The Status Line

BattleTech: Lots of Meching around
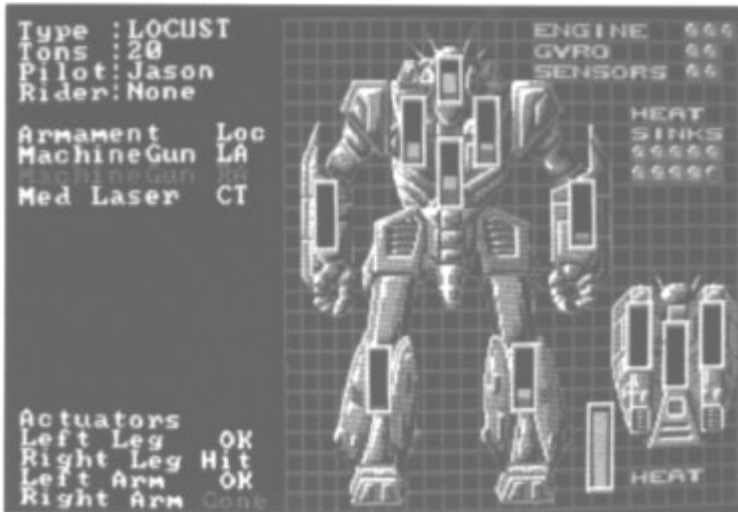
Check out that 'Mech—A detailed scan of a WASP BattleMech is just one of the features in this action-packed role-playing game based on the popular BattleTech *role-playing and strategy board-game series.*

He cursed himself for what felt like the 15th time in the last hour. The inside of his neuro-helmet was slick with sweat, making matters even worse now that there was poor contact with the helmet's electrodes. He remembered the message that his instructors drilled into his head again and again: "Controlling a 'Mech requires patience and above all strategic allocation of resources." Funny how it was never as easy when the trainer 'Mechs were firing back.

"I cannot let father down," Jason mumbled to himself as he aligned the Chameleon's twin medium lasers on the approaching Locust's torso. "Cannot let the computer keep fighting for me, especially after last time," Jason thought, ruefully remembering how he had caused a critical overheat by being careless.

Slowing his breathing, Jason scanned the status report of his 'Mech's condition. His concentration was broken by alarm bells sounding and the warning, "Critical shot to the head! Man eject!" blaring into his ears. Numb, Jason triggered the eject button, blasting the canopy off the top of the 'Mech and causing him to drop the 35 feet to the ground, safely cocooned within the seat's webbing.

Dejectedly, Jason detached himself from the now useless seat and trudged back to the Citadel's training grounds, realizing that he now had another failure he would have to try to live down with the mechanics. "They already hate me because of their station in life," said Jason, realizing that tomorrow's training session would be just as brutal as today's.

If Jason thought he had problems training to be a 'MechWarrior, he

Zork Zero takes you back to the beginning

Ever since *Zork I* first appeared on home computers, and the *Zork Trilogy* became our best-loved series of interactive stories, countless fans have begged for Zork IV. Now our Steve Meretzky, doing exactly the opposite, gives you something even better by taking you back to before the beginning. Nearly 18 months in the making, we are proud to reveal our most ambitious project ever, *Zork Zero*.

Zork Zero: The Revenge of Megaboz takes you back to the last days of the Empire. A wizard's curse has destroyed the ruling Flathead family and has threatened the kingdom itself. Although you are but one of many fortune hunters who have flooded the capital city of Flatheadia to try to claim the huge reward for stemming the curse, a carefully guarded family secret gives you a big advantage!

Every corner of the kingdom

As you begin your quest, you'll meet the court jester, whose rhymes will leave you laughing, whose tricks will leave you cursing, and whose rebuses and riddles will leave you scratching your head. You'll travel to every corner of the kingdom, visiting exotic locales from the glaciers of the Gray Mountains to the swamps of Fenshire, from the placid shores of Lake Flathead to the searing heat of the Great Underground Desert, from
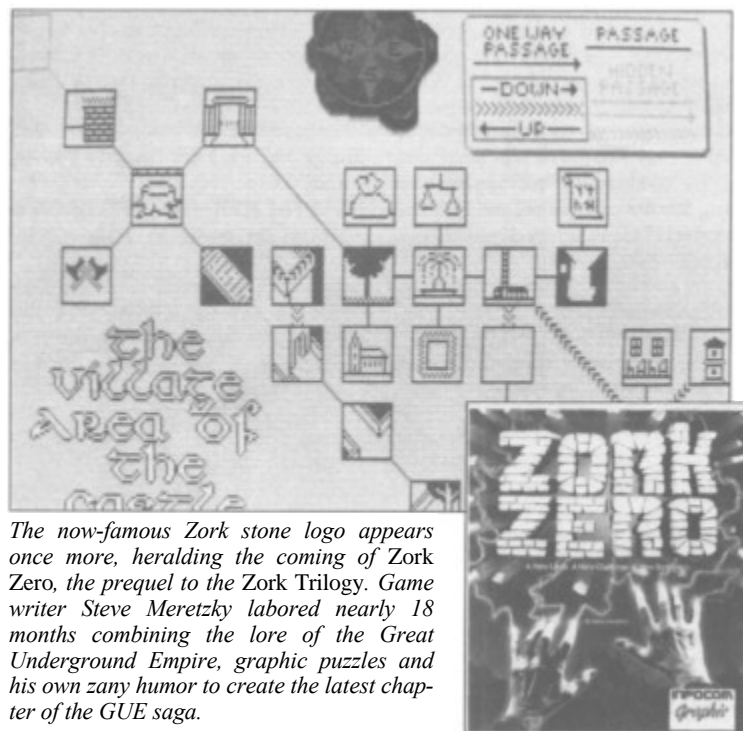
The now-famous Zork stone logo appears once more, heralding the coming of Zork Zero, *the prequel to the* Zork Trilogy. *Game writer Steve Meretzky labored nearly 18 months combining the lore of the Great Underground Empire, graphic puzzles and his own zany humor to create the latest chapter of the GUE saga.*

