at our fabulous country cabin, where you'll enjoy walking in the woods, swimming in the bog, sleeping in the bed, and drinking in the usual way. Our special attractions in this autumn season include picking apples, riding horses, and cutting firewood.

You must also attend a short sales presentation with one of our fun-filled service representatives, and learn about the fabulous investment opportunities in New England nuclear power stations. (If married, both husband and wife must attend. If unmarried, both "husband" and "wife" are meaningless.) Please call 617-492-6000 in advance of your visit to make an appointment.

Date: 23 Jun 1988 1208-EDT From: Try Algae Lust! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: invitation To: forum cc: swg

NEW!! NOW!! SIX-FOOT MUD PIES!! TEN-FOOT TINKERTOYS!!

Hot muggy weather got you down?

Need to pound away your frustrations with a hammer?

Dying to see how a porch kit gets assembled?

Then drive up north for a couple hours and visit the Galleys' cabin! For the next two weeks, you too can hoist a joist or flail at a nail in the beauteous Maine woods. On the day after Carol's wedding, we plan to mix and pour concrete for the piers. Then, on the long Fourth-of-July weekend, we'll be raising posts and building the floor and roof. Other activities include canoeing on the Ossipee River, and watching fireworks over Province Lake. Not to mention listening to birds and frogs, hiking in the White Mountains, counting stars, and other fun stuff.

A map and written directions are at Stu's office for copying.

All contributions of cold food or drink are most welcome!

Date: 11 Aug 1988 0044-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: shed party To: EVERYBODY at FRED

It won't be as exciting as building Stu's house. In fact, it probably won't even be as exciting as building Stu's porch. But I'm having a shed-building party this Saturday, so if you like getting out your frustrations by driving nails into wood, drop by! Bring a hammer! And afterward, I'll fire up the grill and if we have enough people we'll get a volleyball game going.

Date: 23 Sep 1987 1030-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Costume Accessories To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Can anyone lend me any of the following:

* a monocle
* a riding crop
* any kind of military-ish medal
* one of those hard, khaki-colored hat/helmets that people wear on safaris (what are those called?)

[I'm invited to a Murder Party and I play a British officer.]

Marc gets caught in an earthquake:

Date: 1 Oct 1987 2027-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Shake, rattle, and roll To: TESTERS at FRED, LIZ at FRED

My trip has been postponed for a day; I will be gone from Friday morning to late Monday night. I will be around or the remainder of the week to insure that the game ships on time.

This was an exciting day here in LA; the earth moved for me.

Date: 1 Oct 1987 2027-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Shake, rattle, and roll To: DA

Yow! Are we living in California yet?

Date: 2 Oct 1987 1819-EDT From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Shake, rattle, and roll To: MARC

Well...now you know. Where were you when it hit?

Date: 6 Oct 1987 1903-EDT From: Marc Blank <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [Re: Shake, rattle, and roll] To: DA

I was in rush-hour traffic on the 5 near (choke!) Sylmar. It was pretty scary and sort of surreal. At the airport, the windows of the tower had blown out, the ceiling of the PSA terminal (this is at Burbank) had fallen down, and hundreds were just sitting outside the terminal at the parking lot - some joking, some in tears.

I rescheduled my flight to the next day to check on damage at home but all was well. Overall, I'm more disturbed than I figured I would be. And that in itself is disturbing!

More when I see you next week.

Date: 7 Oct 1987 1206-EDT From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Becoming an Imp/Programmer To: imps at FRED

I seem to be getting occasional calls/letters asking me what is the best college preparation for becoming a game writer/programmer at Infocom. I have been mumbling some meaningless stuff about computer science, English and MIT. Anyone have any better suggestions as an answer to these queries?

Date: 16 Oct 1987 1459-EDT From: nJo celPaa <JON at FRED>
Subject: Tuesday about 10:30 To: Imps at FRED

A woman from Montana, Paula Petrica, will be here Tuesday about 10:30. She's researching a book and is doing an extensive chapter on Infocom. For some reason, she wants to meet with the game writers.

Date: 20 Oct 1987 0823-EDT From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Party Invite II To: DA

Here's a line for the next Halloween Party Memo Invitation:

"Activities Include: ANNUAL PUMPKIN DROP—this year we will be dropping pumpkins and Activision Stock at the same time, to see which one drops faster."

Reported in the Winter/Spring 1987 issue

Date: 26 Oct 1987 1320-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Jason To: DA

Look at today's "Robotman" strip.

Date: 26 Oct 1987 1556-EST From: A Musical Yak <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Wyrms To: everybody at FRED

Has anyone a copy of "Wyrms" — Orson Scott Card's latest book? I'd like to finish it.

Date: 3 Nov 1987 1540-EST From: Brad Sagarin <DRAGON at FRED>
Subject: "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window" To: everybody at FRED

Hello everyone, and a belated happy halloween.

After receiving lots of flack when I failed to mention a play I was in over the summer, here's a quick plug for my current endeavor:

TRME: The MIT Tech Random Music Ensemble

presents

"The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window"
a drama in three acts by Lorraine Hansberry

8:00 PM November 5,6,7,8,9
admission $4.00
room 34-101 (at MIT)

Reservations &
Information
225-6426

"Sidney" is a powerful drama, which (if all these 7:00 PM - 6:00 AM rehearsals pay off) we'll hopefully do some justice. I've actually left the pit for this production, and am playing David Regan, a cynical, homosexual playwrite.

"I love the theater,
The theater is my life."
(spoken with extreme sarcasm)

P.S. Quick teaser: there's a surrealistic orgy including Sidney, Gloria (his sister-in-law) and myself in the third act ...

Date: 25 Nov 1987 1556-EST
Subject: Wednesday Party

From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
To: everybody at FRED

Never mind what you might have heard—there will be a party today.
(What's Thanksgiving without a hangover?)

Date: 9 Dec 1987 1136-EST
Subject: Re: MAINE JOKES

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: DA

What, between you, and Bok, and Johnny, I would expect for people up there to start an Anti-defaMainetion League.

Date: 18 Jan 1988 1619-EST
To: SWG

From: CHALLENGE
Subject: Wallaby lusts

Dear Stu:

It is not enough to regret...one must REPENT and SEEK FORGIVENESS for such lusts. Then one must send large sums of money to appropriately authorized agents to ensure everlasting peace.

I thought the review was pretty good, although neither particularly innovative or brilliant. Does it mean anything?

Date: 18 Jan 1988 1624-EST
Subject: Re: Wallaby lusts

From: I RegretWallabyLust <SWG at FRED>
To: CHALLENGE cc: SWG

I believe the review is available to any compuserve subscriber, but probably only readers of The Electronic

Gamer will know about it, and only some of them will bother to read it.

It might also be distributed to other subscription services. Even so, it will probably influence only a handful of fanatical users.

Date: 1 Feb 1988 1158-EST From: Trust Sir Hack <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: BOWLING To: everybody at FRED

We now only have two lanes reserved. Please let me know by 3:30 if you are planning to bowl so I may reserve more lanes if necessary. Thanks

p.s. Sorry for saying LANE so much, I'll try to use alleys instead of LANE when I can.

Date: 3 Feb 1988 1242-EST From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: new exhibition To: Everybody at FRED

On exhibit at the Infocom Library through February

"BETTY AND STEVE"
recent photographs by Janet Rothrock

and

"STEVE AND BETTY"
recent photographs by Stu Galley

Opening Reception Friday, Feb. 5
Meet the artists (if they come)

Date: 15 Feb 1988 1315-EST From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Blizzard of '78 To: MARC

Do you realize we recently passed the 10th anniversary of the great blizzard? Those were the days....

Date: 10 Mar 1988 1709-EST From: Risk Hurts Cat <KIRSCH at FRED>
Subject: Re: Crazy Dimwit flyer To: SWG

Thanks. We found the typos a few days ago.

Pissa-cool is a coined term first heard by me in the inner city high schools of Boston (MA) in the mid 1970's. PISSA is a form of PISSA, n., slang; a object or event meriting praise—"That's a pissa." In the move from New York to Boston, the term was changed to an adjective—"That's pissa." It eventually came to modify COOL, much as in the 1950's term "NEATO-KEEN."

Date: 4 Apr 1988 1414-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Spring is in the air To: DA

I'm shocked — shocked! — that you would suggest such a thing!

P.S. Here's what I know: they hung around together all night during the goodbye party at Aku and were still hanging around together when I left around 11:00 and J.D. had his arm on Gabby's shoulder a couple of times and I've seen them go to lunch on at least two occasions and they both bring in dogs. What more can you say?

P.S. Doesn't J.D. have a POSSLQ?

Date: 4 Apr 1988 1428-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Spring is in the air To: DA

"Person of Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters"

I think it was coined by the IRS or Census Bureau or someone like that a few years back to cover all the bases.

Date: 12 Apr 1988 1154-EST From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Oscar Results To: EVERYBODY at FRED

There were 27 entries. Here's how the votes broke down in each category. An asterisk (*) denotes the actual winner.

PICTURE (6 pts)
- 6 Broadcast News
- 1 Fatal Attraction
- 2 Hope and Glory
- 18 *The Last Emperor
- 0 Moonstruck

DIRECTOR (4 pts)
- 2 Adrian Lyne (Fatal Attraction)
- 5 John Boorman (Hope and Glory)
- 11 *Bernardo Bertolucci (Last Emperor)
- 4 Lasse Hallstrom (My Life as a Dog)
- 5 Norman Jewison (Moonstruck)

ACTOR (4 pts)
- 15 *Michael Douglas (Wall Street)
- 1 William Hurt (Broadcast News)
- 3 Marcello Mastroianni (Dark Eyes)
- 1 Jack Nicholson (Ironweed)
- 7 Robin Williams (G. M. Vietnam)

ACTRESS (4 pts)
- 9 *Cher (Moonstruck)
- 7 Glen Close (Fatal Attraction)
- 10 Holly Hunter (Broadcast News)
- 0 Sally Kirkland (Anna)
- 1 Meryl Streep (Ironweed)

SUPPORTING ACTOR (3 pts)
- 3 Albert Brooks (Broadcast News)
- 16 *Sean Connery (The Untouchables)
- 1 Morgan Freeman (Street Smart)
- 5 Vincent Gardenia (Moonstruck)
- 2 Denzel Washington (Cry Freedon)

SUPPORTING ACTRESS (3 pts)
- 0 Norma Aleandro (Gaby-A True Story)
- 5 Anne Archer (Fatal Attraction)
- 16 *Olympia Dukakis (Moonstruck)
- 2 Anne Ramsey (Throw Momma...Train)
- 4 Ann Sothern (The Whales of August)

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY (3 pts)
- 1 Au Revoir Les Enfants
- 11 Broadcast News
- 2 *Moonstruck
- 5 Radio Days
- 8 Hope and Glory

ADAPTED SCREENPLAY (3 pts)
- 9 The Dead
- 3 Fatal Attraction
- 4 Full Metal Jacket
- 7 *The Last Emperor
- 4 My Life as a Dog

FOREIGN FILM (2 pts)
22 Au Revoir Les Enfants (France)
1 *Babette's Feast (Denmark)
0 Course Completed (Spain)
2 The Family (Italy)
2 Pathfinder (Norway)

ART DIRECTION (1 pt)
7 Empire of the Sun
3 Hope and Glory
14 *The Last Emperor
2 Radio Days
1 The Untouchables

COSTUME DESIGN (1 pt)
2 The Dead
2 Empire of the Sun
21 *The Last Emperor
1 Maurice
1 The Untouchables

ORIGINAL SCORE (1 pt)
10 Cry Freedom
3 Empire of the Sun
9 *The Last Emperor
3 The Untouchables
2 The Witches of Eastwick

ORIGINAL SONG (2 pts)
6 "Cry Freedom" (Cry Freedom)
15 *"Time of My Life" (Dirty Dancing)
1 "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us" (Mannequin)
2 "Shakedown" (Beverly Hills Cop II)
3 "Storybook Love" (The Princess Bride)

CINEMATOGRAPHY (1 pt)
2 Broadcast News
6 Empire of the Sun
2 Hope and Glory
16 *The Last Emperor
1 Matewan

FILM EDITING (1 pt)
5 Broadcast News
1 Empire of the Sun
8 Fatal Attraction
5 *The Last Emperor
8 Robocop

SOUND (1 pt)
4 Empire of the Sun
8 *The Last Emperor
3 Lethal Weapon
8 Robocop
4 The Witches of Eastwick

TOTAL AWARDS BY FILM:

The Last Emperor	9	Harry & Hendersons	1
Moonstruck	3	Innerspace	1
Wall Street	1	Hope & Glory	0
The Untouchables	1	Broadcast News	0
Dirty Dancing	1	Fatal Attraction	0
Babette's Feast	1	etc.	

PREDICTION CONTEST RESULTS:

RANK		POINTS	#RIGHT
1.	Steve "The Fixer" Meretzky	34	13
2.	Mike Dornbrook	29	12
3.	Nancy Citro	27	10
4.	Betty Rock	26	11
	Jeanne Munson	26	10
——	CONSENSUS ——	25.5	9.5
6.	Janet Rothrock	25	9
	Fritzi Galley	25	9
	Jerry Wolper	25	8
9.	Duncan Blanchard	24	7
10.	Marc Blank/Cezanne Hitchcock	22	9
	Stuart Kirsch	22	6
12.	Dave Lebling	21	10
13.	Stu Galley	17	7
	Diane Morlock	17	7
	Jim Bull	17	6
16.	Amy Briggs	16	6
17.	Kristin Palace	15	7
	Jose Fernandez	15	5
19.	Jacob Galley	13	6
	Leo DaCosta	13	3
21.	Lorri Fischer	11	6
22.	Christopher Erhardt	9	4
	Debbie Reilly	9	3
	Lori Hornung	9	3
25.	Jon Palace	7	4
26.	Rich Citro	1	1
	Jon Arnold	1	1

Date: 19 Apr 1988 1215-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Imp Lunch To: JON

I'm sorry if I annoyed you by objecting to inviting Eileen and/or Scott to Imp Lunch.

It just seems to me that like many things around here, Imp Lunch has deteriorated from its former state of usefulness into a sort of moribund ritual. I think one reason Imp Lunch has done this is the wider definition of who should be invited to it. When you were the highest management person involved, things were still pretty good. You are "one of us" in that you are in the suite, seem to usually identify with our interests, and so on. When Chris Reeve began to come, things got worse, because not everyone knew Chris as well as (say) I do, people were less open, and no one was sure who was running the meeting; you or Chris. Things weren't helped in that regard by the fact that both of you are pretty laid-back, non-managerial managers, so neither of you leapt to "run things."

When Joel began coming, things really got bad. Now we had three managers, none of whom seemed to want to move things along. Also, Joel is even more of an outsider than Chris (by at least an order of magnitude), so discussions became even more diffuse, even less "candid" (to overuse the word). Christopher's presence, and then Chris Reeve's absence don't seem to have changed things much.

I don't know what can be done to improve things. Maybe nothing. I know I enjoy having lunch with everyone once a week, but I'm not sure that's enough reason to have Imp Lunch.

With only two IF games in development in-house, the "technical discussion" aspect is pretty limited. With Joel there, the "gossip session" is pretty limited. That leaves "socializing" and "progress reports" as the only two reasons to have the thing.

I suppose I just got annoyed at the idea of yet more people showing up, even as a one-time thing. Again, sorry.

Date: 21 Apr 1988 1417-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Tim To: MARC

Nope. He just got back today and reports himself "still undecided." In other new, he reports that Spike actually doesn't have a girl friend, more's the pity; Melody is a friend but nothing more.

Date: 6 May 1988 1636-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: InfoJargon To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Someone at (I think) Commodore magazine is writing an article about (I think) jargon words that are local to various companies, and Eileen would like to compile a list of such words that have appeared here at Infocom. For example, "garybug" or "Info(anything)." Please send me as many as you can think of, and I'll compile them for her.

Date: 6 May 1988 1644-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: InfoJargon To: SEM cc: SWG

Stock phrases:	"It'll never work."	"It's worse than that."
"It's not a very good ..., is it?"	"I see no ... here."	"Which ... do you mean?"

Date: 11 May 1988 1033-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: InfoJargon To: SEM cc: SWG

Comments:

I think the tradition of prefixing words with "Info-" may have begun in autumn '81 with Joel's list of names

for a series of future business products: Infobase, Infocalc, Infowrite, etc. But its first flowering may have been the memo (written by you? in early '83?) about Info-employees, Infobrew, etc.

I think the paragraph about "lebling" needs rewriting so that the first use of the verb "to leble" is obviously a verb. You might mention the old joke: "Do you like Kipling?" "Dunno, I never kippled." Also: "game to compile" s.b. "game to be compiled" (transitive verb).

You left out "impactful" in the first paragraph about O'Learyisms.

Date: 27 Jul 1988 1209-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stuff To: JON

REMEMBER.ALAMO REMEMBER.MAINE REMEMBER.ME-TO-HERALD-SQUARE

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1055-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Playing (no pun intended) with my HD/emotions… To: liz, tester.craig, tester.jacob, patti, kurt, matt, joe cc: tester.adam

Ok, mission succeeded. You've all thoroughly embarrassed me in front of half of the company. Thank you. I suppose this is the price I'm to pay for having a hard disk. Who got this program...? Liz no doubt. She seems deeply fascinated by it.

You'll all be happy to know that I've installed a guard program to protect against further ridicule. People here know how to disable it, but that doesn't concern me. If need be, I can prevent anyone (perhaps even the legendary Tim) from installing annoying things on the HD.

Once again, I thank you. Liz, I'll stop asking for things, ok? I get the message....

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1101-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Playing (no pun intended) with my HD/emotions... To: TESTER.ADAM cc: LIZ

Adam, it really wasn't to mortify you, just play a good joke. Patti took it ok when you and Kurt put that popup program on hers, right...? Don't get all fussy and defensive. It was just fun.

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1244-EDT From: Patti Pizer <PATTI at FRED>
Subject: Re: Playing (no pun intended) with my HD/emotions... To: TESTER.ADAM

We really didn't mean to hurt your feelings or embarrass you. I'm sorry.

Date: 8 Sep 1988 1758-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Enhancement of the Working Environment To: JOEY

1) Popcorn for the popper Steve brought in.
2) A separate fridge for soft drinks; one that would hold enough that (e.g.) the Diet Coke is always cold.
3) A ban on speaker phones, particularly ones that are speaker phones in both directions.

ps: I won't even suggest the $50 fines for using the words "Dude" or "awesome."

Date: 27 Oct 1988 1558-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Moved…
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Cezanne and I have now completed our move to Oregon. Our new address and phone number are in my WHOIS entry. If any of you are ever in the area, don't forget to stop by.

Date: Thu, 16 Mar 89 10:26:08 EST
From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
To: joseph@glenfiddich

Well, actually I haven't even used this computer since Tuesday morning, so don't feel bad. I've been spending almost all my time testing Journey, but sometimes I wonder why. Later this week (I suppose that means when I'm through with Journey), I'm going to load King's Quest IV into Donna's computer and see how far I can get with that. I'm tempted to experiment with a game like that — full screen graphics with an interactive parser. Only of course we would do it much better than Sierra.

Thanks for the offer of your ZIL code. I need to start hacking away on that. I think I'll just start developing that horror story idea. Did you do a storyboard?

I miss playing Scrabble so that would be something to look forward to. Not tomorrow though — it's Zoe's birthday. We got her the presents of her dreams, a teddy bear called The Last Elegant Bear (who wears a wine-colored satin smoking jacket) and a Barbie doll named Bopsy.

I'm still reading the book you lent me and loving it so much that I think I might buy my own copy. I've actually read parts of it out loud to people; that's how much I love it. Don't worry, I always credit you for lending it to me.

Now that the weather is getting nice again, we should go for some noontime walks. This is a good time of year to walk around Fresh Pond. Like playing Scrabble, however, I can't do that until next week.

Date: Fri, 17 Mar 89 10:44:10 EST
From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
Subject: Today
To: Joseph@glenfiddich

Well, it's Zoe's birthday. She loved both her presents; in fact, she could hardly believe that her dreams came true. I can hardly believe my daughters are 12 and 14 years old. That seems too old to me. Almost everyone I know has little kids, or no kids. It's very bizarre to have these daughters who are almost women themselves.

I've been up in the middle of the night the last two nights arguing with Donald about all the same old stuff. It's really fatiguing and hard to keep thinking there's any point in it.

Today I'm going to start working on my game (or at least experimenting with building some rooms). So I would really like to see the work you did.

What day would you like to play Scrabble? I really miss it. Have you ever played Mille Bournes? That's a fun game, too, although more luck than skill. We played at my sister's house last weekend. It's fun to play in teams; maybe we could take on Hadley and Zoe some time. First I guess I have to get the game, but why worry about those details when there's words to unscrabble.

Songs and Poetry

Date: 9 Feb 1984 0937-EST
Subject: group singing

From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: consumers at ZORK

We could liven up meetings and such by starting with a song.
Here's a good one from "A Prairie Home Companion" on PBS radio.

Tune: "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here"

Rejoice, rejoice! The multitude's assembled!
Why should we concern ourselves?
Why should we concern ourselves?
Rejoice, rejoice! The multitude's assembled!
Why should we concern ourselves at present?

Date: 20 Mar 1984 0857-EST
Subject: song for pro-evolution rally

From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
To: testers at ZORK

(Tune: "It's a long way to Tipperary")

It's a long way from Amphioxus! It's a long way to us!
It's a long way from Amphioxus to the meanest human cuss!
So it's goodbye, fins and gill slits! Hello, lungs and hair!
It's a long, long way from Amphioxus, but we came from there!

(c) Copyright owned by somebody, no doubt. Heard on Natl. Public Radio.

Joanne-Busters!

(JOANNE-BUSTERS!)
When you're hearin' things
On the telephone
Who you gonna call?
(JOANNE-BUSTERS!)

When there's something strange
in the testers' room
Who ya gonna call?
(JOANNE-BUSTERS!)

I ain't afraid of Joanne
I ain't afraid of Joanne
When she bitches aloud
about her honda?
Who can you call?
(JOANNE-BUSTERS!)

When she can't shut up
about her new condo
Who you gonna call?
(JOANNE-BUSTERS!)

I ain't afraid of Joanne
I ain't afraid of Joanne
You banana!
(JOANNE-BUSTERS!)

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1845-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: [MAC EZIP] To: imps at ZORK

>From the graphics wonder of the 80's the following message from Father Blanchard, blessed by the Cardinal Toolbox, through the good graces of St. Steven the Windower.

Date: 19 Mar 1985 1904-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Close enough To: imps at ZORK

23rd Psalm
_____

The Toolbox is my shepard. I shall not underline.
He maketh me use inverse video for selection. He restoreth my desktop.
Yea, though I type through the valley of the writers of text,
I shall fear no implementer. For thou art with me.
Thy mouse and thy icons, they comfort me.
Surely thy windows shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of Steve Jobs, forever.

Date: 21 May 1985 0952-EDT From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Poems To: imps at ZORK

On Sunday, I wrote a few poems that I thought I would share with you.
Don't worry, they're not as bad as the Vogon stuff...

_____

<POEM?>
_____

FSET, FCLEAR; PROB and RANDOM
Instructions often used in tandem.
PARSER, MAIN-LOOP, nested deep,
Code to make a grown man weep,
ONBIT, TURNBIT, sometimes WEARABLE,
Writing games becomes unbearable.
Alpha, beta, delta, gamma,
Think I'll move to Alabama.

_____

But Is It Art?
_____

"You are Sent." and "Hello, Sailor",
Are not in books by Norman Mailer.
"Beneath the seat you find a ring!"
Were never words of Stephen King.
People who claim that "I am Phong."
Do not appear in Erica Jong.
So don't compare, it's something new,
Would Melville care for "Call me Stu?"

Personnel Blues

It's always our policy clearly to post,
For all new positions (well, anyway most),
Promotions, of course, must be posted as well,
But these should be scented, since often they smell,

Don't grant a promotion in status or title,
To one whose performance has made him too vital,
Nor ever submit a request for a raise,
Unless the employee rolls over and bays
Like a wolf or else otherwise grovels or moans,
When (like it or not) you must throw him some bones,
But then in a voice that is filled with sincerity,
Pronounce "It's not much, since we're now in austerity."
Don't argue with me, for these guidelines were taken,
>From the books of The Personnel Policy Making
And Form Filling Out And Fruit Basket Requesting
And Questionnaire Asking - Employee Molesting
Department in Washington, office of Labor,
So send them a letter, and do me a favor,
By not asking questions, and stopping complaining,
'Cause God only knows, and he's not now explaining.

Date: 10 Sep 1985 1125-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: stuff for Binky To: imps at ZORK

After our talk with O'Leary at last week's lunch, I wrote the following, which I think expresses my view of what we do and how we do it.

I don't know whether this will make him any happier, but I'd like to give you a chance to comment before I show it to him.

THE IMPLEMENTOR'S CREED

I create fictional worlds. I create experiences.

I am exploring a new medium for telling stories.

My readers should become immersed in the story and forget where they are. They should forget about the keyboard and the screen, forget everything but the experience. My goal is to make the computer invisible.

I want as many people as possible to share these experiences. I want a broad range of fictional worlds, and a broad range of "reading levels". I can categorize our past works and discover where the range needs filling in. I should also seek to expand the categories to reach every popular taste.

In each of my works, I share a vision with the reader. Only I know exactly what the vision is, so only I can make the final decisions about content and style. But I must seriously consider comments and suggestions from any source, in the hope that they will make the sharing better.

I know what an artist means by saying, "I hope I can finish this work before I ruin it." Each work-in-progress reaches a point of diminishing returns, where any change is as likely to make it worse as to make it better. My

goal is to nurture each work to that point. And to make my best estimate of when it will reach that point.

I can't create quality work by myself. I rely on other implementors to help me both with technical wizardry and with overcoming the limitations of the medium. I rely on testers to tell me both how to communicate my vision better and where the rough edges of the work need polishing. I rely on marketeers and salespeople to help me share my vision with more readers. I rely on others to handle administrative details so I can concentrate on the vision.

None of my goals is easy. But all are worth hard work. Let no one doubt my dedication to my art.

(Reprinted on page 1)

Date: 10 Sep 1985 1138-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: Re: stuff for Binky To: SWG

It's good, but I have a feeling it wasn't what he had in mind.

Date: 10 Oct 1985 1839-EDT From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: The Last Bug To: Testers at ZORK

"When the moon shall have faded out from the sky, and the sun shall shine at noonday a dull cherry red, and the seas shall be frozen over, and the icecap shall have crept downward to the equator from either pole ... when all the cities shall have long been dead and crumbled to dust, and all life shall be on the last verge of extinction on this globe; then, on a bit of lichen, growing on the bald rocks beside the eternal snows of Panama, shall be seated a tiny insect, preening its antennae in the glow of the worn-out sun, the sole survivor of animal life on this our earth — a melancholy bug."

W. J. Holland, "The Math Book"

Not if our testers find the bug first.

Date: 11 Oct 1985 1015-EDT From: Gary T. Brennan <GARY at ZORK>
Subject: Re: The Last Bug To: JON at ZORK cc: TESTERS at ZORK

WE'D BE LOOKING IN THE GLACIERS FOR MORE AFTER WE FOUND THAT ONE.

Date: 29 Jan 1986 0949-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: source of Reagan's quote To: imps at ZORK

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds—-and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—-and wheeled and soared and swung

High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through the footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
Where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

Written by John Gillespie Magee, Jr.
nineteen year old American flier killed in action with the RCAF

Quoted by Pres. Reagan, 28 Jan. 1986

Date: 11 Aug 1987 0846-EDT
Subject: Lunch

From: An Opec Taj Nahal <JON at FRED>
To: Imps at FRED

How careless
I'm carless
If you lend me your auto
I'll get lunch like I ought to

Date: 3 May 1988 1721-EDT
Subject: Spring

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Everybody at FRED

"In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth." - Milton

Date: 3 Jun 1988 1636-EDT
Subject: A Visit from St. Bob

From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
To: Liz cc: SWG

'Twas two weeks before beta
And all near Logan
Not a game was progressing
('cept maybe Shogun).

When all of a sudden
There came from the skies
The so-cheerful voice
Of Bob, saying "Hi guys!"

He came to see Darrell
And for a pre-beta meeting
OK with you, Liz?
(He'll bring donuts for eating.)

Date: 22 Dec 1988 1710-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE To: EVERYBODY at FRED cc: CHALLENGE at FRED

AN UNTOUCHABLES CHRISTMAS POEM

...And I heard him confess,
As he twiddled the bytes,
“Merry Christmas to all,
And to all...
ZIP20 ERROR
Stack Overload
Undefined local, assumed armed and dangerous
FBI Listening at Level 2.

Z

Employee information

A prophetic quote:

Date: 13 Nov 1986 1846-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: Quote To: Imps at FRED

"If this company is sold, the buyer will say to us: 'You will be the jewel in our crown and we won't change a thing.' I think anyone who believes that is brain-damaged." — Roger Straus III of Farrar, Straus

The following messages contains insights into the kind of employee Infocom had and wanted to hire.

Date: 24 Jan 1985 1112-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Brad Stock To: JON cc: SWG

I thought he was nice and polite, certainly a talented writer and designer of fantastic environments for TSR-style games.

But I have concerns about him:

* perhaps not enough programming ability. He seemed to catch on quickly when I showed and explained a bit about ZIL programs. But (as PDL would say) people with inadequate experience in programming may tend toward conventional designs, whereas we are looking for more innovation at this point, I think. On the other hand, such people may design things that are so unconventional as to be infeasible! It's a tough one to call.

* perhaps not enough "zaniness". It's hard to judge in a couple of hours, though.

* the relocation problem. Having just moved recently, he may demand unreasonable compensation for moving to this area.

Actually, I'd like to know more about his recent background before "voting". Why did he leave Parker Bros. and the Boston area? What kind of computer work did he do there? Can he pull a hat out of a rabbit?
— Stu.

Date: 4 Jun 1985 1433-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Ray To: Imps at ZORK

Ray has played around a little bit with Lisp and Forth; I showed him a little bit of Enchanter code, and he didn't panic.
Anybody we hire will be a risk; I'm pretty willing to take the risk with Ray. Anybody else have an opinion?

Date: 4 Jun 1985 1520-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Ray To: JON cc: SWG

I, too, am willing to take the risk. I liked his line:

"Writing is my life, and computers are my fun."

Date: 2 Nov 1983 1415-EST
Subject: Reminder

From: Brian Berkowitz <BTB at ZORK>
To: EHB at ZORK, BLANK at ZORK, BEREZ at ZORK, MD at ZORK, SWG at ZORK cc: btb at ZORK

The wake for DM will be held on the 9th floor of LCS (formerly Project Mac) starting at 6:30 tonight.

Jon Palace's first day:

Date: 6 Mar 1984 1134-EST
Subject: Interlogic Editor

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: IMPS at ZORK

Jon Palace, whom we met at an Impy's lunch about 4 weeks ago, is going to be our Editor. He will probably start on April 2. God help him.

Boy, is Jeff in for a surprise...

Date: 27 Sep 1984 1016-EDT
Subject: SAVE THE CALIFORNIAN

From: Joy Pulver <JOY at ZORK>
To: TESTERS at ZORK

SAVE THE CALIFORNIAN

Jeff O'Neill, traded from San Diego, was seen at the Red Sox game last night in a short sleeve shirt while a frosty breeze had the rest of the crowd huddled under wool jackets and blankets.

He was seen ordering an ice cream (special ordered from the concession stand) and was heard to say, "This is it [winter], right?"

Donations of jackets, mufflers, ear muffs, mittens, and polypropylene underwear should be dropped off next to the air conditioner in the computer room.

Date: 21 Dec 1984 0021-EST
Subject: Re: Z1 supply; Tim

From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: JOY cc: md

Thanks for passing on Tim's comment. I guess I'm just an old sentimentalist. I've been somewhat depressed at the effects the new organization are going to have on Gabby, Ernie, me, and others, and it helps to know someone appreciates what I try to do.

Under the new organization, Ernie will lose control of production to a new Director of Production. I will lose Quality Control, Product Support, Market Research, and Direct Mail. It appears that with the exception of the three on the "Leadership Committee," anyone who doesn't have the "outside expert bit" set can look forward to eventually being replaced or demoted. Spirit, drive, creativity, hard work, don't seem to matter much in the long run if your "real world" experience is limited to Infocom. Sorry, I don't want to depress you, but I'm worried about the Dave Andersons, Jennifers, etc. prospects and the prospects for Infocom if people like them lose hope.

On a more positive note, I am going to Milwaukee on Saturday (my birthday) and returning Wednesday morning, so I will be with most of my family for Christmas. I hope you have a great holiday.

By the way, I'm having a New Year's Eve party at my house. It's supposed to be for old-time LSCers, so Tim certainly qualifies (as do you as his guest). Please drop by if you can. Festivities begin at about 9:30 and end ...?

Date: 31 Dec 1984 1806-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: New Organization To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

All right, men (you ladies will just have to get used to this), the new military organization goes into effect at 00:00 hours tomorrow. Effective immediately, roll call for all Product Development personnel will commence at 06:00 hours in the Situation Room (formerly conference room A). White glove inspection will be at 07:00. I want to see every terminal and printer shine! Temporary barracks are being built in the lofts and all personnel are required to be quartered there. Taps will be played at 21:00 hours and lights out at 21:30.

Each of you men will have a new rank (formerly title). Here are the new ranks:

Old	New
===	===
Vice President, R&D	General
Senior Project Manager	Colonel
Project Manager	Lieutenant Colonel
Senior Designer/Tester/Engineer	Captain
Principal " " "	Major
Game Designer/Tester/Engineer	Lieutenant
Junior " " "	Sergeant
Magic	Magic, Sir

Henceforth, each member of the R & D division will salute all other members of higher rank. Uniforms will be worn at all times (none of this Hawaiian shirt bullshit in my army).

New orders will be prepared by Colonel Berlyn and Lieutenant Colonels Palace and Agnew and will be posted outside of the mess hall at 09:00 hours.

Look sharp, men!

General Blank

Date: 14 Feb 1985 0856-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Job-Desc To: SWG, Prof, JW, SEM cc: Jeff, Blank

Donna has asked me — ME — to write a job description for the position of game designer.

I have no idea what you guys do.

Though I'm tempted to give Donna random drivel, I know she'll be persistent. So I'll be asking for your input later today to make the drivel official.

Date: 14 Feb 1985 0930-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Job-Desc To: JON cc: SWG, prof, jw, sem, jeff, blank

My first question is: shouldn't the job title be something else? To me, "game designer" connotes someone working in the consumer-products division on a particular kind of product. Suppose I go to work in R&D for a while, or even (gasp!) on a business or educational product? Do I get a new title during that time? Or would "software engineer" better connote what I expect to do, all the time?

Date: 14 Feb 1985 0930-EST From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Job-Desc To: SWG

The official title is "Product Engineer", believe it or not.

Date: 14 Feb 1985 0938-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Job-Desc To: SWG

Indeed. Marc informed me this morning that he gave some generic titles to Donna ("product engineer," he thought). Perhaps Donna did not realize that product engineers were game designers? At any rate, I'll talk to Donna.

Date: 14 Feb 1985 1115-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Job-Desc To: JON cc: SWG

PRODUCT ENGINEER (IF group)

conceives and programs an IF product from start to finish;

may collaborate on a product with either another employee or an outside contractor, with the division of labor determined separately for each such product;

cooperates with other engineers on common problems;

works jointly with product-testing and product-support depts. on debugging products; and

works jointly with project manager, marketing group, and advertising agency on product conception, packaging, and/or promotion, as appropriate.

Date: 14 Feb 1985 1246-EST From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Job-Desc To: JON cc: SWG, Prof, SEM, Jeff, Blank

How about:
"Conceive, design, implement, and debug games (stories?); help other game designers to do same."