the defoliated Fublio Valley to the granola mines of Antharia.

Zork Zero answers many of the questions that have tormented Zorkers for ages: What is it like to play Double Fanucci? Where did grues come from? And finally, most compelling of all, what is the origin of the white house where *Zork I* begins?

Epic in both size and scope, this prequel covers a full century and explores the collapse of the Great Un-

derground Empire. Straining our new "Y" development system to the limit, *Zork Zero* is our largest game ever, with more than 200 locations, and as many puzzles as all three games of the *Zork Trilogy* combined. To top it off, *Zork Zero* shatters one of computerdom's most sacred barriers—the first true graphical enhancements to an Infocom story.

Double Fanucci

Our diehard fans are probably mourning the passing of an era; but take heart. "*Zork Zero* has everything you've come to expect from us: lots of descriptive prose, a ton of puzzles, depth and attention to detail; it's a well-tested and polished game, all served up in a fun, handsome package," says author Meretzky. "The graphics simply add one more level of excellence. I tried to use them in a different way; rather than illustrate locations, the graphics are integrated into the puzzles themselves. I'm really pleased with the result." The graphics, created by computer artist James Shook, make possible such graphical puzzles as Peggleboz, Snarfem, the Tower of Bozbar, and Double Fanucci.

But wait—there's more! *Zork Zero* abounds with exciting new features. It marks the introduction of our newest-

Good-bye to Status Line, hello to Escape

Here it is--the 20th edition of *The Status Line*. Well, of course, most of those editions were called *The New Zork Times* until a "major metropolitan newspaper" marshalled their cadre of lawsuit-thirsty lawyers.

After 20 newsletters we think we have somewhat perfected the medium. Our combination of news, features, nutty contests and puzzles has been praised by many, including our competitors. So as we are reshaping the world of interactive fiction and othe forms of storytelling, it is time for us to push back the publishing envelope once again. We have decided to retire *TSL* and replace it with a full color magazine called *Escape*.

Don't Panic. We will still be the same publication we have always been, but now in color and with more detail about gaming in general. And

Next stop—Florida!

don't worry about *TSL*, it is going to Florida to join the *NZT* at the retirement home for leading-edge publications.

And just think, now you won't have to take black and white film on your vacations anymore for those Landmark Photos!

Here is a sample of what to expect in the first edition of *Escape*:

James Clavell's *Shogun*—Dave Lebling's adaptation promises to make this one of our most inspiring interactive fiction stories. Incredible graphics, too.

Marc Blank sends you on a fantastic *Journey*—the co-author of *Zork* once again creates an entirely new way to experience a fantasy adventure story on your computer.

More conversions of *Zork Zero* and *BattleTech*--the excitement grows as our latest releases find their way to more and more systems.

Plus lots more!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Infocom,
I like your games. I like your games so much that I've tried other company's games, and realized how much better yours are.

I've just finished *Beyond Zork*. I've enjoyed previous romps, but *BZ*—you must come out with more games using this interface, and I mean yesterday. "Define keys"—I didn't have to type "roll onion," "blow bubble" or "turn mirror" 555 times! I never thought I'd find a companion to match Floyd (I cried when I thought he was dead, just ask my roommate), but Spunky the minx, Stu the caterpillar, and Phil the pterodactyl came pretty damn close.

I thank you, my mother thanks you, and my roommate thanks you for the Solid Gold and $14.95 specials (Mastercard and VISA do not). Actually, my roommate may be grateful that they enable me to pay my rent, but she's probably not pleased (or maybe she is) that they tend to make me somewhat reclusive. And for the love of God, don't tell my thesis advisor—I've missed so many deadlines because of these things he probably thinks I'm out with the reserves a lot or suchlike...

If you ever need testers, or writers, or brainstormers, or just generally cute people to liven up the joint, say the word.