Date: 14 Feb 1985 1300-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: JOB-DESC To: IMPS at ZORK

"Product Engineer?" Come on, guys. The man who develops disposable razors at Gillette is a "product engineer." Can't we use something a little more interesting (not to say accurate) like "Story Engineer" or even "Storyteller"? Or are there political implications and bureaucratic subtleties I'm naively ignoring? If so, shouldn't we know what they are before we're asked to describe our jobs? "Product Engineer." Humph! Disney has "Imagineers." And we thought WE were creative.

Date: 14 Feb 1985 1303-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: JOB TITLE To: IMPS at ZORK

I'm not incredibly enamored with "Game Designer," but "Product Engineer" sounds awful. It makes me think of some dry, boring, uncreative job where someone spends all their time hunched over technical manuals and incomprehensible diagrams. Surely we can do better. Brian and I have come up with a few:

STORYTELLER IMAGINATION DESIGNER STORY ENGINEER

Any other ideas?

Jerry Wolper's last day:

Date: 29 Apr 1985 1844-EDT From: Jerry Wolper <JW at ZORK>
Subject: Good Bye To: everybody at ZORK

I'd say it's been real, but we all know that reality has nothing to do with Infocom. Thanks for everything.

Alan Chaplin's first day:

Date: 14 May 1985 1459-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: THURSDAY To: Imps at ZORK cc: Lim at ZORK

This Thursday, May 16, Gabby would like some of us to talk to our new Western Regional Sales Manager, Alan Chaplin (Allen Chaplain? spelling unknown). So at 10:30, I'll be doing that. We'll be in my office, so you can all stop by and belch. I don't think anybody needs to spend a lot of time with Alan; 10 or 15 minutes should suffice.

>From 3 to 5 on Thursday, interested imps (II's) and Graphics Gurus (GG's) will have an informal get-together (perhaps outside, weather permitting). There's no agenda for this historic occasion; I just think people with similar goals (like designing good computer games) might have interesting things to say to each other. Try to spend SOME time with the GG's even if you can't spare 2 hours. Thanks.

Andy Kaluzniacki's last day:

Date: 9 Aug 1985 1801-EDT From: Andy S. Kaluzniacki <ANDY at ZORK>
Subject: aloha To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

its been an excellent year, I wouldn't trade the fun I've had for anything
aloha is not goodbye-(ask Liz) so aloha

Jennifer Fine's last day—Cornerstone's effects are beginning to show:

Date: 30 Sep 1985 1157-EDT From: Jenni <Jennifer at ZORK>
Subject: Goodbye To: Everybody at ZORK

For those that wish to pay their last respects, I will be around a little this week. [They can't cut me out of the will that easily!!] Also, anyone interested in contacting me once I've cut the umbilical cord should look at my WHOIS before it gets deleted, since my home phone is virtually unlisted.

I will miss you all very much—I started missing you this weekend.

Date: 30 Sep 1985 1359-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Goodbye To: Jennifer cc: SWG

I really hoped that our company's troubles wouldn't get so bad that people had to leave against their wishes. And I was really surprised that you were one of the casualties. I'm going to miss you, too.

"There is a positive side
And a negative side.
At each moment, you decide."

Date: 3 Oct 1985 1200-EDT From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at ZORK>
To: JON

It's been an especially frustrating time for me the last couple of weeks. Just at a time when all of my energies should have been directed toward my game, I was made to start thinking about money. This has the potential to have a cancerous effect on my attitude toward the work that I'm doing here.

Getting jerked around by O'Leary for a month and a half as I've been would not seem the way to guarantee a good start for the company next year with the best product possible. When I was expected to chase him down and perform some dog and pony show to justify my Review after he wouldn't be convinced by you — well, it was all too demeaning to me as the bugs were piling up to be required to put on this show for John since he'd been showing that he has no feel and little respect for what we do.

Perhaps his ignoring my situation was in part to get back at the Imps for a low-productive year. Part of it maybe the Dornbrook syndrome of John taking advantage of people for as long as you can get away with it.

Hiding behind Austerity is no justification either. There were other reviews that went through over the past months. What I just can't believe is how stupid upper management (by which I mean O'Leary) could have been as idiotic as not take care of those aspects of the company which would get things going next year on the right foot. When he said to the Imps that he viewed each one of us as an investment he must have been lying though his teeth or ignorant of how to view investments. Even if this company were filing for Chapter 11 today, I still wouldn't feel unjustified in expecting to be paid an amount consistent to my worth to the company.

The bottom line is that it's assholic from a business standpoint to keep someone doing with the job the amount of responsibility, and workload required at essentially a testing pay scale. I say again I much would have preferred never to have addressed the subject of money and I put it off for as long as I could, but psychologically it's impossible for me to continue to be here weekends and nights for an indefinite period of time, slowly twisting in the wind.

So, now that I'm on the subject of money, the old fact of Bruce's beginning salary comes to mind, determined by the pay stubs he left in his office drawer that I and later Brian came to use. He was paid 31 K as an unproven Imp. And here I am, what I believe to be proven (if the facts are otherwise let me know) making 20 K. I can hear the arguments about those being the old days when Infocom liked to throw money away. But I think essentially that old figure represents the respect paid to the designer of game, the value placed on the quality of work that he was expected to produce. I see none of that kind of respect for quality here, in my case anyhow.

Am I asking for more than 31 K now since my game is a real product now? No, even though I think a strong case can be made for that, considering the skill level achieved, the amount personal responsibility for my product, and workload I would be expected to carry right now. But I don't want to keep slowly twisting in the wind. I certainly want my review to go through right now, show a handsome raise, and be effective Oct. 1. For anything other than this to happen would be unwise on the part of whoever makes that decision.

Mark Sawtelle's last day:

Date: 1 Nov 1985 1156-EST From: Mark C. Sawtelle <MCS at ZORK>
Subject: not au revoir, just hors d'oeuvre To: everybody at ZORK cc: mcs at ZORK

<PRINC "Floyd, I hardly knew ye...">$

I'll miss those who are reading this, as well as those who aren't.

Paul Gross' last day:

Date: 20 Dec 1985 1729-EST
Subject: Stage Left
From: PeeGee-13 <Paul at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

<< From the keyboard of P. Henry Hoppy >>

It has been a pleasure working with you all. This company is a unique bunch! Take care and may the future be a bit brighter!

Sincerely,
Paul

From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: summer tester?
To: scf cc: swg

My son Jacob, who is 14, asked if Infocom could use him this summer for testing games. If paying him is a problem at all, his reward could be just time in the micro room playing other games too. He has a lot of experience with computer games, so he might represent a segment of our market. What do you think?

From: Suzanne C. Frank <SCF at FRED>
Subject: Re: summer tester?
To: SWG

Darn, I wish he asked a month or two ago. I just hired two more testers. Let me look into it, okay?

Date: 25 Jun 1986 1458-EDT
Subject: Re: summer tester?
From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
To: SCF cc: SWG

What about a casual arrangement, like one day a week and no pay? That's enough to keep him off the streets and give us some benefit.

Jacob does get hired:

Date: 11 Jul 1986 1609-EDT
From: Jacob Galley <SWG.J at FRED>
To: swg

Found a lot of interesting stuff in Moonmist. The terminal dimensions still don't work.
bye
"find Jack" is a doosie....

Date: 2 Jul 1986 1206-EDT
Subject: News
From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Betty had dinner with Marc out in CA last night, and picked up a few pieces of news:

Marc's wedding is set for late December, and will take place in Oregon in the hotel where The Shining was filmed.

Laurie Horn is pregnant.

Date: 11 Aug 1986 1132-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Random news To: Imps at FRED

A manager for customer support has been hired. She starts 2 weeks from today.

Duncan is manager of the micro group.

A store display for the four 1986 games is in the works. Dealers will get 1 free game for each 8 they order. On the display is a coupon giving customers a free hint booklet on any of the 4 games (good for a limited time only).

Date: 19 Dec 1986 1100-EST From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: lunch To: everybody at FRED

Suzanne's official goodbye lunch is this afternoon at 12:30 at the Swiss Alps in Harvard Square. Everyone welcome - please send me back a note so I can make reservations...

Date: 20 Dec 1986 1612-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: PG To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I just spoke to Paul Gross, and he says to say HI to everyone, so...

>EVERYONE, HI

He's still at Goldhill, but he's moved from Development into Sales! He promised to stop by soon at a Friday party.

Suzanne's last day:

Date: 24 Dec 1986 1402-EST From: Skiff <SCF at FRED>
Subject: Goodbyes To: everybody at FRED

My last day has come and I'm almost out the door. Last minute packing; I always seem to leave something behind. It's inevitable I guess. It is difficult to "see" what I should be taking simply because it already is in its "proper" place. Beyond the meta stuff - I'll miss you all. I'm not the best letter writer, but I'll drop a line every now and then. Good luck to all of you, and Infocom also.

Until then, Suzanne.

Date: 27 Feb 1987 1046-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Next week To: Imps at FRED

We'll have lunch on MONDAY, since Brian and Chris are leaving Tuesday morning for the west coast.

I'll be on vacation the entire week of March 9. So what do I have to get done next week before I go?

-Lurking Horror instruction manual
-Romance meeting Monday afternoon
-Wordplay meeting Thursday lunch
-Usual testing

Is there anything else I'm forgetting? Please remind me ...

For those of you who don't already know, I have some numbers in my office: Mike's forecast for the coming year; net sales by game for calendar 1986 and 1985; international sales for July-December 1986; and a comparison of the first two months' orders for Ballyhoo, Trinity, and Hijinx.

Date: 6 Mar 1987 1344-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Good … To: Imps at FRED

...bye!

(But he's still leaving messages weeks later...)

Linde Dynneson's last day:

Date: 13 Mar 1987 1745-EST From: Linde S. Dynneson <LINDE at FRED>
Subject: Bye To: Everybody at FRED

I've enjoyed working with you all and will miss you all very much. Bye. Le

Date: 13 Mar 1987 1851-EST From: Bokster <Tomas at FRED>
Subject: Bye To: everybody at FRED

It's been a constant strain on my nerves. No, wait, cancel that, I've had a great time these last few months. Bye-y'all Tb

(His last day is later, 9-13-87, so I'm not sure what happened here)

Date: 30 Mar 1987 1534-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
Subject: two things To: EVERYBODY at FRED

1. Max's mail about Suzanne gave me an idea: we ought to have a file somewhere (real or on line) with the whereabouts and phone numbers for as many ex-employees as can be documented. It can get updated as word trickles in of new addresses and phone numbers. Comments?

2. On Sunday, May 24, at approximately 1:00pm, my car will be in San Francisco and I will be flying toward Boston. But I would like to get my car back to Boston also. Companies find people to drive your car from one city to another want approximately $300 to do this. Is anyone interested in driving my car from Frisco to Boston for some amount up to $300? (For the same amount of money, I'd rather have someone I know doing it instead of a stranger.) I would want the car back to Boston by June 7 (i.e. two weeks). One-way airfare from here to SF is $154, but I believe that in order to get that rate, tickets must be purchased by 4/3. Alternatively, does anyone know person(s) in the SF area who would be interested in doing it and then flying back?

Date: 30 Mar 1987 1444-EST
Subject: Greetings from a stranger

From: beyond murk syntax <MAX at FRED>
To: everybody at FRED

I talked to Suzanne last night. She sends her regards and love to all. It seems that she has a job as a sales person for a computer company (I've forgotten the name of it - I believe they make minis and micros for business applications). She likes the job and even made her first sale recently.

She has moved out of her Mom's house and has moved in with her former college roommate, Tina. It's a tiny studio in the west 70's and they're sharing everything - clothes, the bed, a cold. But she has a line on a 3 bedroom house in Mount Vernon. Now all she has to do is use her sales technique to sell the idea to Tina.

All in all, it sounds like she's having a great time in the Big Apple. She did say that she misses the folks up here from time to time, and thinks of us often.

If anyone would like her new number, I think I can dig it up. Lemme know.

Date: 2 Apr 1987 1047-EST
Subject: Greetings

From: Gray lust tale <SWG at FRED>
To: jon, clr, joel cc: swg

I bring greetings from the Dominion of Virginia:

David, Frederick, and Robert of Challenge, Inc., say hello, and thanks for all the bits.

I am ready to debrief you any time today.

Date: 26 May 1987 1505-EDT
Subject: LINDE

From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at FRED>
To: EVERYBODY at FRED

I just got a note from Linde. She's biking across Crete. It's beautiful, and she says "Hi" to everyone. She also included an article from a London newspaper that she found in Crete. It was about a U-boat simulator called "Silent Service" which has been banned in Germany because "it is too realistic and could cause anti-social behaviour among youths." The article goes on to say that computer games in Britain have yet to run up against the law "despite the arrival of titles such as LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS."

Date: 30 Jun 1987 1147-EDT
Subject: Max

From: Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>
To: da

is leaving soon. Are we doing anything on Thursday?

Date: 30 Jun 1987 1157-EDT
Subject: Re: Max

From: Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>
To: DA

Does he have an interesting/funny enough life to play off of? Or should it be entirely made up? Anything we could do that takes a bit less work? There's not much time between now and Thursday. again, if we could get Suzanne to phone in ... or just tape her phone call ... a Reagan imitation ... some sex kitten ... Problem is, Max is hard to embarrass.

I dunno, either.

From: Bright Gray Sum <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Max To: DA

Yes, that might embarrass him. It certainly would be funny enough.

Date: 2 Jul 1987 1133-EDT From: Gus & Myra Bright <AMY at FRED>
Subject: PANIC To: DA

What are we doing for Max and Lisa? Is this Max's last day? Just the old champagne route? Or dinner for two (each) at, umm, J.C. Hillary's? or some such rot. Or what?

Actually, I can't see how we'd do a dinner-for-two type thing, without it looking like we're just giving them $30.00 a piece. ("We'll PAY you to quit!")

Champagne?

Date: 7 Jul 1987 1522-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: max don't read this To: everybody at FRED

Max's last day is Friday, so we're going to surprise him with a farewell lunch that he knows all about - in fact he picked the restaurant. Swiss Alps in Harvard Square - 11:30 - Friday.

rsvps please so I can make a reservation.

Date: 7 Jul 1987 1600-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: max don't read this either To: everybody at FRED

OK, it seems there's going to be a reporter type person in almost all day Friday, so we're going to change everything and have it Thursday at 12:30, same place. If you all don't mind, would you rersvp to this new date? (I really just like getting all the mail)

Max's last day:

Date: 10 Jul 1987 1553-EDT From: Buxom Tyranny Desk <MAX at FRED>
Subject: G'bye To: everybody at FRED

Well, this is it. I'm outta here. It comes with a lot of mixed emotions. In a very real sense, Infocom has become an extended family for me. I'll never forget some of the times we've all shared together, both good and bad. If I had the chance to do it again (what a stupid sentiment) I would change a thing. Well... maybe my loki. I'm gone, but I won't let you forget me too easily. I intend to make surprise inspections of Friday parties to make sure they're up to par. Take care of yourselves and each other - that's what keeps Infocom going strong.

Date: 10 Jul 1987 1556-EDT From: Buxom Tyranny Desk <MAX at FRED>
Subject: transfer To: five-0 at FRED

Well, team, my transfer to the Interleaf division is official. I'll miss our old beat, but be sure I'll be back to

assist with testing of pitchers at the bus stop. I know you guys will keep the peace in this precinct. Godspeed and HEY...

Let's be careful out there!

-max-ho, over and out

Steve's last day ("the other Steve"):

Date: 8 Sep 1987 1148-EDT From: Venereal Task Twins <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: Re: Last Day To: DA

My last day, drum roll please, (ratta-tat-tat) is Friday. (This very Friday) I'm leaving before the sun gets up Sat. morning.

Date: 8 Sep 1987 1152-EDT From: Venereal Task Twins <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: article To: da

You still thinking about doing a parody on my stay? With pics and stuff? Friday would be a good day. Beyond Zork is going to be a mess for the next couple of days....

Date: 11 Sep 1987 2234-EDT From: Venereal Task Twins <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: everything To: everybody at FRED

I just wanted to thank everyone at Infocom for being so nice and helpful while I was here this summer. I really enjoyed working here and I wish everyone the best of luck in the coming year. Thanks for everything.

the other steve

Date: 12 Sep 1987 0006-EDT From: Thank you. <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: party To: da

I know I was a shit my last night here, but I really had to stay. I'm looking forward to seeing the article. Please send me a few extra issues when it's printed. Thanks.

Tomas Bok's last day:

Date: 18 Sep 1987 1108-EDT From: Frank Booth <DA at FRED>
Subject: FAREWELL PARTY To: five-0 at FRED cc: JEFF at FRED

Be advised there is a going away party today at 12 noon for Tomas Ho. He is going away to Cop College on the mainland. All officers should plan to attend what will be one of the highlights of the departments party season. Please no station house groupies.

Doctor Funk and I will not be able to attend due to the recent flap over the drug arrest of the governor's daughter at the Annual Five-0 Picnic.

Let's beer careful out there, Chief Mai Tai

Date: 8 Oct 1987 1256-EDT
Subject: Suzanne.

From: 47 41 52 59 <GARY at FRED>
To: everybody at FRED

She's getting married to Tony this weekend. Congratulations!!!

Date: 27 Oct 1987 1211-EST
Subject: Party

From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
To: DA

Wait...isn't Paul at Gold Hill, not Interleaf?

Jeff does not agree with his review, which stirs up trouble:

Date: 16 Dec 1987 1526-EST
Subject: Critique

From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
To: AMY, PDL, SEM, SWG, PROF

Tuesday, during my brief "bonus meeting" with Chris, he took the opportunity to verbally review my job performance. One does not ordinarily openly discuss such matter with others. But for the following reasons I am going to:

1) I believe the criticisms were unfair.
2) The issues addressed are of general interest to imps.
3) The clearing of the air on these issues is not inconsistent with the concept of "peer review."

Since all of you have been to some extent witness to the issues, I would like your views of them. I intend to send my arguments to Larry Hicks at Activision, since Activision has no-doubt already observed this bad mark on my performance record.

Chris noted three reasons to view my performance negatively. I disagreed with him on all three counts and told him why I thought they were wrong.