Saving up another $14.95 (plus
$2 postage and handling)
Debby Berry,
Columbus, OH

Dear Infocommies,
Infocom Terms for the Beginner:
INVENTORY—any necessary items such as chips, soda, beer, etc.
STATUS LINE—number of hours you've been working on the same puzzle.
MARITAL STATUS LINE—something funny you tell your spouse to stop them from leaving because you spend all your time at the computer.
A LINE—something often used at single's bars but which has little or no meaning to an Infocommie (except maybe at the Infocom Friday office parties).
WISHBRINGER—Mailman who brings you the Hint Booklet you ordered.
SEASTALKER—one who chooses to walk on the beach to work out Infocom puzzles.
WITNESS—some friend you call when you are about to solve an incredibly difficult puzzle, like the infamous Babel Fish we-have-to-get this-slimy-little-fish-in-our-ear puzzle.
ZORK I, II—planets people might think you're from if you intend to get involved with Infocom.
ZORK III—a good game if you are from Zork I or II.
ENCHANTER—a friend of the opposite sex who clues you in on how to solve a puzzle.
SORCERER—a friend of the same sex who gives you a game or a hint.
PLANETFALL—what the Earth could do, as long as you have your computer and your Infocom games.
CUTTHROATS—what your family might do if you don't quit playing those doggarn Infocom games and come to dinner.
SUSPECT—everyone, if your favorite Infocom game is missing.
A MIND FOREVER VOYAGING— your brain when you're figuring out a difficult puzzle.
INFIDEL—someone who interrupts your game.
DEADLINE—what you may look like after solving an Infocom game in 3 days without stopping if you didn't start out with a big enough inventory
SPELLBREAKER—someone who breathes while you are completing a very fragile chain of thought that will enable you to solve a puzzle.
STARCROSS—when you stop daydreaming about a puzzle and get back to work.
SUSPENDED—the type of animation you appear to be in when thinking about a puzzle.
CHESS—a nice relaxing game (of course, before you know it, Infocom will come out with interactive chess, and you'll have to turn to checkers, or marbles to relax).

Sincerely,
Ben Holzman
Roslyn Heights, NY
[*Thanks Ben. We will he adding these to our new game manuals*—Ed.]

Dear TSL,
I need help. I am a junior in high school and frankly, I hate History. In effect, I am not doing so well in it. After a long conference with my teacher, we decided that if I could get my letter published in any professional publication, he would raise my grade 1/2 a grade. I was just wondering if you knew of any professional publications.

Pleadingly yours,
Eric Lee
San Leandro, CA
[*Eric, have you tried* The New York Times?—Ed.]

Quarterstaff: Our first role-playing fantasy

Three months ago, a peaceful colony of druids vanished without a trace. As their crops lie overgrown and abandoned, a crossfire of rumors has descended upon the land, laying blame on everything from epidemic to mass homicide to demon worship. Scouting parties have been frantically assembled and sent forth to bring an end to all the hearsay, but none has returned. Now the local kingdoms, restless for news of the missing sect, have called upon you to venture into the depths of the lost Tree Druid colony, buried deep beneath a great oak tree. You must discover whatever foul secret lies within.

Graphics and sound

Quarterstaff: The Tomb of Setnoth — our first entry into the fantasy role-playing (FRP) genre and the first in our RPG series — is role-playing adventure as you've never seen it before on a computer. You'll read rich text descriptions of the places, objects, and creatures you come across. High-resolution graphics and digitized sounds reinforce the text, and your moves are tracked by a detailed on-screen map which your characters "draw" as they go.

You issue commands to your characters in full English sentences. And as in any FRP, the characters in your party develop and mature in a variety of specific skills, and fight according to a comprehensive combat system.

Pervading the *Quarterstaff* universe at all levels is close attention to detail — apparent in everything from the weight and bulk of objects they're carrying to the complex timetable by which hunger and fatigue affect the characters in the game. All these elements weave together into a game which is more akin to a "pen and paper" adventure environment than anything previously released on a computer.

Monsters learn from mistakes

As the game opens, you stand at the entrance to the Tree Druids' colony, ready to begin your underearth quest. As you progress, you meet many a curious creature. In *Quarterstaff*, monsters are not merely "deathbots," whose only purpose in life is to maim and destroy, but ordinary living things whose actions are guided by real life drives such as hunger, anger, and the need for friendship.

Monsters even learn from their mistakes and accomplishments through an artificial-intelligence learning system. Some creatures will react negatively to your party, resorting to combat and force. Others, however, will try to help your party, or even join forces with you; and so,

though you begin the adventure with only one character, you're sure to quickly acquire a formidable band of adventurers.

Quarterstaff provides a number of innovations for manipulating your party. Your characters can move about independently, or as part of a central group that moves as a unit. You can even divide your party into two or more groups that explore different parts of the geography on their own. This gives you unlimited freedom to control your party: you could, for instance, allow some of your group to sleep, while two characters stand watch, and a scouting party probes the nearby rooms for action.

Quarterstaff was originally designed, written and implemented for the Macintosh by Simulated Environment Systems, which released the game in 1987. The game immediately received rave reviews—*MacUser* gave it a near-perfect rating of four mice, while *Dragon* gave it a perfect

Quarterstaff features Apple's hierarchical menus for the ultimate Macintosh interface, making your adventuring even easier. Your quest is also aided with the convenience of on-screen mapping.

In Quarterstaff *we've included on-screen room-by-room mapping as well as a map of the surrounding geography (shown in the picture above). Digitized sounds and high-resolution graphics enhance the mood.*

five stars, saying 'Quarterstaff... is, in our opinion, among the finest fantasy role-playing games available for *any* computer system." Despite reviews like these. which reflected impressive design and development. Quarterstaff ran into marketing trouble, and its distribution was limited. We recognized the game's potential, and bought the rights to the product.
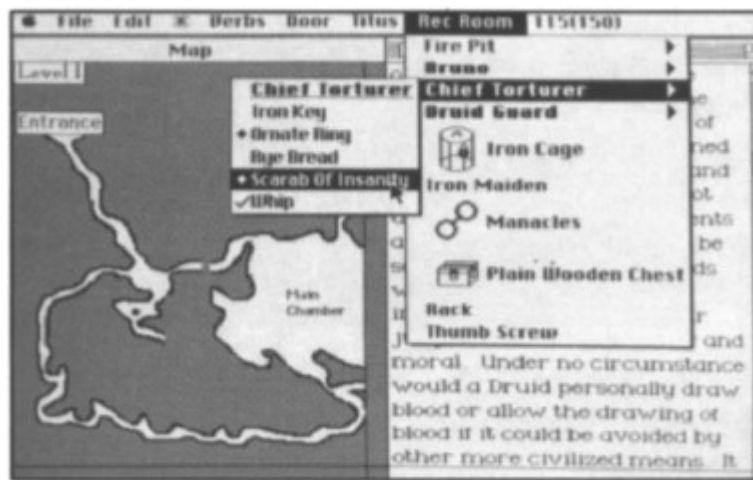
Includes hierarchical menus

We've spent months in collaboration with the game's authors, Scott Schmitz and Ken Updike, and a slew of talented artists, writers and programmers in order to perfect the game. The first improvement was the implementation of a new Macintosh interface — one that allows the user to play the game entirely with the mouse, or to play entirely using the keyboard. Pull-down menus allow you to easily point and click your way through even complex sentences. We've included Apple's hierarchical menus, usually found only in top-notch business products, to allow you easy access to your inventory. Of course, any command can be typed in via the keyboard.

Next, InfoImplementor Amy Briggs (author of *Plundered Hearts*) reworked and rewrote most of the game's text to provide a greater sense of plot and continuity within the story. We also corrected a few grammatical errors as well. Computer artists were brought in to touch up the high-resolution graphics and to design a special set of gorgeous color graphics which the game uses when running on a color Mac II.

New package and manual

Our infamous testing staff (which had recently been genetically altered so as to not require sleep) was unleashed on the program to perform exhaustive bug-whacking. After several dozen cases of Jolt cola were consumed over the course of a few months, the finished game emerged. Finally, a new package was conceived and produced featuring beautiful cover art by artist Ken Barr. Inside we put a brand new user's manual and, as is our style, an assortment of mood setting pieces: a mystical parchment titled "The Path to Enlightenment," a wooden druidic coin and a dazzling color poster featuring the cover art.

The Macintosh version of *Quarterstaff* will be available in October, and will include the special color graphics for the Mac II. Versions for the Apple II GS and IBM will be available in spring of 1989. Watch upcoming issues for further information. All versions will retail for $49.95.
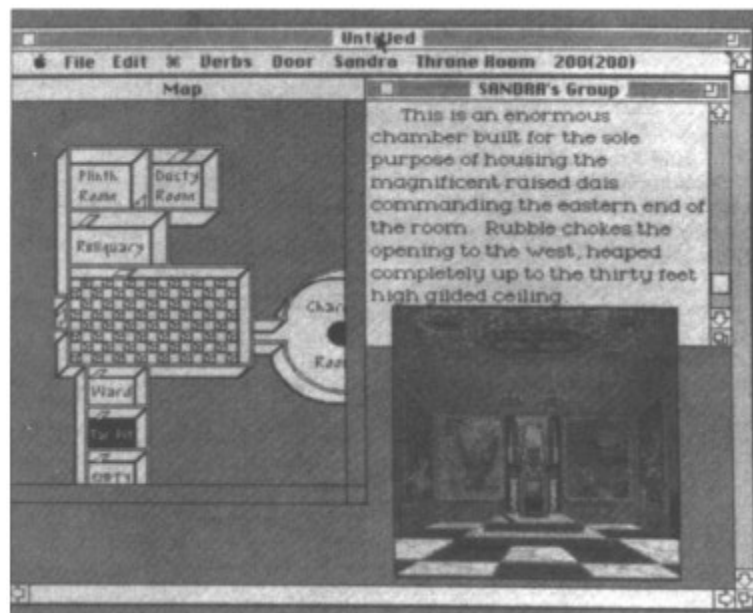
Four more popular titles reduced to only $14.95

We at Infocom are offering you, our most loyal fans, a special deal, the kind of deal that just makes you want to cry with joy. Well, get your hankies out, because now you can get four of our most wildly popular games—*The Lurking Horror, Stationfall, Nord & Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It,* and *Plundered Hearts*—for the low, low direct-mail price of $14.95!