1) The first criticism was that I unsatisfactorily participated with the members of the management group judging the Gas Pump. I, on the contrary, believe more design information was provided for Gas Pump than just about any other game to date. For example, I was flexible in adding, after initial reluctance, the play-as-either-gender feature. Unfortunately, the group was not very specific in what became an increasingly negative view of the game. "Needs more hooks," I heard from marketing. So I made several attempts at adding "hooks." Mike admitted that after one of our group meetings Gayle voiced much stronger and more specific criticisms in private to him. Eventually, I felt that the group had been given more than enough information on the game to judge it thumbs-up or thumbs-down. I expressed this view at imps' lunch. I grew weary of weeks and weeks of marketing a game to marketing, and not getting useful feedback. Finally, the opportunity to work on German Zork came along, and I grabbed it, with an understanding at the time, from Chris, that the translation would not mean the death of Gas Pump, merely the postponing of the issue.

2) Here's second criticism of my performance. Chris said that I unjustifiedly had the feeling that Mike was responsible for killing Gas Pump. What he was referring to was a meeting I had with him around late November. In that November meeting Chris stated how unseemly it was that I was being exposed to rumors that I was going to be working on Restaurant at the End of the Universe. I noted it was particularly unsettling that this was going on while Gas Pump was still under consideration and had not been killed; or if it had been killed, nobody had told its prospective author — i.e., me.

Chris then assured me that although Gas Pump was indeed dead, it had actually been a victim of the "I.F. Crisis" which had happened relatively recently. He asked me if the offer I had made in August — to program Bywater's Restaurant text — was still open. I said that before I consider another game, I would like to officially

clear up the reasons Gas Pump was killed, since it has taken a lot of negative criticism even before the I.F. Crisis. I had heard, for example, that one reason that Mike gave to Brian XX(SHOULD YOU MENTION BRIAN? WILL HE BACK YOU UP / YES, PROBABLY. PERHAPS "..example, that Mike told Brian that Gas Pump was …")XX , was that Gas Pump was a good idea but that Jeff was not the right person to write it. (Also, the anecdote includes Mike saying that Bywater would be given the opportunity to work on the Restaurant until January, when Jeff would take it over.) The view that I shouldn't be the one to write Gas Pump was particularly odious since it was behind-the-back, with no opportunity for me to refute it. My "professional reputation" was at stake here — under-estimation of my abilities could naturally limit the kinds of projects that could be possible for me in the future. And since Mike is one of the prime deciders of what games get done, this was unacceptable to me. Unfortunately, it became clear that even before the I.F. Crisis, marketing — who officially were supposed to be weighing the pros and cons of Gas Pump, had "decided" I was to be working on Restaurant. Thus, I told Chris in that November meeting that before I take on my next project, I wanted an opportunity to first hear, and then respond, to critiques of my abilities or of Gas Pump. Apparently, Chris viewed by attitude as unreasonable.

3) The third criticism of my performance was that I have not been contributing to a satisfactory level at, for example, Imps' lunch. Not withstanding movie reviews and other small talk, I think I have maintained some decent level of contribution. Another example of my "non-participation" given was that I had apparently not played the required I.F. game while in-between games myself. This I pointed out was, of course, dead wrong, since I had played Spy and sent bugs and comments along to Marc.

In sum, I would like to know if you, as fellow imps, would care to comment on whether I have been justified in my actions — and, if not, where criticisms are valid.

Date: 16 Dec 1987 1557-EST From: Truly eat slag! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Critique To: JEFF cc: AMY, PDL, SEM, PROF, SWG

My first impression is that criticism of your performance does indeed seem to be unjustified.

My first suggestion is that you describe the situation as you see it, in writing (not unlike your message to us), and give the letter to Chris and Joel. I think it's needlessly bureaucratic to involve Activision at this point, when there's still a chance that the problem can be solved within Infocom.

As for further thoughts, I think talking is a better medium.

Date: 21 Jan 1988 1709-EST From: Jeff O'Neill <JEFF at FRED>
Subject: Leaving To: Amy, Sem, pdl, prof, swg

FYI:

Yesterday, I got a call from Jon, asking me over to come to Joel's office.

Joel, pointing out bad marks on my employment of last year, as well as the lack of sales in interactive fiction, laid-off/fired me. He said it was a decision reached by management. He said I'm on the payroll until March 18 — to finish German Zork and seek employment.

Date: 21 Jan 1988 1758-EST From: I RegretWallabyLust <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Leaving To: JEFF cc: SWG

Fired?!?

And here I thought your job was getting better for you — I heard you talking more during imps' lunch, and I saw you bringing German Zork to a successful finish, collaborating with an outside translator, getting involved with the Japanese, etc. etc.

How do you feel about this? Do you want to fight to keep your place? Or are you tired of fighting and willing to try your luck elsewhere? Or maybe you'd like to stay at Infocom with some other job, like tester?

I confess I'm a bit shocked!

Date: 25 Jan 1988 1834-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

This is true. Details are hard to come by. Jeff says that Joel wouldn't give him a straight answer regarding whether it was a firing or a lay-off. Needless to say, everyone is pretty pissed and upset. Joel has fled town for two weeks. Jeff's best impression is that it's more a firing than a lay-off. (Although "officially," it's a lay-off.) The "grounds" for the firing are that Jeff wasn't 100% cooperative when marketing decided to design "Gas Pump Girls…" for him, and that he doesn't contribute enough at Imps Lunch. Incredible bullshit, huh?

Date: 25 Jan 1988 2357-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

Well, last year's IF Marketing Theory — Fact at the time — was that any game we put out there would sell 30K copies plus so we should put out as many titles as humanly possible.

This year's IF Marketing Theory — currently Fact — is that all-text IF is no long an economically viable market, and that IF requires graphics and other spiffs to sell. On top of that, only a small number should compete for the limited customers, and those should have License Heat or High Concept or preferably both.

Naturally, this latest IF Marketing Theory leaves the fringe Imps out on a limb; I'd be pretty worried if I were Amy. And I'm pretty worried about all the rest of us a year down the road; who knows what next year's IF Marketing Theory will be.

But if the Jeff thing was a total lay-off, why set him up with all this bullshit about him doing a bad job. He's done a good to excellent job as an Imp. Nord and Bert may be my favorite IF of all time. True, he's quiet, but if talkativeness were a virtue, Prof would be CEO.

I guess that Sigh is the "in" word for ending mail these days.

Sigh.

Date: 26 Jan 1988 1219-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

I certainly agree that "something has to be done" based on bad sales, and that a lay-off may have been necessary, and that Jeff might be the most logical choice in that case. But in his defense, he tried to collaborate (on Bureaucracy), but was unable to complete the collaboration due to a lack of cooperation on the other end. In the area of innovation, few titles we've ever done were ever more innovative than Nord and Bert, and in particular, On-Line Hints and the Short Story format were two things that marketing wanted to see very badly. And few ideas are more High Conceptish and potentially lucrative than a sequel to LGOP (even if it sold only a third as many copies as LGOP, it would outsell 7 of our 8 1987 titles!). But "Gas Pump…" was torpedoed by marketing and upper management "for not being original enough," despite the fact that Jeff had more new and good ideas for it than we've ever had for a sequel before!

On a personal note, we're scheduled for induction of labor Friday at 8:00am (if necessary). Sounds like a TV listing for the seventh of the World Series, doesn't it?

Date: 26 Jan 1988 1231-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Canned To: MARC

Yes, he was canned. Not just laid off, mind you; they fired him.

The story is too long and sensitive to go into here. Let's just say he made a couple of dangerous enemies at a time when management was looking for scalps. Doubtless he could have prevented it if he'd been willing to descend to the level of his detractors. This he would not do.

The other Imps? Such as remain worship the Great God Mortgage, and are probably thanking Him that it wasn't them.

Date: 26 Jan 1988 1547-EST From: Call Me Ishmael <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

The short answer is that Jeff didn't think up any feelies as interesting as scratch 'n' sniff or a 3-D comic. The long answer is more elusive. Joel, Mike, and Gabby kept being dissatisfied by Jeff's design, but were unable to say what they wanted, only what they disliked. And what they disliked was that it was too much like LGOP; not enough innovation. This is despite the fact that Jeff's idea was much less sequel-ish than any other sequel we've ever done. It was set in the Fifties, and it was going to be a satire of that decade (prudish morality, McCarthyism, "B" sci-fi movies, etc.) in much the same way that LGOP was a satire of Thirties space opera pulp. Unable to articulate what they disliked about "Gas Pump…", it was put on a back burner while Jeff worked on translating Zork to German. He later learned that "Gas Pump…" had been cancelled as a project without being TOLD, let alone consulted, about the decision. He made almost no fuss throughout; I thought he was letting himself get stepped all over and told him so. It's absolutely amazing that one of the 3 "reasons" that Jeff was doing a poor job was that he was difficult to work with during the "Gas Pump…" period; it was Joel/Mike/Gabby who were impossible to work with, and Jeff was going far beyond what was reasonable to try to satisfy them!!! Flame over. Sigh.

Date: 8 Feb 1988 0937-EST From: WritesGreatLullaby <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Jeff To: CLR, Joel cc: Jon, SWG

I think one of you should explain Jeff's dismissal to the implementors. The majority feeling is that he was treated unfairly. Is there a new policy about job performance, or a new part of the job description? So far, only Jeff's side has been heard, and re-told, etc.

Date: 10 Feb 1988 1648-EST From: Pollyantha Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

Well, Jeff has left Massachusetts, as of early this afternoon, driving home to California. You can guess as well as I when he'll get there, assuming his car holds up.

I don't know if this is what you heard, but Joel told Jeff to leave Infocom before the end of the day last Friday. Reasons imputed for the sudden change of mind were that Jeff was a lower-er of morale while he hung around. Some believe it is not coincidental that Jeff had sent inquiries to Activision personnel shortly before. The whole thing is now being presented as a "lay-off," nothing more.

Jeff was found on the premises on Monday night, (Joel says he was writing letters to the press using my account) and escorted off by Dornie. Some words were exchanged — I guess Jeff just lost his head.

The whole thing is painful, demoralizing, and just plain ugly.

'nuff said?

Amy.

Date: 10 Feb 1988 1240-EST From: Pollyantha Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Jeff To: SEM, SWG, PDL, PROF

Sends his best, and hopes to visit Massachusetts again some year, but wanted to get past New York City by rush hour. He's already thinking Californian, and hopes maybe we'll all channel together thru one person sometime in the far future.

Date: 24 Feb 1988 1024-EST From: Amaranthine Briggs <AMY at FRED>
Subject: Re: Jeff To: MARC

Yeah, he got back, umm... it must be two Saturdays ago, driving the last leg (from Santa Fe to home) on only two hours sleep. He appears to be taking a couple weeks vacation in the sun and sand, now.

Date: 3 Mar 1988 1736-EST From: Al J. Capone <JON at FRED>
Subject: Jeff's letter To: Imps at FRED

I have a copy of a letter Jeff allegedly wrote to Shay Addams, which Shay is printing in the next issue of QuestBusters. Come by if you want to read it.

Management attempts to smooth things out:

Date: 10 Feb 1988 1752-EST From: YearsWillGetBrutal! <SWG at FRED>
Subject: howdy! To: SEM cc: SWG

Maybe you already know, but there's a Company Meeting planned for Friday at the usual time, at which Joel will talk about the trip to Activision and announce something that will "be good for Infocom but will make some people unhappy at Activision" (Mikey's words). Also planned: VCR theatre, including something from Avsn's development group and something from Apple Computer. Could be a good time to show off baby video(s).

Date: 5 Mar 1988 1849-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: clr To: marc

In case you haven't heard, Chris is leaving to manage a compiler writing group at a place called Kendall Square Research, which is making a supercomputer (a "cheap" competitor to Cray). They offered him more money, and the job description sounds perfect for him. It is my opinion that Tim will leave soon after. I talked to Joy and she agrees. This effectively dooms MacII Muddle, as it will no longer be maintained even if it gets up and running before they leave. This kills any interesting future for software development at Infocom.

I will probably start updating my resume as soon as Tim makes it official. In the meantime, I want to cry.

Chris Reeve's last day:

Date: 6 Mar 1988 1358-EST From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Re: Dave To: MARC

Obviously the possible demise of the development system was a major negative factor in my decision to leave. I am convinced the basic MIM system will be solid when I leave (or I will continue to assist Tim in additional details). I don't know what Tim will do at this point.

The Z system can be maintained/enhanced without hacking the underlying MIM stuff. That can be done by people other than Tim or me.

If Dave leaves Infocom, he is definitely not going to be using MIM or the Z system. If he stays, there is a very good chance both MIM and the Z system will continue to thrive. Of course if the Infocom rumor mill start saying that the development system is dead without me (and Tim?), it could become a self fulfilling prophecy.

The group rallies around Tim, offering support:

Date: 8 Mar 1988 1714-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Welcome back… To: TAA cc: marc

I assume you're back, in any event. Was your trip at all successful?

I've heard about Chris' leaving Infocom, and naturally I'm somewhat saddened. For what it's worth, I believe that you're one of the greatest assets Infocom's got moving forward, especially in light of the expanded role Infocom will be taking on. I sincerely hope you can convince yourself to stay around, at least long enough to see whether we can take advantage of the new ideas and technologies that are coming along. What with CD-X, graphics, etc., I think the next couple of years will be far more exciting than anything we've seen in years.

Say hi to Joy for us.

-marc

Date: 10 Mar 1988 0937-EST From: Swgalley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: debriefing? To: TAA cc: SWG

If you have a meeting to talk about what you acquired from Magnetic Scrolls (aka "Tim clangs closer!"), I'd like to be there.

I heard a rumor that you were thinking of leaving Infocom. I hope you don't, because your talents are very useful here, not to mention needed. I think the future of internal product development would be iffy without you. For what it's worth, I want to do what I can to make your job more to your liking, from handling shitwork to developing tools.

I don't think you could find a nicer bunch of folks to work with!

Gayle's last day:

Date: 23 Mar 1988 1228-EST From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Journey version 163 #44 Other To: GAYLE, JOURNEY-BUGS at FRED

Thanks for the note. I'm happy and sorry that you're leaving Infoco; happy for you, sorry for Infocom. From what Mikie says, it sounds like a great opportunity. Congrats!

Date: 23 Mar 1988 1407-EST
Subject: Re: reply to your message

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: GAYLE

It's always hard to move on, but it almost always works out for the best. I'm very happy for you.

Date: 23 Mar 1988 1608-EST
Subject: Hmmm.

From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
To: GAYLE

I don't know what happened; as you say, it could have to do with your setup. Sorry.

The third paragraph is interesting and prophetic...

Date: 29 Mar 1988 1612-EST
Subject: News

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: MARC

I don't completely understand his reasoning, either. But he's a card-carrying technological snob; he won't buy a new monitor for his trans-awesome video system because none of the ones he likes displays more than 500 lines. Never mind that so video system likely to appear in the next 3 years even HAS that many lines; he just likes to know they're there.

Things in MacLand are okay. My project's user interface is almost usable enough to let me start thinking about the story. I hope to put it into testing sometime this summer.

No new resignations announced this week. But it's only Tuesday.

How's Christopher treating you?

Date: 29 Mar 1988 1652-EST
Subject: News

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: MARC

Yes, his cheerfulness makes me feel alternately refreshed and enraged. But I suppose this really is a nice place to work if you don't remember what it was like 3 or 4 years ago. Ah, Nantucket, Nantucket ...

Harry's last day:

Date: 16 Apr 1988 1637-EST
Subject: Re: Hi

From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
To: MARC

Things are well with Laurel and I.

Things at Infocom are, er, in flux. Tim's flown off to Seattle again "to visit Spike;" this time, he's taken Joy along with him. Many fear the worst. Chris E. is at "Activision Corporate" (as he likes to call it) for the 2nd of two weeks. Yesterday was Harry's Last Official Day. Amy is still here, tidying up the library. Everyone else who's said they were leaving has left. Joel's search for a new VP of PD continues. Red and Blue parking cards were exchanged. It snowed last night.

Date: 21 Apr 1988 1417-EST From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Tim To: MARC

Nope. He just got back today and reports himself "still undecided." In other new, he reports that Spike actually doesn't have a girl friend, more's the pity; Melody is a friend but nothing more.

Tyler Gore announces he'll be leaving in about a month:

Date: 22 Apr 1988 1716-EST From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: reply To: marc

I'm leaving on May 15 (actually, now that I think about it- May 13, which happens to be a Friday.) I am planning to return to school this fall, and have applied to a few schools in the New York area. I have to make preparations over the summer (housing, etc.) which I can't take care of up here. But I'll be living in Manhattan over the summer, which I've always wanted to do. But, at any rate, it's been enjoyable working (long distance) with you on your games, and I'm glad that my comments have been useful.

Gary's last day:

Date: 25 Apr 1988 0937-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Alpha To: MARC cc: LIZ

I'd known that Gary was unhappy here for a while because there wasn't room for him in the area of advancement he preferred - implementing. His last day is this Friday - 29th. He'll be working at the Repub. State Committee as a database manager. Of course he'll be replaced, but testers as good as he aren't that easy to find. Interviews are underway. Also, Tyler is leaving in two weeks and this upset is affecting testing. You may find that your game won't be receiving the kind of testing you'd like it to get until I can get this under control. All imps are aware of the need and are bracing themselves.

Date: 26 Apr 1988 1827-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Mac Attack To: MARC

Yesterday, MAC MIMC/MIMOC successfully compiled GETORD on the MAC II. Tim is working up to compiling a ZILCH on the MAC II.

Most of the graphics utility routines are observed to work on the MAC II.

No official news on Tim yet, but the rumor mill says he wasn't very happy with his second visit to Seattle.

Scott Fray's last day:

Date: 27 Apr 1988 1740-EDT From: Scott Fray <GANDALF at FRED>
Subject: IBM YZIP To: marc

Hi and thank you for the welcome. I am having fun here at Infocom and it is true that the work has kept me rather busy.

IBM YZIP has two plateaus at this point. The first is the addition of window functionality. This has been

scheduled for early June but if all goes well I will be able to knock some time off that plateau. The second plateau is the addition of graphics. This is scheduled for early July. So far I haven't been able to take a look at any spec for the graphics so I can't predict if I will be done earlier than that date.

I'm looking forward to meeting you and will welcome your comments on YZIP.

Take care.

Date: 13 May 1988 1415-EDT From: Tyler C. Gore <TYLER at FRED>
Subject: puzzle To: marc

That sounds like an excellent idea. You should give some subtle hints that Praxix is using some kind of powder, but not say what it is.

By the way, today's my last day. So good luck with Journey!

Joe Ybarra's first day will be next month:

Date: 20 May 1988 1549-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Lunch To: Imps at FRED

Joel would like us to have our lunch on Monday, so we can all meet with Joe Yberro (sp?), a candidate for VP of Prod. Dev.1

Two new employees:

Date: 2 Jun 1988 1517-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Kurt To: MARC cc: LIZ

Yay. I think he mentioned that to me, and I thought that's a good idea. He has really learned quickly and I think he'll get the hang of things quickly, too. There'll be another new permanent face soon as well - Patricia Pizer. And next week there'll be Craig Fields, Adam Glass and you may have noticed that Matt Hillman is back (thought he's working part time with Tim on the UNIX system).

Amy Briggs announces she's leaving:

Date: 7 Jun 1988 1151-EDT From: Mirth Gas Rugby <AMY at FRED>
Subject: My Departure To: Joel at FRED, Jon at FRED cc: Imps at FRED

I suppose I should be somewhat official and formally tell you I intend that June 17th, 1988, to be my last day at Infocom.

I occasionally regret my decision to leave the company, with the exciting things that are happening here, the transfer over to Macs and all the new products. I suspect I'm walking out just when the going is getting really good. However, I have never doubted that it was the right choice for me, despite regrets.

I want to "see America," I want to write more conventional fiction, and I want to get away from the rat race of the Boston area. I may go to graduate school. (Unfortunately, the best school for writing is in Iowa, but one does what one must.) I am still excited by the computer entertainment industry, and I honestly think that Infocom (and Activ — uh, Mediagenic) has a good chance to be at the top of the heap, as long as you don't give up long-term quality and innovation for short-term bucks. I'd like to somehow do more with you in the future — either a

collaboration with me on the game of my Pulitzer prize-winning, major motion picture filming, best-selling first novel, or proof-reading the galleys of the instruction manuals for Infocomics after 307 publishers turn down the manuscript of my first novel.

I've had a great time with Infocom. I've made friends and lost softball games. I'll be leaving a lot of creative, funny, and good people, and I'll miss them all.

Cordially and sincerely yours,
Amy

Date: 20 Jun 1988 1200-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: new emp. To: marc

Just to let you know, there's a new tester, named Patti who will be playing Journey for the time being. She's played a lot of Infocom games, as well as rpgs. I expect she'll be a very valuable addition to our full-time group. So, keep in mind that she's new...

Patti = Patricia Pizer

Date: 1 Jul 1988 1928-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: FYI To: Everybody at FRED

I will be on vacation until July 11. (Try not to trash the place...)

Joe Ybarra officially starts on July 5. Because so many of us are gone, he won't be here until July 11. (He'll be visiting some of our West Coast developers.) Joe can be reached on voice mail at 266.

Brian Moriarty announces he's leaving to go to Lucasfilm:

Date: 5 Jul 1988 1814-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Airplane, and Taking Off To: MARC

Yes, the one at Novato is the one I had in mind.

This has been in the works for the past several weeks; one does not move to the west coast lightly. I informed everybody today of my plans.

Date: 5 Jul 1988 1604-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: Howdy ... neighbor! To: MARC

I gave 2 weeks' notice to Joel last Thursday, having accepted a position in the Games Division of Lucasfilm, Ltd. Laurel and I will be moving to Marin County around the end of the month. They have a lovely little airport nearby; do you still fly?

Jon Palace announces he's leaving:

Date: 20 Jul 1988 0923-EDT From: Pleasure Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: News To: Challenge cc: Jon

I'll be leaving Infocom at the end of July, to seek fame and fortune in ways as yet to be determined. I have told Joel (et al.) that I wish to keep my departure's disruption to a minimum — that is, I want the processes of game development already underway to continue with as little interruption as possible. To that end, I'll be compiling lists for all the games I'm working on: things to be resolved, things to do, where things stand, etc. That way, Joe Ybarra and everyone else who'll step in when I step out will have some base of knowledge. Your help will be necessary.

I've enjoyed working with you, Bob. I think you have successfully written 2 games (nearly) which are high-quality and fun, and that's quite an accomplishment. Good luck to you.

By the way, I've read the new Oz proposal, and I liked it. I'll make sure others read it and give you their opinions.

Date: 29 Jul 1988 1045-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Goodbye Lunch To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Today is Jon's last day and there'll be a goodbye lunch at 12:30 at Yangtzee River. If you'd like to go, please RSVP to me by 11:30. (Expect it to cost around $10, drinks extra).

Date: 29 Jul 1988 1144-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: Lunch To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Okay, it'll be 18 people at Yangtze at 12:30. Meet around the reception area in the 12:00-12:10 range to carpool.

Note: it's also a birthday lunch for Nancy—she's 21 today.

The reservation is in the name of Infocom.

Date: 29 Jul 1988 1626-EDT From: Eat At Robber's <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Bon Voyage To: Jon cc: Challenge

Dear Jon:

Farewells are always hard.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege working with you. I have always admired your commitment to quality, and I think that commitment is evident in the products you have been involved with. I know Sherlock and Arthur are much the better because of you, and I thank you for that.

In the creative business, one is constantly open to attack and criticism, and sometimes it is hard to figure out the motivation behind a person's comments. I have very much appreciated the fact that when you criticized something, it was with the sole object of making it better. Your honesty, combined with your tact, has made my job a lot easier.

I wish you nothing but happiness in your new endeavors. And once you get the house fixed up, if you find yourself yearning to return to the land of imagination, I don't think it would be such a bad thing.

Good luck. Bob

Date: 1 Aug 1988 1627-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Games, etc. To: MARC

I think that if Chris Reeve and Jon Palace hadn't left, and the original IBM guy had stayed (we lost about six weeks between his leaving and Scott's starting), there would have been a good chance of meeting the basic plan (all three games on IBM, Apple II, and Mac). Joe Y. is basically going to try to revise their expectations downward AND hit them up for more money. Should be an exciting performance.

On the other hand, the games Christopher is producing aren't in much better shape, and we don't have much effect on their schedules.

A former employee resurfaces?

Date: 9 Aug 1988 1235-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Smartfood packaging… To: everybody at FRED

On the back of the Smartfood Cheddar Popcorn packages, there are comments, and such from people who love it... anyway, I was reading them, and I saw the following quote:

"It is the premium of puffed perfection that passes over my palate!"

What? Could Paula have escaped? Did she pack and proceed punctually to the nearest port? I particularly pray that Paula parted peacefully, pondering places to produce pay (probably aPART from popcorn producers).

Joel Berez announces he's leaving:

Date: 9 Aug 1988 1320-EDT From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at FRED>
Subject: Re: Joel To: MARC

Dornbrook says he bought a house (in the $750K range) in Heaven on Earth (oops, Pittsburgh) last fall. Joel says he told Cousin Brucie in April, Joe Ybarra before he agreed to take the job (but after it was clear that he WOULD take the job). The timing is not terribly surprising in the sense that there is now enough upper management to keep things going, and it's fairly clear that Joe will work out.

Joel insists that he jumped rather than being pushed, although "everybody knows" that Bruce doesn't like Joel (which improves my opinion of Joel quite a bit).

Date: 9 Aug 1988 1521-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Leaving.… To: MARC

Presumably you mean Joel? He's leaving at the end of the month to go to Action Industries. He said he told Bruce last winter that it was in the cards. So much for the theory that the suit is a way of getting rid of Joel.

He said he is the largest stockholder in Action, which I hadn't heard. He also said the precipitating event was the death last year of his uncle.

Date: 9 Aug 1988 1318-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Joel To: MARC cc: LIZ

Yeah, there was a company meeting at 11:30, and he announced his resignation. It was nice, he talked about his feelings about Infocom and his excitement with joining Action. It was really sad.

Date: 11 Aug 1988 1133-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: chris To: joey cc: liz

I have had absolutely all I can stand of dealing with Chris. He's arrogant, imperious, and in my opinion, inept. I've spoken with him twice about asking me for things from my department and it hasn't seemed to have any effect. The testing department is not at his whim, beck, or call. We do not copy disks. We do not fedex, fax, or deliver items for someone else.

I'm so disgusted with his attitude, that I don't want him even stepping into this area. We are busy - Quarterstaff is not the only game we're working on.

His attitude is completely disruptive - I'm so furious that I can hardly work, and that's not right. It's beyond my comprehension that that person continues to behave like an asshole and remain employed. This is ridiculous.

I'm angry. liz

Date: 18 Aug 1988 1722-EDT From: Kurt Boutin <KURT at FRED>
Subject: Tomorrow To: bugcorps at FRED

Tomorrow Liz is going to be gone. A boggle match will take place in the morning at 10 am. All in testing are expected to participate. Remember, don't tell Liz!

This will be the game to end all games... Careful! System Crash is IMMINENT.

If we do crash the system we will of course postpone the 11 am ARENA match.

Thank you for your support...

Adam's last day:

Date: 26 Aug 1988 1525-EDT From: ADAM <TESTER.ADAM at FRED>
Subject: Re: hints To: SEM cc: TESTER.ADAM

Steve, I'm leaving today... I think you should have Patti write the hints (if she wants to). She'd be the best bet...

PS: I'll talk to Liz about arranging the autographed Zork Zero.

Craig Fields' last day:

Date: 26 Aug 1988 1829-EDT From: Craig A. Fields <TESTER.CRAIG at FRED>
Subject: Bye To: bugcorps at FRED

Bye. It was fun (except for Quarterstaff). I'll visit now and then (or at least try).

Date: 31 Aug 1988 1141-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: Re: Testing… To: MARC cc: LIZ

Schedules for all games currently in testing are in a juggling pattern. Part of the holdup/difficulty/(whatever the term is) has been getting the graphics done. We're having a scheduling meeting this afternoon to determine just where everything is. To say it's been hectic around here wouldn't be giving the word "hectic" justice. On top of all the bs, I'm interviewing for a new tester and had about 25 responses to the ad that ran a few days ago. Also, if

you've been on the system you may notice that Adam and Craig are gone, Jake leaves this Friday, and as of today, Joe Prosser's back to school (therefore part-time here). I don't know what consolation or dread this will bring you, but Steve Watkins starts next Tuesday!

whew. liz

Jacob Galley's last day:

Date: 2 Sep 1988 1712-EDT From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: ciao! To: bugcorps at FRED

This is it. 5 pm Friday. Party time. I'm history. What a strange place. I'm going to miss the free drinks. (Alcohol and Non) And the bagels and my new Mac.

It's been fun, folks, and I shall come back to visit and maybe even to work here next Summer. But now it's time again for Miserable High School.

Bye, people. I'll miss you. [sniff]

PS- Joe, tell Carol I figured out the belly button - tartar sauce joke ... ha, ha ha.

Jake the Macless

Date: 2 Sep 1988 1323-EDT From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
Subject: testing To: joey

Considering the games upcoming, we should strongly consider hiring AT LEAST two people in this round of interviews. Also, I've heard that Gary is bored/unhappy at his new job. It would be interesting to see if he'd be interested in coming back here, though his reasons for leaving were that there were no areas of advancement for him here.

Also, the least of your concerns I realize, but one of mine is still the issue of my salary. And confronted with the upcoming schedule - heavy - it makes it all the more important that I have some sort of decision.

Thanks. liz

Date: 16 Sep 1988 1240-EDT From: Lord Wat <TESTER.STEVE at FRED>
Subject: MARRIAGE To: EVERYBODY at FRED

DAH DAH DEE DUM DUM DUM DUM DUM.....
JOE PROSSER AND SUZI KMETZO HAPPILY ANNOUNCE THEIR PLANS TO BE WED.
CONGRATS.

Liz is laid off, just two weeks after raising the issue of her salary. Interesting coincidence...

Date: 20 Sep 1988 1447-EDT From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Wishful thinking To: CHALLENGE cc: erhardt, liz, SWG

Bob,

I sent you new parser files last week. You should have them by now.

I will nudge Tim again for the compiler tape.

The bad news: Liz was laid off yesterday, as part of reorganizing JoeY's half of the company: customer support and testing will be merged, under a new manager. Actually, other parts of the company were reorganized too, and two other people were also laid off. For now, JoeY is managing testing.

Date: 21 Sep 1988 1516-EDT
Subject: Re: Liz

From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
To: MARC

Yeah, no kidding. I think basically Joe and Mike decided they'd rather, having made the decision, take the hit now rather than try to pretend for two months or so that they hadn't. Sigh. There is now no one in testing who has played Shogun.

Date: 23 Sep 1988 2036-EDT

From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
To: marc

Well, I'm gone, though I can hardly believe it. No explanation, no nothing - this is it. I wish you good luck through Journey and your next endeavors...

Date: 23 Sep 1988 2010-EDT

From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
To: md

I never realized you didn't like me this much.

Date: 23 Sep 1988 1930-EDT
Subject: goodbye

From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
To: pdl, taa, swg, patti, tester.steve, joe, veldran, sem, clr, kurt, jon, eliz

I will dearly miss all of you. Infocom (as it used to be, I suppose), means so much to me. You people are the best. I'll miss all our good nergilent jokes. I hate to leave. Think of me.

Date: 23 Sep 1988 2009-EDT

From: Liz Cyr-Jones <LIZ at FRED>
To: joey

I don't think this whole mess is fair or well thought out. Hopefully, the future will prove me wrong. For whatever personal reasons you had in laying me off - essentially firing - am I that dumb? You sincerely deserve what you get - karma, ne?

The dictionary owns nice words for what I think of you now.

Kurt Boutin announces he's leaving:

Date: 4 Oct 1988 1038-EDT From: Kurt Boutin <KURT at FRED>
Subject: Resignation To: joey

I will be leaving Infocom as of Friday. I am writing this to you because I wasn't sure if I was going to get a chance to talk to you. The main reasons for leaving are: The weather. I commute an hour a day. In the winter, it would be extended to an hour and a half to two hours or longer. This I feel is unreasonable. I had planned on finding an apartment down around here but they are all too expensive.

Ken and Shaun have been playing Battletech. Ken, I guess, has been playing this week. Shaun has been playing in his spare time to get acquainted with the game. So that area appears to be covered.

The reason for the short notice is that I will be working with my father starting on Monday. I hadn't known anything positive until Monday. I'm glad I got to work with you. Believe it or not, I learned a lot.

Status report on former employees:

Date: 14 Oct 1988 1656-EDT From: Melvin of Arabia <SEM at FRED>
Subject: brian/amy To: EVERYBODY at FRED

Prof just called, and says hi to everyone. He seems to be happy and doing well. Lucasfilms Games has merged with ILM, which he claims is a good thing. He says he say Mick Jagger in the lunch room once. Laurel got a job managing a high-priced yuppie confectionery store.

Amy is in town (well, Worcester) for a month. She said she'd come in once she gets over a bad cold.

Jacob wants to hire back on at Infocom:

Date: 9 Jan 1989 1639-EST From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: hire me please To: da cc: tester.jacob

Now that I'm into a college homework doesn't matter as much so I have more time and less money. I was wondering if you could use me in testing 15 (maybe 20) hours a week ... or if I would have to get a real job. Let me know ...

Date: 11 Jan 1989 1638-EST From: Jacob Galley <TESTER.JACOB at FRED>
Subject: Re: hire me please To: DA

Ok. I'll wait. I expect to be around through August, if you want me in the Summer as well.

Date: 17 Jan 1989 1209-EST From: JDARNOLD
To: KIRSCH Subject: BIX letter

Here is a letter I got on BIX the other day:

> Memo #29822 From: countmadzia
> Date: Fri, 13 Jan 89 23:54:19 EST To: infocom
> Subject: New Games

Hello Jonathan,

I'm the buero chief for seven PC und Mac publications in Europe here in San Francisco. I follow your infocom/soapbox closely and my editors are very interested in reviewing the new mac/pc packages that came out. could you pass along my name and address to your marketing/ pr department, because repeated calls to your office have resulted in zip!

My Name:
Klaus Madzia
Exec. Editor International Affairs for
PC-Magazine, Europe, MacUp, Computer persoenlich, PC-USER UK
office adr:
1935 Buchanan
San Francisco, CA 94115
Phone: 415-567-5250
Fax: 415-474-8409
mcimail: kmadzia

Thanks a lot
Regs
Klaus

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 89 12:04:08 EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
To: joseph@glenfiddich Subject: Hi.

Hi, Joe. I get to send messages to you on both machines in one day. That sure is exciting. In fact, it's about the most exciting thing that's happening today. I'm pretty bored. It's hard for me to work up a lot of interest in learning ZIL when I'm not sure if I'll ever get to use it for anything. And Rob wants me to redo that Arthur press release. I tried to make it sound just like the Mediagenic press releases, but it turns out that's a no no. We want them to sound like the old Infocom press releases. Luckily, I wrote those. But it's still somewhat of a pain to have to rework it.

Maybe I'm feeling out of sorts today because I took a week off but don't really feel as though I had a vacation. I wish I could have hung around the house all week doing whatever I felt like each day. That would be a really wonderful vacation. Oh well, I should just shut up and be glad I have this chance to work on game design (even if only part time and if perhaps for naught).

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 89 15:05:06 EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
To: Joseph@glenfiddich Subject: Sorry

Sorry to be so depressing. I'm just in a lousy mood today — too many uncertainties in my life right now. In some ways I envy the fact that you know what you want and are working towards it. I'm kind of drifting right now, so I shouldn't say a word about planning for the future. I can see your frustrations with Susi and really there's nothing wrong with you wanting to have some idea of your shared future. Maybe because I let Donald follow his dream for so long (even to the detriment of myself and the kids at times) I'm defensive on the subject. When I think about it, I probably should have urged him to make some concrete decisions a long time ago. And that's probably why I seem to take Susi's side. It's because in truth I've always believed the same thing that you do, but I've never found a way to stand up to Donald about it. (I think it's hard with artists anyway; there are always enough hopeful opportunities to make you think fame and fortune is just around the corner.)