The Lurking Horror

Since they were released last year, each game has received incredible reviews. For example, *RUN* magazine game Infocom's first interactive horror story, Dave Lebling's *The Lurking Horror*, a grade of "A," saying, "Whatever it is that alarms, unnerves, dismays, startles, or turns blood into ice water can be experienced in this boundless romp into the unknown." This eerie thriller, which takes you through the G.U.E. Tech campus from the top of the great dome to the bottom of the elevator shaft, will have "your spine tingling and your heart beating faster," promises *A+* magazine.

Stationfall

"Fall into *Stationfall* and you'll have trouble climbing back out," warns *Analog Computing*. The entertaining sequel to the ever-popular *Planetfall*, Steve Meretzky's *Stationfall* once again features the lovable and hilarious Floyd up to a completely new set of mischievous antics. But this time, he's paired up with another robot named Plato, becoming "what will probably be known as the greatest comedy team ever in interactive fiction," according to *Analog Computing. MacUser*, which gave *Stationfall* four-and-a-half mice, says, "*Stationfall* is one of those rare sequels that lives up to the original."

As a Stellar Patrol officer, you and your beloved Floyd set out to explore a deserted space station. What might you find? You'll just have to find out for yourself, if you can put up with Floyd's habit of reciting multiple digits of pi. In the words of *ST X-Press*, "...if you haven't ever played Infocom games or have just passed them by, then this is the one to pick up (along with *Planetfall*)." And now it's just $14.95!

Nord and Bert

Do you believe that the pun is mightier than the sword? Do you appreciate word plays, puns and other linguistic twists? Then get the ball rolling, take the bull by the horns and try *Nord and Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It* by Jeff O'Neill. "In a world that is hungry for some literary humor, *A+* states, "*Nord and Bert* is an entertaining and distinctive step in the right direction."

If you have ever had the itch to really make a mountain out of molehill, then put your nose to the grindstone with this collection of eight short interactive fiction stories. Observes *inCider*, "It's perfect for those who are clever, intelligent, and quick-witted. On the other hand, it could be a most humbling experience." In *Nord and Bert*, you learn that the town of Punster is undergoing a linguistic crisis so severe that its citizens are unable to communicate. It's up to you to save the day. Just watch out for the large chocolate mousse standing in the aisle of the Shopping Bizarre on your way to visiting the Manor of Speaking. And if getting the right answer is like finding a needle in a haystack, then the on-screen hints should get you one leg ahead. Indeed, as *Newsday* says, *Nord and Bert* is "a hoot, really," and as *COMPUTE'S Gazette* confirms, "*Nord and Bert* is truly different, and that's as sure as little green apples."

Plundered Hearts

And now for something completely different—pirates, ripped bodices and steamy passion are all yours for only $14.95 in Amy Briggs' 17th-century tale of romance, *Plundered Hearts*. The first interactive fiction title to feature a woman as the main character, *Plundered Hearts* puts you in the middle of a high seas adventure as you sail to the West Indies to see your ailing father for what might be the last time. But can you resist the escalating passion that you feel for the dashing pirate Nicholas Jamison?

Men and women alike have hailed *Plundered Hearts* as intriguing and enjoyable. *Commodore* magazine praises Amy's rich storyline and considers her knowledge of the time period to be a contributing factor to the intricate plot. But it warns, "Don't let the fact that the main character is a woman scare you away! *Plundered Hearts* won my respect by not relying on this gimmick and delivering a challenging adventure with which to pass the time."

Computer Entertainer asserts, "While women players of interactive fiction have adapted, of necessity, to playing male roles in adventures, now it's time for men to show their flexibility and assume a feminine role for a change!" And Dan Gutman, syndicated columnist, found *Plundered Hearts* to be "well written and fun to play, romance novel or not. But I must confess I felt a tad uncomfortable kissing Captain Jamison."

Convention goers visit the joint FASA-Infocom booth at this year's GEN-CON/ORIGINS. Over 10,000 participants packed the MECCA.

Infocom attends GENCON gaming mega-convention

The year 1988 was a banner year for the amalgam of companies making up the board/strategy/fantasy role-playing/war/hobby-gaming industry. The two major conventions were, for the first time, combined into one mega-convention. GENCON, the fantasy role-playing convention, sponsored by TSR (makers of *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, among others) and ORIGINS, the war gaming show, sponsored by Avalon Hill (a leader in the field of both non-computer and computer war gaming) became GENCON/ORIGINS 1988.

The show attracted over 10,000 fanatics and first-timers to the MECCA in Milwaukee, where for a weekend, gaming was king. Over 125 exhibitors attended, easily making this the biggest and the most successful convention the industry has ever seen.

While companies like TSR, FASA, Avalon Hill, Games Workshop, and Ral Partha Miniatures ruled the show, strangely different banners also adorned the exposition hall—names like Infocom, Strategic Simulations Inc. (SSI), Electronic Arts, Atari, Commodore, Mindscape, New World Computing, Origin Systems, and Computer Gaming World appeared. Yes, computers and computer gaming had merged into the world of traditional gaming. Said one computer professional, "Hey, games is games. Whether you play them alone, with friends, or on a computer is only a difference in the method. But in the end, games is games."

Perhaps the convergence of the industries is the proof of this theory. Infocom is releasing a computer version of *BattleTech*. SSI has released computer products for *AD&D*. Origin Systems has its versions of *Auto Duel* and *Ogre*. Gamers gave software products and computer gaming an overwhelmingly positive reception. The computer rooms were sponsored by Atari, Commodore, and the Milwaukee Area Commodore Enthusiasts (MACE); they were continually packed with people playing everything from *Might and Magic, Pool of Radiance*, and *Dungeon Master* to *Earl Weaver Baseball, Universal Military Simulator*, and *Jet*.

But for Infocom, not only was the convention a new market and a new show, but it was also a homecoming of sorts. Milwaukee is the original home of the Zork User's Group and the birth place of this very magazine (then the *New Zork Times*). Even though neither Mike Dornbrook nor his parents live there anymore, we were received like hometown heroes. (Just ask us about the Astor Hotel—on second thought, don't.)

The response of GENCON/ORIGINS to *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* was simply stupendous. Crowds gathered from aisles around whenever the familiar beat of "The BattleBeast" (our promotional video) began. Everyone wanted to be the first on their block to find out what it would be like to be Jason Youngblood. Plans have already been made (by MACE) for a *BattleTech* computer competition during next year's Con.

War is a way of life on 31st-century Pacifica

didn't know what fate lay ahead when Kuritan forces attacked the planet. Now, eighteen years old and totally alone, he's adrift within a war-ravaged city, undertrained, and with only the money he had saved as a student. Add to this his being hunted and pursued by the occupational forces and you'll get the feeling of our new role-playing game, *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. While the above text is not from the game, it does give you a taste of how you might feel when you play it.

Based upon FASA's popular adventure board games of armored combat in the 31st century, you are cast as Jason Youngblood. Raised as a court favorite (due to father's friendship with the local duke), Jason is arrogant, egotistical and vain. But suddenly he's forced not only to survive on his own, but to try to piece together the fate of his father... and his father's loyal guard.

While this storyline may seem to be a reasonable premise for one of our interactive fiction stories, walking into *BattleTech* is a departure for the traditional Infocom player. This is not an interactive fiction story. This is a full-fledged computer role-playing game (RPG), complete with training and experience, armour, weapons and equipment acquisition, party building, impressive graphics, and lots of combat. And, as an Infocom first, this game is not text based! But this is not standard RPG experience.

This is a game with all the depth and richness you expect from Infocom, plus all the excitement of the *BattleTech* universe.

Developed by Westwood Associates, the wizards behind SSI's *Phantasie III* and Epyx's *Summer Games* and *World Games, The Crescent Hawk's Inception* is a unique, animated, and richly detailed game. The story in *BattleTech* is more intriguing and more in depth than that of any other computer role-playing game.

One of the features that makes this game unique is the addition of many animated "outtakes" that appear at various points throughout the game. They are designed in the style of "monga" or Japanese, comic books. Whether you see the expressive face of Jason or the explosive missile launch from a Locust, the "outtakes" will bring the story even more alive and enrich your playing experience.

But the animated "outtakes" and a rich storyline are only part of the excitement of the game. *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* features the largest playing area of any com-

Emotive outtakes in the style of Japanese "monga" comic books add extra visual excitement to our new role-playing game, BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception. *Should Jason get into trouble you'll see this look of fear and surprise in his eyes. The artwork on the cover (right) is just part of what you'll find inside.*

puter RPG. With over four million (that's right, four million!) locations which your party can visit, *BattleTech* offers the player a huge territory in which to explore and fight.