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 89 11:09:08 EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
To: joseph@glenfiddich Subject: Hi

Hi, Joe! I'm in MUCH better spirits today. Rob came in last night and said that he and Joe want me to concentrate on learning ZIL because soon I'll be starting a game! Oh boy! I don't even mind that I have to spend today writing the sell sheet for Arthur, because tomorrow I can work on my game all day. Since Rob likes your game idea so much, maybe that means things will work out for you, too!

Date: Fri, 12 May 89 10:38:41 EDT From: Elizabeth Langosy <eliz@glenfiddich>
To: joseph@glenfiddich Subject: Hi.

Hi, Joe. This is the first time I've read my mail since last Wednesday. I'm not that motivated to work on ZIL anymore. I don't know if I will ever use it in my life. So I don't know how often I will log into this computer. I'll be taking it home soon anyway, but first I have to get another hard drive so it will work with hypercard.

This morning Donald was talking about how much he misses seeing you. You and Susi should come over for dinner sometime when your schedule is freed up. Or come in the afternoon and we can sit outside and have an early supper. It's really pretty in our yard now.

Financial information

Date: 3 Nov 1983 1648-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: stock To: taa cc: swg

I have received the new stock certificates from our lawyers, reflecting the two-for-one split of July 29.

You are welcome to take your certificate if you sign a receipt for it. However, let me urge you to leave it with me, and I will send it to our lawyers' vault for safekeeping. (It took a lot of time and effort for me to round up the old certificates in order to effect this stock split, and something similar may happen again.) If you want a keepsake, you can make a photocopy.

Please let me know, in person or by mail, what to do with your certificate.

Date: 3 Nov 1983 1651-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at ZORK>
Subject: stock To: ehb, ri cc: swg

I have received the new stock certificates from our lawyers, reflecting the two-for-one split of July 29.

You are welcome to take your certificate if you sign a receipt for it. However, let me urge you to leave it with me, and I will send it to our lawyers' vault for safekeeping. (It took a lot of time and effort for me to round up the old certificates in order to effect this stock split, and something similar may happen again.) If you want a keepsake, you can make a photocopy.

Please let me know, in person or by mail, what to do with your certificate.

I also have an "investment letter" for you to sign, saying that you know the stock is not registered, not transferable, etc.

Date: 3 Nov 1983 1728-EST From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at ZORK>
Subject: Re: stock To: SWG

Please have the lawyers keep it for me.

Date: 3 Nov 1983 1759-EST From: RI at ZORK (Richard Ilson)
Subject: Re: stock To: SWG at ZORK

You may send the stock to the lawyers' for safekeeping.

If it's not too much trouble, I would like a photocopy.

I will stop by to sign the investment letter.

Date: 4 Nov 1983 1116-EST From: Timothy A. Anderson <TAA at ZORK>
Subject: Re: stock To: SWG

Given Infocom's propensity for issuing new stock certificates, I think you probably should keep it.

-ta

A problem with one of Infocom's vendors:

Date: 11 Oct 1984 1151-EDT
Subject: CFS

From: Jennifer Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
To: MD

I just got a very weird call from Jamie Moreno. She was effectively returning my calls yesterday to Bob Muzzy. What she said was that we should no longer call Bob, as he is no longer in charge of fulfillment; that she has now "taken over some of his responsibilities". I asked her point blank what Bob IS in charge of now, and got "<pause> Um, er, ah, he's more involved with the er, ah, mailing aspect." Too weird. I told her about the phone problem, and she tried to tell me that the problem was with OUR phone (bizarre)—that their phone was working fine, and that if I couldn't reach Rose Ann, something was wrong with our system.

I also talked to Rose Ann this morning, and am beginning to believe that she's schizophrenic. I discussed David Hackley with her (the one you wanted me to send a free game to), and she says she has never talked to him. She said that many people call and say they've talked to her before, but she's never talked to them. She believes that someone at Creative is answering her phone and saying that they are Rose Ann. I'm sorry, but this is just too weird for me.

It sounds like things are in more of a state of chaos down there than usual. If Bob is no longer 1) on our account 2) working for CFS, or any part of DM 3) in charge of fulfillment 4) other, why didn't someone tell us? We send lots of packages to this man. I find it more than hard to believe that Jamie has taken his place. She didn't say that exactly, but if that's the case, we're worse off than before. I know you probably don't want to think about DM right now (I honestly don't blame you), but at least save this message and re-read it when you get back. I think we need to do something, at least confront them about the changes in their companies, why they've happened, and WHY NOBODY TELLS US.

Please respond. You can wait 'til you return from London.

First indication of problems between the business and games divisions:

Date: 11 Jul 1983 0941-EDT
Subject: Scheduler

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: EVERYBODY at ZORK

I have modified the system to use a class-scheduling system as an experiment. This means that the INFOBASE group is guaranteed to get 65% of the system and the INTERLOGIC group 33% with the remainder/other groups. "Windfall" (the amount not used) is freely allocated to other groups. This is an attempt to make the use of the system more consistent for each group. Let me know what you think.

Date: 12 Jul 1983 1707-EDT
Subject: Scheduler

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: EHB, MSB, BEREZ, SWG

I'll give it some more thought, but it seems absurd to think that the business group is discriminated against when it receives twice the share that the consumer group has. I think that those complaining most are to some extent spoiled. This is the major crunch for the consumer group, which was being crippled by system load. If the business people would like to pay the bills, that's all well and good, but until then priorities would indicate that the products go out the door. Remember that we have no outside funding for now. If this means that procedures downstairs and/or upstairs have to change somewhat, then so be it. I would also comment that the allocations in the current budget are 65% to 35%, and were used in coming up with class shares.

As I say, I will think about it some more. Why should the consumer group be penalized for having smaller, less compute-intensive jobs anyway? Mumble, grumble.

Date: 12 Jul 1983 1708-EDT
Subject: [scheduling]

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: MSB, SWG, BEREZ

This was the letter that prompted the reply.

Date: 12 Jul 1983 1658-EDT
Subject: scheduling

From: Edward H. Black <EHB at ZORK>
To: MARC at ZORK

The class scheduler is causing discord in the basement. The load average down here is much higher than that encountered by the entertainment group, which makes it look like favoritism, not equity. Is everyone's time equally valuable?

The idea that we are all working for the same ends is hard to support under these circumstances, and people are already saying "it's us against them".

I think everyone would be willing to sacrifice if there were deadlines that caused short-term inequities. That was not clear from the way the scheduling was instituted/described. Will you reconsider? Otherwise some consistent argument is needed for what is going on (screw you all, you don't make any money (yet) may be one argument, but its ghost may return when we do).

help!
ed

Date: 13 Jul 1983 0818-EDT
Subject: Class Scheduler

From: Marc Blank <BLANK at ZORK>
To: EHB, msb, swg, berez

If you think it would be best, let's have a meeting to discuss the rationale for the class scheduling stuff. We could either meet with just Mike or Stu, or have a meeting with the Infobase group and me. Although the result may not change, it is important that everyone understand what is happening, and why.

Date: 20 Jun 1985 1549-EDT
Subject: company meeting

From: Etuart Galli <GALLEY at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

... is planned for 16:45 in the lounge about financial situation.

Date: 4 Feb 1986 1459-EST

From: Hollywood <DA at FRED>
To: imps at FRED

This announcement appears as a matter of record only.

$164,500,000

Infocom Incorporated

Birthday Party Coupon Certificates of Deposit

Hollywood and Hollywood are pleased to announce we will be the exclusive agents for Imps to purchase a $3.50 option for the Feb. 13 Birthday Party.

This mail is neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy. Copies of the prospectus may be

obtained in any state in which this announcement is circulated from only the undersigned.
Hollywood and Hollywood

Date: 26 Feb 1986 1012-EST From: Chris L. Reeve <CLR at FRED>
Subject: Activision To: pdl, taa, btb, ehb, swg, sem, prof, jeff, jon, da

As part of our the acquisition process, Infocom is attempting to judge the viability of Activision as a long term company in the consumer software business. While we believe from existing evidence that they are, we are essentially making sure. To this end, I am preparing a set of questions to be posed to their development people. These questions are designed to help us understand their development process and see if it is reasonable. The file <CLR>QUESTIONS.ACTIVISION contains an initial set of questions. Please review and comment if you wish. Let me know if you have other questions you think should be asked.

Date: 28 Feb 1986 0926-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Activision stock To: everybody at FRED

Closing price was up 30 percent yesterday (at 1 5/8 on NASDAQ system) with about five times the normal volume of trading.

Date: 4 Aug 1986 1120-EDT From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Activision stock To: clr, ehb, md, pdl, taa, swg

Here's another update:

I just called L.F. Rothschild (800-225-4240) and spoke with their other specialist in selling restricted stock, George Dougherty ("Dogarty").

He had one or two encouraging things to say about the market; said he would check out the restrictions on transfer with Activision; and said his firm also would charge no commission on 22K shares, which is the amount I want to sell in the near future.

(Does that seem like an arbitrary number? It's not. I reckon that my original $400 investment in Infocom is now 22,706 Activision shares.)

Date: 11 Feb 1987 1350-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Have You Heard ...?

That Activision is keeping its "Profit"-Sharing Plan, so we will NOT be able to deduct IRA contributions in the future. (1986 contributions ARE deductible.) However, Activision is setting up something — a 401K Plan, whatever that is — into which one can make deductible contributions greater than $2K/year. Details to come; unfortunately, it'll be from lawyers, so we can expect "87 pages of details" (according to Joel).

Date: 16 Jul 1987 1354-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Stuff To: SEM, Amy, SWG, PDL, Jeff, Prof cc: jon

Activision made a $500,000 profit for the first fiscal quarter. Activision had predicted a $960,000 loss. This info may not yet be public (at least officially), but it certainly will be public (officially) no later than Monday.

Harry gave me this morning several pages of numbers which claim to be an analysis of Q1 performance. See me if you want to look at these pages.

Price changes: Zork I will sell for $24.95 (Commodore) and $29.95 (all others). The Zork Trilogy will sell for $44.95 and $49.95. The other "value packs" (Enchanter Trilogy, Sci-Fi Trilogy, and Mystery Trilogy) will sell for $49.95 and $59.95. See me if you want to know why, or if you want to know where I or other managers stand on this issue.

Date: 13 May 1988 0944-EDT From: Screen Writer Guild <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stock broker? To: JON cc: SEM, SWG, CLR, PDL, TAA

ACTIVISION, INC. INTEROFFICE MEMO
DATE: December 3, 1987
TO: Senior Management
FROM: Michelle Anderson
RE: Commission-free Purchases of Activision Stock

Alan Broder of Datek Securities has offered to trade Activision stock for our employees free of commission, as his firm makes a market in our stock. Gail thought it would be appropriate for officers to be aware of and take advantage of his offer.

Alan can be reached at the following address and phone number:

Alan Broder
Datek Securities
50 Broad Street, Suite 534
New York, NY 10004
(212) 785-6000

Happy trading.
/s/ Michelle

Mediagenic is suing Infocom:

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1007-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Letter from Mediagenic To: PDL, SWG, Marc

You may or may not have already received a letter from Mediagenic. In either case, I am available to supply some commentary.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1228-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Don't panic, but … To: MARC cc: SWG

Yes, I guess you haven't received your copy because they used your Rinconia address.

The letter is a legal notice of Activision's intention to make a claim against the ten former shareholders of Infocom who agreed in the "Consent of Indemnifying Shareholders dated May 13, 1986" to indemnify Activision for any inaccuracies in the merger agreement. They claim that the financial statements of Infocom didn't have enough reserves for obsolete inventory and doubtful receivables.

Needless to say, we are not going to take this lying down. It seems like a particularly stupid move on their part.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1804-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: You know what… To: SWG

I spoke with Herb earlier this afternoon, then spoke to Joel again. My sense is that Bruce wants to come to some sort of settlement after the facts are reviewed. I suppose the best thing is to wait it out for a while and see the "facts" before pursuing some other plan of attack.

Date: 13 Jun 1988 1907-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Documents To: SWG

If you've got them, I could use copies of 1) the indemnification agreement and 2) the document that Joel signed acknowledging the truth of various statements about the company's finances. This second document was more than a few pages, as I recall.

Date: 14 Jun 1988 0920-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: You know what… To: MARC cc: SWG

Yeah, I'm adopting a wait-and-see strategy, sort of by default. My pipe dream is that discovery and negotiation will reduce their claim to under $100K, which the agreement defines as zero!

Date: 14 Jun 1988 0922-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Documents To: MARC

You should have the indemnification agreement this morning. I'll look for the other, though it may be scattered hither and yon.

Date: 14 Jun 1988 1638-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Phone call To: joel cc: marc

I spoke to Bruce a few minutes ago (he returned a call from before he spoke. He said the same things to me that you reported, my overall impression being that he wants some sort of settlement and is willing to give payment "terms" to those who would have some hardship in paying all at once.

He seemed to be saying that the only important fact in terms of inventories is that they ended up being worth less than we said; he even said that they waited all this time to make sure all the numbers were right! The same, of course, goes for the bad accounts (it doesn't matter that we thought it was right, he says, only that we weren't when all was said and done.)

Regarding "additional amounts," he seemed to be saying that they wanted to put in their claim before the two years ended, with the approach that the placeholder could serve as "notice" under the terms of the agreement.

Date: 14 Jun 1988 1642-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: [Phone call] To: SWG

FYI....

Also, thanks for the package; I barely remember the agreements!

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1329-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Screw, etc. To: MARC

Not too much. Joel gave three possible explanations for this silliness, all of which (to me) sounded fairly bizarre unless one assumes that Bruce (or whoever) is slightly feebleminded.

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1829-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: ActiChompitude To: MARC

Joel had lunch today with Herb Urbach, who will apparently be frobbing some sort of letter to the Infocom Ten and to Activision. It sounds from a preliminary report that the letter will be similar to many respects to the famous letter to TSR. Herb apparently made the same point AV did to you (Al has talked to Herb); they are not without sin, and in fact their sins, particularly their tardiness in registering the new Activision stock, are potentially monetarily worse.

Film at 11.

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1255-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Documents To: MARC cc: SWG, Joel, PDL, CLR

I'm sending you copies of selected pages from the "Agreement and Plan of Merger" that seem to bear on Activision's claim against us.

Here's an interesting item in Section IX - General Provisions, subsection 9.3 - Notices:

> "All notices and other communications hereunder shall be in writing and shall be deemed given if delivered personally or mailed by registered or certified mail, commercial overnight courier (e.g., Federal Express, DHL, Sonic, etc.) (return receipt or confirmation of delivery requested), or telecopy to the parties at the following addresses …"

and then it gives addresses for Activision and Infocom.

Now, since Section VIII - Indemnity gives no other instructions for how to give notice, one might assume that this "general provision" applies there also. However, my airbill has on it Michelle Anderson's signature that "authorizes Federal Express to deliver this shipment without obtaining a delivery signature". Hmmm...

Yr. most obdt. ntpckr.,

Date: 15 Jun 1988 1351-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Indemnity To: SWG

Unfortunately, the agreement doesn't specify when notice is given, only when the damage is alleged to have taken place.

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1428-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Stuff To: SWG

I got your latest package; thanks a lot. BTW, I talked to Al yesterday about the ActiMess; he has the same sort of feelings that the rest of us do. In talking to Herb, he believes that we may well have claims against Activision (they didn't register the stock, etc....,) so he thinks they're stupid to bring this whole thing up. In all, everyone

seems happy to wait until the facts are known and then mull it over.

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1458-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stuff To: MARC cc: SWG

Dave said that, while Joel was lunching with Herb yesterday, Joel almost had to calm Herb down, because he was getting so excited about this juicy case that he felt sure of winning!

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1542-EDT From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Re: Stuff To: SWG

That's good news; I suggested to Joel yesterday that we send the Activision Directors individual letters indicating the economic damage that might be wrought by this action, including bad terms with Tandy, taking Joel's time away from running Infocom during this turnaround year, pissing off the designer of the YZIP system and slowing down progress on his game, and alienating an outside developer. Any one of these things could cause damage in excess of the monies they claim.

My feeling is that they will back down. As an aside, Joel said that Scott had talked to Ed Esber who claimed to have no idea that this was going on.

Date: 16 Jun 1988 1600-EDT From: Late Lt. Sugary <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Re: ActiNews To: MARC at FRED cc: Holders at FRED

The mailing list Holders@Fred (as in Stock Holders, or Holding the Bag) now points to the five of us, for spreading rumors more efficiently.

Date: 17 Jun 1988 1013-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Testing new mailing list. To: Holders at FRED

Gail Conely tells me that she used a very rough calculation to arrive at $293,000. The Mediagenic Controller (who, alas, is not Harry Regan) is working diligently to dig up inventory, sales return, and receivables data to substantiate the case and get a more accurate number. He should be done in another week.

Meanwhile, I have officially contacted them on behalf of all of us and nothing more is expected of us at this time (i.e., no payments or collections). I've sent a letter to this effect to all of us.

Date: 20 Jun 1988 0953-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Herb's Letter To: MARC cc: JOEL

1) Activision has your old address. Unless you object for some reason, I'll give them the correct one.

2) I've been attempting to discourage everyone from calling Herb, which would be the primary method right now to run up high legal fees. (Naturally not everyone will listen to me.) The next good method, and perhaps a better one, is to get into litigation. Obviously we should not do that without a general agreement among us.

Date: 11 Jul 1988 2248-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Letter
To: pdl, taa cc: swg

The file <MARC.X>BRUCE.TXT contains a proposed letter that I would like to send to the individual members of the Activision Board of Directors. I'd appreciate any comments you might have, including: bad idea.

Date: 12 Jul 1988 1003-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Letter
To: marc

I'm not convinced that sending it is a good idea. Nonetheless, you ought to add that Stu is the "New Parser" Guru.

Date: 14 Jul 1988 1330-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Extortion
To: marc

I haven't heard anything new. Joel expects to get a draft of the letter from Herb tomorrow.