Combat, too, is of a scope befitting such an exhilarating game. Whether you are in your 'Mech (a 30-foot tall, 20-ton war-machine) or on foot, alone or in the party you've assembled, combat is a frequent test of your skills and nerves. Hand-to-hand combat weapons range from longbows and pistols to vibroblades and laser rifles. But seated in your 'Mech, you can fire off laser blasts, infernos, and missiles. War is a way of life in the 31st century, and armaments of destruction are a way to survive in this harsh world.
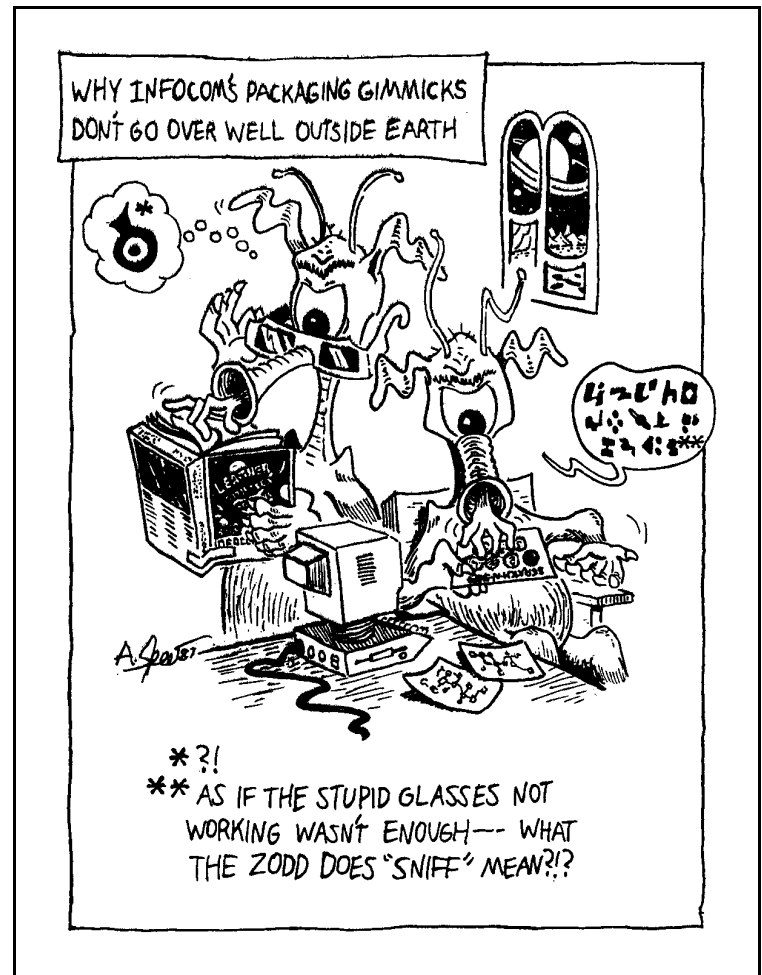
If lots of tactical maneuvering and strategic planning is not your thing, *BattleTech* has an auto-combat capability that lets your computer do the planning and fighting for you. The story, the discovery, the excitement, however, are all still there.

And playing *BattleTech* couldn't be easier on the fingers. Your numeric keypad or arrow keys move you around both your geography and your menu choices. Joystick support will be available on some versions.

There's an added bonus for winning the game: should you be skillful enough to discover the secretly hidden 'Mech that we've placed at the end of the game, you can send for an exclusive, custom crafted Ral Partha Battle-Tech lead miniature. Just answer the

question on the card inside the package (and send it to us with shipping and handling costs) and we'll send you the figure that has been designed and created especially for us and *The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. Plus, in your *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* package you'll find a spectacular poster and official Lyran Commonwealth 'Mech and Weapons Recognition Guide. And if you're among the first to get your copy of *BattleTech*, you'll get another real prize: in a limited number of specially marked packages, you'll find an authentic Crescent Hawk insignia pin! Wear it proudly!

BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception will be available in November for the IBM and 100% compatibles (supports CGA, EGA, VGA, MCGA, and Tandy Graphics; 384K RAM required), in February for the Commodore 64/128, and in the Spring for the Apple II series and Amiga. Suggested retail price is $39.95 for the Commodore 64/128 and $49.95 for all other systems.

WHY INFOCOM'S PACKAGING GIMMICKS DON'T GO OVER WELL OUTSIDE EARTH

* ?!
** AS IF THE STUPID GLASSES NOT WORKING WASN'T ENOUGH— WHAT THE ZODD DOES "SNIFF" MEAN?!?

Andrew Speer

In Zork Zero, *the prequel to the* Zork Trilogy*, you'll finally get a chance to try your hand a Double Fanucci. We have taken computer game graphics a step further by integrating graphic-oriented puzzles into* Zork Zero.
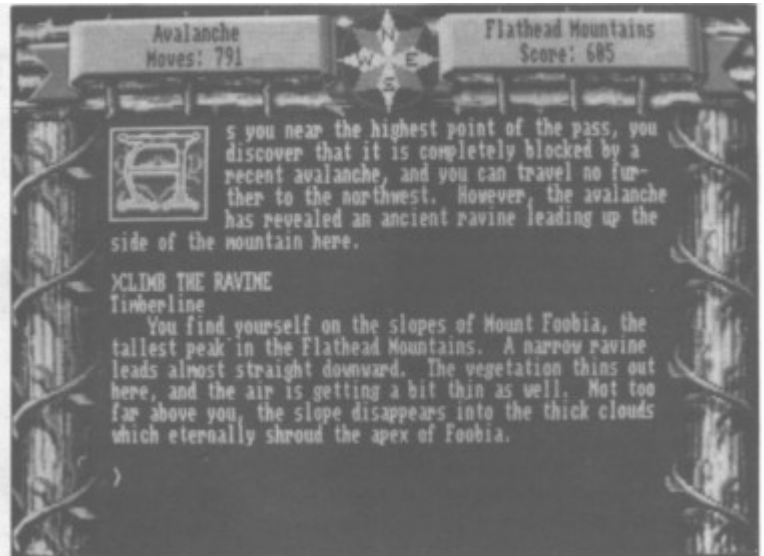
We've gotten more extravagant than Dimwit Flathead himself with our new development system. Ordinary screens of text come to life with graphic enhancements like these.