Date: 15 Jul 1988 1524-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Letter
To: MARC cc: pdl

It makes the following points;

1) The demand letter makes no reference to what warranties and representations are allegedly the basis. One must assume it is those dealing with the reserves, etc. being adequate. Arthur Anderson and Coopers & Lybrand audited the books, and Ed Roffman examined them during the due diligence, and no one objected to the reserves as inadequate.
2) Given that the agreement ran out after two years elapsed, there is no basis for any claim over the original $293K. Any claims made after that are without basis.
3) The indemnification is to be "net of benefits" to Activision. It is a moot point whether, in addition to obvious things like tax benefits, Activision's goodwill was increased by taking returns, etc. Further, had these losses been taken at the time of the agreement, they would have been divided by two in their effect on the sale price, and thus they can't be claimed at full value. (This is something Joel wants Herb to add).
4) Activision took substantial writeoffs over the last two years. First, these writeoffs probably included the stuff they are claiming, and hence they violated the "prompt notice" clause. Second, some of the Activision writeoffs should have been taken before the merger, and hence their financial position was not as represented.
5) The delay of registering the stock caused a substantial loss in the value of the unregistered shares, as the stock went down 1/2 point during the period of the delay.

He then recommends we defend the action with all means at our disposal.

He then includes a warning that a court case could be long and expensive, as any court case would probably involve a lot of conflicting testimony and interpretations.

Joel is asking Herb to beef up the part about the expiration of the time limit. He also doesn't want to send copies out to everyone, even when it's in final form, so that he can say to Bruce "I haven't yet sent all this inflammatory stuff to everybody."

Date: 27 Jul 1988 1423-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Activision's Claim
To: pdl, swg, taa

The latest word from Joel is that he spoke to Bruce last Friday, but didn't make any particular progress. Apparently, Bruce showed Herb's letter to the Activision lawyers, who responded that they were reasonable arguments, though not necessarily correct ones.

As of an hour ago, Joel was about to address the Board of Directors on the matter; Joel expects to hear something by tomorrow regarding Activision's posture on this mess.

Date: 28 Jul 1988 1358-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Suit
To: MARC

I had a discouraging talk with Joel just now...

Date: 28 Jul 1988 1802-EDT
From: Umbrellas: A Snack? <MARC at FRED>
Subject: Joel…
To: PDL cc: swg, taa, marc

I had a talk with him as well. To summarize...

1) He's not so sure how good our case is, and he's worried that AVSN might seek well over a million in a suit.
2) He doesn't believe AVSN will back down, though they would be amenable to a settlement.
3) They assume that all of the "damage" has bee done, in terms of morale and the like.
4) He thinks we have two choices: to make a counter-offer or to tell them we don't intend to pay. He's inclined to the former, most likely for about $150,000 (half of what they currently are demanding.) He figures they would accept such a number.

For what it's worth, as a relatively risk-averse person, I tend to agree with him about the settlement, though I don't necessarily believe we owe them anything. However, lots of strange things were happening a few years ago, and they might be right about some of the facts.

As far as "damage" goes, they are obviously wrong, but it might be hard to convince them of that without guaranteeing a lawsuit.

Date: 29 Aug 1988 1336-EDT
From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: Scott's settlement, etc.
To: MARC

Baby is Kathleen Rothrock Lebling, aka Kate or Katie (Katy?). Fatherhood is pretty reasonable so far; from what I hear I'm having an easier time of it than Chris is: Kate tends to tank up before bedtime and sleep 3-4 hours at a stretch during the night. She only cries when she's hungry (with maybe a 10% probability of boredom or gas or other random causes). She's really a lot of fun, and she doesn't really do all that much yet, so she'll presumably be even more fun later.

Vis a vis Scot: Sigh. I think basically all he's done is make the settlement that we all thought we could more or less make at any time. I know I felt all along that they would be willing to settle for about half the original demand. All Scot has done is confirm that. It makes it very difficult to negotiate a lower number (but admittedly also more difficult for them to insist on a higher one). I think it would have been better to wait until their lawyers respond to Joel and Herb's points, since that was underway anyway. If Bruce et al really think their case is so air-tight, lawyers being lawyers they are going to get a surprise when the response comes back; no lawyer ever says a case is airtight. Scot seemed to think that both you and Joel were willing to settle on substantially the same terms.

He also made a veiled warning (threat?) about any attempt by Activision to compensate those of us who are still associated with the company if they did it "obviously," such as by a one-time bonus. Scot has always been conservative and risk-averse, so this all doesn't surprise me too much, but I think his timing is very bad.

Date: 29 Aug 1988 1026-EDT From: Joel M. Berez <JOEL at FRED>
Subject: Scott's claim To: Marc, PDL, SWG

Upon further reading of our agreement, I conclude the following:

1) If anyone contests Scott proposed settlement, those who contest will be personally liable for any overage that Scott must ultimately pay.
2) If no one contests it, then Scott will STILL be obligated for his proportional share of any excess amounts that the rest of us may ultimately pay.

Both assume, of course, that Scott gives us proper notice.

I therefore conclude that Scott's action is largely a no-op; nobody will contest it and of the hook he will not be off. It does, however, set a precedent for an amount that (presumably) Bruce will accept from each of us. It also, unfortunately, sets a precedent for the amount that Bruce will expect from each of us.

Date: 15 Oct 1988 1249-EDT From: Mike Kawahara <MIKEK at FRED>
Subject: Re: Contract To: MARC cc: MIKEK

Sorry for not answering sooner. They put me on the internal Mac net but forgot to say that I could not get onto FRED.

Joe knows he owes you a contract; we talked about it a few times this week. However, Mediagenic has been riding him hard to get out an operating budget and business plan by this Monday. So, he's been up to his eyebrows trying to keep our buddy Bruce Davis happy the past two weeks.

I know it's hard to stay patient after 5 weeks, but that's all I can tell you right now. As we left it, we needed to get the draft written up (which is really hard right now since we have NO administrative assistants or secretaries to help us out) but we are all extremely swamped with work. We haven't forgotten you, and there are no problems with the new contract. It's just that Corporate is setting other priorities before we get back to doing our usual work.

Date: 28 Oct 1988 0930-EDT From: Lend Big Veal <PDL at FRED>
Subject: Re: cott To: MARC

I spoke to Scott at the LCS banquet. He is planning to pay after the weekend. He said he had made some sort of agreement with them under which they would compensate him if he ended up having to pay more. I told him I thought that would be exactly equivalent to them paying one of us back with bonuses or whatever. He said "no, no, it's completely different." I ain't convinced.

Bob Bates outlines Challenge, Inc.'s financial position:

Date: 31 Oct 1988 1559-EST From: Best rare boat <CHALLENGE at FRED>
Subject: Finances To: JoeY cc: Erhardt, Challenge

Mr. Joseph Ybarra October 31, 1988
Vice President, Product Development
Infocom, Inc.
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Joe:

At our last meeting, we agreed that I would send you folks a request for money that would cover the next six months of Challenge's operation. Last week, I called Christopher with the figure, which ranged from a high of $115,000 to a low of $100,000. Needless to say, eyebrows were raised.

Christopher gave me a very polite phone call and, without once calling me crazy, asked me if I could put something down in writing to explain those figures. The gist of his concern seemed to be, "If that's what it costs Challenge to develop a single game for Infocom, then Infocom can't afford to have Challenge developing games."

This, then, is that explanation. It will have to involve some discussion of Challenge's finances, but I will attempt to keep it brief.

The basis of Challenge as a business is very simple. Our operating budget is $160,000 per year. Our arrangement with Infocom is to produce at least two games per year. Therefore it costs us roughly $80,000 to produce each game. Our (anticipated) profits come from the projection that each of our games (after Sherlock) will sell a minimum of 50,000 units, which generates a royalty of somewhere between $112,500 and $135,000 per game.

The trick, of course, is to survive the start-up period until the royalties start to come in.

Challenge financed the start-up period with a combination of advances from Infocom and money from investors. However, in May of 1988, the advances from Infocom were interrupted. As you know, the design for Game #3 was tossed back and forth until finally we agreed on developing the movie project. This has delayed the advance stream by 6 months and created a current shortfall of funds.

At the same time, Infocom decided to delay the release of Arthur from September of 1988 to February (?) of 1989. Although you have most generously continued the advances, the projected royalty income stream to Challenge has been postponed by 2 quarters, which will cause further shortfalls in the early months of 1989.

The upshot of all this is that Challenge finds itself about $90,000 short in operating funds. $60,000 of this we have financed with a line of credit at the bank. The other $30,000 has been financed by delaying monthly payments to various suppliers, and by postponing payroll payments.

When asked, "What does Challenge need to operate the next six months?" what I did was to take the $30,000 we currently owe to people other than the bank, and add it to our $85,000 projected expenses (slightly higher than the $80,000 mentioned above) to get a total of $115,000. With that figure, we could pay everyone off except the bank, and stay on an even keel for the next six months.

Realizing that $115,000 was a lot of money, I also mentioned to Christopher that we could get by with as much as $15,000 less. We could accomplish this by continuing to roll over monthly invoices and by not catching up in our payroll.

Having said all that, I guess there are several points to make.

The first is that this advance should not be looked at solely as the cost of developing the movie project. Viewed in that fashion, I can certainly understand the reluctance to put so much money up for a single game. Rather, it should be looked at as serving to cushion the delay of Arthur and the delay of Game #3, as well as serving as the regular advance for Game #3.

The second point is that Challenge is not going to fold up and die if we do not receive $100,000 - $115,000 in small unmarked bills by noon on Thursday. I am confident of our ability to negotiate a mutually agreeable figure that will allow Challenge to continue to develop games for Infocom, with both companies profiting by the deal. If I were not confident, I certainly would not have gone to South Carolina last week.

The final point is to note that these advances do not, as Christopher has implied, make Challenge more "expensive" than other developers. We are still dealing with advances here, and they are recoupable against royalties. In real dollars, it is Challenge who is bearing the ultimate financial burden for the various delays.

I hope this clears things up a little. And I hope that we can settle on an acceptable figure and get this behind us by the end of the week, so we can all concentrate on our new underwater adventure. (Speaking of which, my trip to Gaffney was enormously successful and I think we have a potential blockbuster on our hands).

I look forward to hearing from you or Chris at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Bates

Z

Sales information and statistics

Date: 29 Jan 1984 2150-EST
Subject: Game Purchase

From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: implementors at ZORK

I've heard some incorrect numbers being discussed, so I thought I'd set the record straight. Our research last fall showed that of those who had purchased more than one Infocom game (71% of our customer list sample), 60% bought Zork I first, 20% bought Deadline first, 6% Zork II, and all other games were below 5% as first purchases.

Date: 9 Nov 1984 1041-EST
Subject: Own-A-Mac

From: Jennifer L. Fine <JENNIFER at ZORK>
To: MD

Count on the games ordered on this batch of cards:

Zork I	23	Seastalker	13
Planetfall	16	Witness	18

Date: 20 Dec 1984 1023-EST
Subject: Z1 supply; Tim

From: Joy Pulver <JOY at ZORK>
To: MD

Just FYI: a friend of mine came by last night bemoaning the lack of a single Zork I for the PC in the greater Boston area.

Also, Tim seemed really pleased when he told me that you had called him Chomper and Zork Historian in the NZT. I said "That was sweet of Mike" and he said "I'm sure glad people like Mike are still around." (I think he always felt a little sad about not being in the biographies, but he understands the reason.)

I hope you hire a DM manager soon! Maybe I should apply in some capacity and you could supervise....I like shirtsleeve operations. Hope you get to see your whole family for Christmas. -Joy

Date: 21 Feb 1985 0950-EST
Subject: #1

From: Michael Dornbrook <MD at ZORK>
To: everybody at ZORK

Hitchhikers has hit #1 on the Softsel Hot List (tm)!

Date: 29 Jul 1985 1150-EDT
Subject: Sales

From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
To: Imps at ZORK

Sales in July, as of Friday: 36,333 i.f; 7600 InvisiClues.

Sales last week of Cornerstone: 675.

Date: 1 Aug 1985 1002-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales To: Imps at ZORK

I.F. sales in July: 45,000 (15,000 over forecast).

Date: 16 Sep 1985 1122-EDT From: Jon Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales To: Imps at ZORK

Interactive fiction sales in September, to date: 19,542.
Estimate for the month: 90,000. [Correction: "sales" should be "orders."]
Orders in September 1984: 102,000.

Don't panic: orders are typically higher at the end of the month; only a few thousand orders for AMFV have been taken; and the Spellbreaker product announcement hasn't gone out yet (it should be mailed later this week).
InvisiClues orders to date: 2680.
Samplers: 904.

Date: 23 Sep 1985 1125-EDT From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales et al. To: Imps at ZORK

Orders through last Friday: 38,900. Includes 6000 AMFV, 5500 Mage.
The "free sampler in every ST" deal fell through.
Online Computers Plus would like an Infocom employee at their booth to demo interactive fiction; at the Bayside Expo this Thursday to Sunday.
Computerland in Worcester would like someone to demo interactive fiction at their store this Saturday.
Production has quite a few backorders: Apple and IBM samplers; Apple, Mac, and Commodore Hitchhiker's; all STs; etc.

Date: 7 Oct 1985 1115-EDT From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales etc. To: Imps at ZORK

September sales: 50,231 interactive fiction (projection: 90,000);
9,212 InvisiClues, 958 samplers.

October orders (as of Friday): 26,608 interactive fiction; 4960 InvisiClues,
-1500 samplers (negative due to many returns), 250 Cornerstones.
Projections for interactive fiction: 150,000 in October, 350,000 in 4th quarter.

Production has LOTS of backorders: Wishbringer Apple & ST, Hitchhiker's Apple, Mac, Commodore, & ST, AMFV Apple, Mac, & ST, Zork I ST. Ernie just received 3000 AMFV Apple disks, all with IBM labels. Oops.
Be prepared to help Ernie/Production in a few weeks. I dont know if we're gearing up for Infoproduction II or something new, like in-house disk duplication (seriously!).
Finally, a request from Dorene: does anyone here have or know a lot about a game called Forbidden Quest? Customer Support has received several calls about it recently. Does the packaging mention Infocom? Or look like Infocom's?

Date: 11 Oct 1985 1534-EDT From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at ZORK>
Subject: Hot Lists To: IMPS at ZORK

HITCHHIKER is back up to 3 on Softsel. ZORK I is at 12, WISHBRINGER is at 13, and ZORK II reappeared at 20.

The new Billboard puts HITCHHIKER at 10 and WISHBRINGER at 11.

Date: 24 Oct 1985 1653-EDT From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: AMFV To: IMPS at ZORK

is number 20 on the latest Softsel hotlist.

Date: 28 Oct 1985 1118-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales To: Imps at ZORK

Interactive fiction: 157,779 Cornerstone: 970 (goal for month: 1250)
InvisiClues: 28,195 Sampler: 7682
Spellbreaker (September & October): 20,000

Date: 4 Nov 1985 1055-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: October orders To: Imps at ZORK

Interactive fiction: 160,281 InvisiClues: 28,495
Samplers: 7700 Cornerstone: 1178

Backorders:
Apple: Zork 1, Spellbreaker, Hitchhiker's, AMFV Mac: Zork 1, Hitchhikers
Commodore: Zork 1, Sampler, Hitchhiker's IBM: Zork 3, Sampler, Hitchhiker's
[There may be others I missed]

Date: 19 Nov 1985 1005-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Re: Orders et al. To: SWG

I don't understand the significance either, but Mike is always so interested about them, I thought others might find them interesting.

I have a guess, though: If we're backordered for a long time, a customer might get annoyed and therefore not do Infocom a favor if we asked for one. Also, the sooner a customer gets product, the sooner that customer will (or should) reorder.

I think backorders are caused by mis-forecasting.

Date: 19 Nov 1985 1506-EST From: Steve Meretzky <SEM at ZORK>
Subject: SALES FIGURES To: IMPS at ZORK

SALES THROUGH 10/31, by machine:

Apple II	127,168	27.1%
IBM	116,716	24.9%
Commodore 64	94,778	20.2%
Atari (both)	67,947	14.5%
Macintosh	40,621	8.7%
Other	21,903	4.6%

SALES THROUGH 10/31, by title:

Hitchhiker's	147,426	31.4%
Wishbringer	68,300	14.6%
Zork I	59,013	12.6%
Zork II	26,344	5.6%
AMFV	23,043	4.9%
Spellbreaker	20,323	4.3%
Enchanter	16,304	3.5%
Zork III	14,614	3.1%
Cutthroats	14,431	3.1%
Suspect	13,445	2.9%
Seastalker	11,969	2.6%
Planetfall	11,096	2.4%
Witness	10,462	2.2%
Sorcerer	8,086	1.7%
Deadline	7,776	1.7%
Infidel	7,525	1.6%
Suspended	4,781	1.0%
Starcross	4,195	0.9%

Interesting facts: Seastalker has outsold Zork I for the Commodore 64.
Hitchhiker's accounts for 46% of this year's C64 sales.
AMFV is the top-selling Amiga title (1311 to S4's 1045).
Wishbringer is 10% of Atari/Mac sales, 22% of C64 sales.
Zork II is the #2 Mac seller, beating even Zork I.

Date: 2 Dec 1985 1132-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Sales et a. To: Imps at ZORK

November orders:
39,582 interactive fiction 610 Cornerstone 12,960 InvisiClues 4638 Samplers

Total Fooblitzky, to date: about 210 (roughly twice as many IBM orders as Apple orders)
Total Atari ST orders, to date: 25,000 Total Amiga orders, to date: 19,000

Ernie's surplus (what he has in stock, less what's been ordered) is significant: For IBM, Apple, Atari XL, and Commodore, more than 50,000 assembled ready-to-go packages, with an additional 30,000 disks in-stock. Add the Mac and the ST, and he has more than 80,000 assembled packages.

Backorders: AMFV Apple, Spellbreaker Apple and Atari XL, and Zork 3 IBM. That's it!
Shipping this week: Amiga Spellbreaker, Hitchhiker's, Wishbringer, and maybe Zork I.

Week before last, Customer Support had a high of 329 consumer calls (high since they've been keeping track, since March). Some problems keeping pace.

Mike had some news from Comdex: An "impressive" speech synthesizer from TI; a write-once-only laser disk that would allow up to 55 hours of audio (for you interactive audio fans); and a potential for bundling some games with AST, who will soon sell a new Apple add-on board.

Date: 9 Dec 1985 1142-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Orders (sigh) et al. To: Imps at ZORK

Interactive fiction: 18,546 InvisiClues: 120 Sampler: 906 Cornerstone: 50

Sales has "no expectations of any orders of any kind" for the rest of the month. (No, Brian was NOT the spokesperson for Sales.)

Backorders: Spellbreaker Apple and AMFV Apple only. There's almost 3000 back-ordered; Ernie is receiving disks at the rate of about 1000 every other day.

New pricing scheme begins February 15 (with the introduction of Ballyhoo). the three Zorks, Enchanter, Hitchhiker's, Wishbringer, AMFV, Spellbreaker, and Ballyhoo will have a suggested retail price of $39.95; all other titles, $29.95. New titles will keep the higher price tag at least 1 year.

Date: 20 Jan 1986 1108-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Order et al. To: Imps at ZORK

Month (and year) to date: 9311 interactive fiction (includes 4772 Ballyhoo orders), 1610 InvisiClues, and a wopping 15,960 Samplers (mostly Radio Shack orders). Infocommunique will be revised to feature Ballyhoo. There may be a telemarketing campaign to push Ballyhoo soon.

Date: 27 Jan 1986 1623-EST From: Jonathan H. Palace <JON at ZORK>
Subject: Orders et al. To: Imps at ZORK Status: RO

Month to date: 13,085 interactive fiction, including 5852 Ballyhoo.
(Forecast: 10,000 Ballyhoo, 10,000 other.)
2040 InvisiClues, 16,044 Samplers.

Ballyhoo orders lower than forecast because (1) nobody knows about it (Infocommunique went out only last week, third class bulk, and the NZT should go out this week), and (2) distributors don't want to order anything until we tell them what our returns policy is (I guess it's being revised). Ballyhoo telemarketing likely, to a select group of likely customers. Volunteers will be needed; stay tuned.

Fooblitzky phone research will be conducted over the next 2 weeks. A "go" or "no go" decision (for selling it through retail channels) will be made mid-Feb.

No final decision yet on the pricing of Cornerstone. Joel, Gab, and the Bink are in Buffalo today, talking to ISDS, trying to sell them exclusive distribution rights (in return for more advertising and cash up front).

Mike found out that we sent out 80,000 Cornerstone demo disks, and we have requests for at least 45,000 others that we DIDN'T send out. If we can afford to do so, he'd like to contact 2000 of these requesters (1000 who did get the demo disk, 1000 who didn't), and tell them about the new Cornerstone price (when we know what it is). See what the reaction is.

Ballyhoo packages will start being assembled next week. Get ready, Jeff, to sign.

Date: 10 Mar 1986 1050-EST From: Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: ConsOps report To: imps at FRED

Sales: 2369 I.F. 730 I.C. 384 Foob 24 C.S. ($99)

Mikey said that we are getting $350K cash from Activision as an advance on royalties for international rights to our products.

Date: 24 Mar 1986 1123-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Orders et al. To: Imps at FRED

13,480 i.f. (3,996 Ballyhoo), 574 $99 CS, 5,490 Inv., 30 Samplers, 2,499 Fooblitzky.

Did you know that the Cornerstone warranty and the games warranty are not the same? Both will probably be modified.

Activision apparently wants us to copy-protect all disks. To be decided.

Marketing will probably recommend the following (to whom? Joel?): lower the price of some games to $29.95; make some other games available direct only. Also, put the Zork Trilogy in one package. When released (later this year?), pull Zork II and Zork III (i.e., Zork I and the Zork Trilogy only will be available retail). (Z2 and Z3 will still be available direct.)

Date: 31 Mar 1986 1105-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Orders et al. To: Imps at FRED

Interactive fiction: 84,070 (includes 20,000 Deadlines, 18,000 Starcross, and 12,000 Suspended, all in old packages, all without disks, sold for $2.50/unit to Ingram; 18,550 no-disk packages sold to Sofsel U.K., at $3.20 for old packages and $6.40 for new; and 3,996 Ballyhoo, for a total of between 16,000 and 17,000 Ballyhoo). 574 Cornerstones, 5980 InvisiClues, 168 Samplers, 2,639 Fooblitzkys.

SPA Award nominations: Cornerstone (best packaging) and AMFV (best new world).

New Cornerstone will be probably be ready the second week of June.

We've partially paid some suppliers, so Trinity should be ready to ship Friday the 13th of June. Product announcement will probably be late. Ballyhoo hint booklet & map will probably continue to be on hold.

Commodore 128 EZIP works (thinks the Micro group), and should go into Testing today.

We're out of Suspended robots.

Date: 22 Apr 1986 1124-EST From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Orders et al. To: Imps at FRED

7541 i.f. (including 1154 Trinity), 75 Cornerstone, 5740 Inv., 150 Sampler, 2090 Foob.

Alan Chaplin will be the new Eastern Sales Manager for Activision and will be based here.

Activision informs us that the all-time best-selling piece of software in Germany (whatever it is) sold 15,000 units. They think we'd be lucky to sell 3000 of any given game. They and Mike estimated the cost of translating a game to be $50,000 (obviously not worth it for 3000 sales). However, we might try one anyway, just as a test.

Johnny Ma is Activision's Manager of Sales & Marketing Information. Great title. He mostly does a lot of statistics, numerical analysis, etc. He'll be here Thursday to talk to Sales, along with Brook Battle (another Activision Sales/PR type).

At the SPA conference, Mike was convinced (more than he already was) that stickers on boxes "work." So he'll be pushing stickers (review excerpts, for instance).

An outside tester who has an IBM emulator on his/her Amiga says that Cornerstone appears to work fine! (The emulator isn't supposed to be 100% compatible.) The outside tester is now trying our games.

First Software declared bankruptcy. Activision and Infocom combined are its 4th largest creditor. Harry says it's not likely we'll get anything from them.

Brian, Stu, and Steve will probably be attending CES, where all three of their games will be announced. Details/certainty to follow. That's the weekend that the Museum of Science/Trinity marathon is scheduled.

Date: 24 Nov 1986 1419-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: On Forecasts To: IMPS at FRED

It should be mentioned that the forecasts in Jon's mail are the "revised" forecasts for the month. The original November forecasts (for Infocom, at least) were originally much higher. Have a nice day.

Date: 24 Nov 1986 1441-EST From: Brian Moriarty <PROF at FRED>
Subject: On Forecasts To: DA

Does Levy shit in his limo?

Date: 24 Nov 1986 1336-EST From: Piece of Manager <JON at FRED>
Subject: Sales To: Imps at FRED

As of November 20:

	Forecast for month	Actual bookings*
All of Activision, Inc.	119K	75K
Infocom	43.3K	23K
LGOP	12.8K	7K
Moonmist	6K	3.3K
Trinity	6K	3.2K
Hitchhiker's	4.3K	2K
Enchanter Trilogy	2K	1.7K
Ballyhoo	1K	1.3K

*Bookings does NOT mean shipments; I guess it's the same as "orders."

Date: 15 Jan 1987 1644-EST From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Sales To: Imps at FRED

I have the final (net) sales figures for calendar 1986 in my office. Not for the weak of heart.

Date: 27 Feb 1987 1046-EST
From: Jon: a nyce pal <JON at FRED>
Subject: Next week
To: Imps at FRED

We'll have lunch on MONDAY, since Brian and Chris are leaving Tuesday morning for the west coast.
I'll be on vacation the entire week of March 9. So what do I have to get done next week before I go?

-Lurking Horror instruction manual
-Romance meeting Monday afternoon
-Wordplay meeting Thursday lunch
-Usual testing

Is there anything else I'm forgetting? Please remind me ...
For those of you who don't already know, I have some numbers in my office: Mike's forecast for the coming year; net sales by game for calendar 1986 and 1985; international sales for July-December 1986; and a comparison of the first two months' orders for Ballyhoo, Trinity, and Hijinx.

Date: 4 Mar 1987 1052-EST
From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: SPA Awards
To: Everybody at FRED

A memo from Johnny Ma of Activision:

"The auditor from SPA approved the following for the special awards:

HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE ..... PLATINUM
ZORK I ..... PLATINUM

SUSPENDED ..... GOLD
HACKER I ..... GOLD

LEATHER GODDESSES ..... SILVER
WISHBRINGER ..... SILVER
HACKER II ..... SILVER

CONGRATULATIONS!"

Date: 9 Jul 1987 1124-EDT
From: Jon Palace <JON at FRED>
Subject: Sales
To: Imps at FRED

For the quarter ending in June:

	Plan	Actual	Diff ($)	Diff(%)
Games	$982,000	$1,070,000	$88,000	9
Invisi	40,000	90,000	50,000	127
C-stone	45,000	31,000	(14,000)	-31
DirMail	170,000	215,000	45,000	26

Not including direct mail, we are $124,000 (12%) ahead of plan.

Date: 9 Sep 1988 1656-EDT From: Beyond Stu Galley <SWG at FRED>
Subject: Sherlock sales To: Challenge cc: SWG

I just saw a report on sales for the April-June quarter, and I wanted to pass some info along to you folks: Net sales of Sherlock were 5200 units, broken down thus:

2150 MS-DOS
1456 Commodore 64/128
1096 Apple II
348 Amiga
150 Macintosh

(Net sales means that returned units have been subtracted.)

Z

The Infocom Timeline

The following is an excerpt from the Infocom Fact Sheet by Paul David Doherty.

69-70	Programming language Muddle (later called MDL) developed by several people affiliated with the MIT's Dynamic Modelling (DM) Group (Dave Cressey, Chris Reeve, Bruce K. Daniels) and AI Laboratory (Gerald Sussman, Carl Hewitt). The MDL development system runs on a DEC PDP-10 under ITS.
Dec 76	First preliminary meeting of future Infocom founders.
Jun 77	*Zork* created by Marc Blank, Bruce K. Daniels, Tim Anderson, and Dave Lebling. Written in MDL.
Feb 79	Last puzzles added to the mainframe *Zork*.
Apr 79	First article about *Zork* published.
6/22/79	Infocom founded by 10 DM Group members (Tim Anderson, Joel Berez, Marc Blank, Mike Broos, Scott Cutler, Stu Galley, Dave Lebling, J. C. R. Licklider, Chris Reeve, Al Vezza). The first Board of Directors consists of Berez, Broos, Galley, Lebling, and Vezza.
Aug 79	Mike Broos resigns; Marc Blank replaces him as Director.
Nov 79	Joel Berez elected Infocom's President.
Mar 80	Infocom gets own P.O. box.
Jun 80	Agreement with Personal Software Inc. to publish *Zork I.*
Nov 80	*Zork I.* First sold copy: PDP-11 version.
Dec 80	ZIP for TRS-80 Model I (written by Scott Cutler). Until 9/81, PS sells approximately 1500 copies of this *Zork I* version.
Feb 81	Apple II version of *Zork I*. Over 6000 copies sold in 8 months. (ZIP by Bruce K. Daniels)
Mar 81	Chris Reeve becomes Director.
May 81	TRS-80 Model II version (never sold).
Jun 81	First 2 employees (Joel Berez and Marc Blank). Zork II agreement with Personal Software.
Aug 81	ZIP V2 introduced
Sep 81	Infocom moved to 6 Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston. Mort Rosenthal becomes Manager of Marketing.
Oct 81	End of the sales agreement with PS. (Infocom buys all Apple II versions of *Zork I* back from PS.) Mike Dornbrook founds "Zork Users Group" (PO Box 20923, Milwaukee, WI 53220-0923) to handle requests for hints and merchandise. In 1983, the ZUG has 20000 members.
Nov 81	*Zork II.* Repackaging of *Zork I.*
1/1/82	Infocom moves to 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Marc Blank becomes vice-president (VP) for product development.

Apr 82 *Deadline.*
ZIP V3 introduced.
New ZIPs for Atari 400/800 and CP/M.
ZUG issues first InvisiClues booklet (Zork I).

May 82 Marc Blank meets Mike Berlyn at an Applefest trade show.

Jun 82 ZIP for IBM-PC.
Employees: 4.

Aug 82 ZIPs for TRS-80 Model III and NEC APC.

Sep 82 *Zork III.*
Starcross.

Oct 82 Business Products division founded. *Cornerstone* development begins.

Dec 82 DECsystem-20 bought for development.

end-82 Sales: $1.65 million (net income: $335.000).

Mar 83 *Suspended.*
ZIP for DEC Rainbow.

Apr 83 ZIPs for Commodore 64 and TI Professional.

Jun 83 *The Witness.*
Employees: 20.

Jul 83 Shutdown of ZUG.

Aug 83 *Planetfall*.
Mike Dornbrook joins Infocom as Product Manager for Entertainment Products.

Sep 83 *Enchanter*.

Nov 83 *Infidel.*
ZIP for DECmate.

Dec 83 ZIP for Tandy-2000.
Ray Stata elected Director.

end-83 Sales: $6 million (net income: $526.000).

Jan 84 Al Vezza becomes Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Feb 84 ZIPs for Kaypro II and Osborne.

Mar 84 *Sorcerer*.
ZIPs for MS-DOS and TI 99/4A.
John Brackett new General Manager (GM) of Business Products division.

May 84 Second DECsystem-20 bought.

Jun 84 *Seastalker*.
ZIP for Apple Macintosh.
John O'Leary new GM of Consumer Products division.
Employees: 50.

Sep 84 *Cutthroats.*

Oct 84 *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.*

11/1/84 *Cornerstone* announced at NYC press conference.

Nov 84 *Suspect.*

Dec 84 Management restructured.

end-84 Sales: $10 million.

Jan 85 *Cornerstone*.
CES in Las Vegas: For promotion of *Suspect*, Infocom rents a mansion and invites approximately 5000 people to become murder suspects.

Mar 85 ZIP for Epson QX-10.

Apr 85 Move to 125 Cambridge Park Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.
New Mail Order Department (PO Box 478, Cresskill, NJ 07626).
ZIP for Apricot.

Jun 85 *Wishbringer*.
Employees: 100.

Aug 85 ZIP for Atari ST.

Sep 85 *A Mind Forever Voyaging.*
First layoffs due to Cornerstone's commercial failure (despite hiring a separate sales and marketing team).

Oct 85 *Spellbreaker*.

Dec 85 Business Products division laid off.
ZIP for Amiga.

end-85 Sales: $11.5 million.

Jan 86 Marc Blank and CEO Al Vezza leave.
Joel Berez new CEO. (He remains president.)

Feb 86 *Ballyhoo*.
Price cut for Cornerstone (from $495 to $99.95).

2/19/86 Directors of Infocom and Activision approve of merger.

Mar 86 *Fooblitzky*.

Jun 86 *Trinity*.
EZIP for Commodore 128.

6/13/86 Merger. Activision Inc. (Mountain View, CA) buys Infocom for stock swap worth $7.5...9.0 million.
GM John O'Leary leaves.
Employees: 40.

Sep 86 *Leather Goddesses of Phobos.*

Oct 86 *Moonmist*.

Nov 86 *Enchanter Trilogy.*

87-89 Losses of approximately $200,000 per fiscal quarter.

Jan 87 *Zork Trilogy.*
Hollywood Hijinx.

Mar 87 *Bureaucracy.*

Jun 87 *Stationfall.*
The Lurking Horror.

Sep 87 *Nord and Bert Could n't Make Head or Tail of It.*
Plundered Hearts.

Oct 87 *Beyond Zork.*
Classic Mystery Library.
Science Fiction Classics.
XZIP for Apple IIgs.

Nov 87 *Border Zone.*

Dec 87 Solid Gold *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Zork I* (Apple II, Macintosh, C64, IBM).

Jan 88 *Sherlock* (Apple II, C64, IBM).
Mike Dornbrook new VP.

Mar 88 *Lane Mastodon.*
Gamma Force.
Sound version of *Sherlock* (Macintosh, Amiga, maybe Atari ST and Apple IIgs too).
Chris Reeve leaves.

Apr 88 *ZorkQuest I.*

Jun 88 Employees: 30.

Jul 88 Solid Gold *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and *Planetfall.*
Joel Berez resigns. Joe Ybarra (formerly at Electronic Arts) becomes new president.

Aug 88 *ZorkQuest II.*

Sep 88 Solid Gold *Wishbringer.*
Quarterstaff (Macintosh).

Oct 88 *Zork Zero*
YZIP for Macintosh (written by Duncan Blanchard; YZIP specification by Tim Anderson & Dave Lebling,).

Nov 88 *BattleTech* (IBM).

Mar 89 *Shogun*
Journey
YZIP for Amiga (written by Clarence Din). BattleTech (C64).

May 89 YZIP for Apple IIgs (written by Jon D. Arnold).

5/5/89 Of Infocom's 26 employees, 15 are laid off. The 11 others are offered the chance to move to Silicon Valley. Only 5 accept, including President Joe Ybarra and GM Rob Sears. Duncan Blanchard is the only long time Infocommie among the five.

Jun 89 Activision (now Mediagenic) moves Infocom from Cambridge, MA to Menlo Park, CA.
BattleTech (Amiga, maybe Apple II)

Jun 89 *Arthur.*
YZIP for IBM (written by Scott Fray).

Post-Infocom "Infocom" releases

1989 *Mines of Titan* (Westwood Associates) — originally published by Electronic Arts as *The Mars Saga*
1990 *Circuit's Edge* (Westwood Associates)
1991 *BattleTech* [2]: *The Crescent Hawks' Revenge* (Westwood Associates)
1992 *Leather Goddesses of Phobos II: Gas Pump Girls Meet the Pulsating Inconvenience from Planet X* (Steve Meretzky)
1993 *Return to Zork* (Eddie Dombrower/William D. Volk/Joe Asprin)
1994 *Simon the Sorcerer* (Mike Woodroffe/Adventuresoft) — US distribution under the Infocom label
1995 *Planetfall: The Search for Floyd* (Steve Meretzky/Richard Manning/Hans Beimler) — unfinished / unreleased
1996 *Zork: Nemesis* (Eddie Dombrower)
1997 *Zork: Grand Inquisitor*
Zork: The Undiscovered Underground (Marc Blank/Michael Berlyn/Gerry Kevin Wilson)

Here ends a transcript of interaction with
"Behind the Scenes at Infocom"