Computerdom's most sacred barrier broken

generation parser, our friendliest ever. Now it's easier for a novice to start, and powerful enough for the experience player.

Zork Zero includes our very popular on-screen hints. In a development made possible by our new graphics system, *Zork Zero* also has complete on-screen mapping. The puzzles themselves range from simple to boggling. Finally, *Zork Zero* is laced with

that famous Meretzky humor you loved so much in *Planetfall, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos.*

The packaging lives up to our usual standards. Start with a scrap of parchment containing a spell from the secret notebooks of the great magician Megaboz. Then, add a construction blueprint from Rockville Estates, the cave-bound condo complex that's targeted for Young Underground Profes-

sionals. And top it off with a handsome calendar, featuring excerpts from "The Lives of the Twelve Flatheads" and illustrations by the great painter, Leonardo Flathead. This calendar is from the year 883 GUE, but (by an incredible coincidence) it is also perfectly usable as a 1989 calendar.

From the exciting prologue, where you come face to face with Lord Dimwit Flathead the Excessive, to the

climactic epilogue, where you meet the most powerful wizard ever to set foot on the soil of Quendor, *Zork Zero* has something for everyone, and promises to be the best offering yet from the Master Storytellers.

Zork Zero will be released in October on the Apple Macintosh, supporting both color Mac II and regular black and white Macs, and will retail for $59.95. Watch upcoming issues for details on other computer versions.

Stuck in the cellar? Frustrated by the Pheehelm? After interviews with thousands of *Beyond Zork* players and many days of detailed statistical analysis, we have selected these two puzzles as winners of our "Most Likely To Cause Irate Adventurers To Axe Their Computers After Endless Hours Of Agonized Frustration" Award, By popular demand, this issue of *The Status Line* features these tricky puzzles from *Beyond Zork*. The hints for each puzzle slowly lead you through the solution. To read the coded portion (in boldface), simply count forward one letter; "A" becomes "B", "Z" becomes "A", etc.

The Cellar

The cellar is a fairly difficult area of the game, yet it must be completed early in order to reach other areas. The first thing you need is a light source. Notice the **mzld** of the **szudqm**? Take the **qtrsx kzmsdqm** from the **szudqm'r rhfm**.

Can't get the light to last long enough? If only you had some way of recharging it. While holding the **kzmsdqm, qdzc** the **Rbqnkk ne Qdeqdrgldms**, found at the **anssnl** of the **rszhqr**.

Now to explore. You'll need a weapon to dispatch the rat ant and discipline the crab; the dagger should do. **Jhkkhmf sgd bqza** should give you the **shmx bqnvm**. The skeleton should be easy to kill, and don't forget to take its **zltkds**. Make sure to **rdzqbg** the **ohkd ne rdzrgdkkr**.

Hmmm. The stack of barrels looks interesting,

VisiClues: Hints for Beyond Zork

doesn't it? If you're too clumsy to climb it you may have a problem. Luckily, there is something in the cellar which can **hmbqdzrd** your **cdwsdqhsx**. Read your Book of Lore. Still stumped? **Rptddyd** the **lnrr**.

Okay, you've climbed the barrels and gotten the **vhmd ansskd**. Now you just need to get out, but someone has shut the door. Fortunately, you have a way to get through the door. Have you noticed those **rsqzmfd fqddm qtmdr** on the **zlt-kds**? They are obscured by **qdc rvhqkr**. You need to find a way to **ehksdq nts** the **qdc rvhqkr**. Try **knnjhmf zs sgd zltkds sgqntfg sgd vhmd ansskd**.

Now **vdzq** the **zltkds** and **qdzc** its **vnqc ne onvdq**. What happens? Use that **dwsqz rsqdmfsg** to **rlzrg** the **cnnq** and **drbzod**!
The Pheehelm

Getting the Pheehelm is the most difficult puzzle in the end part of *Beyond Zork*. The famed Pheehelm is an ancient helmet, rumored to possess magic powers of intelligence. It lies north of the River Phee, among the ruins.

However, it's not easy to find. Perhaps some

magic would help. Notice the **zqbgvzx** in the ruined plaza. Have you found any other object which has a similar shape? The **gntqfkzrr**, which can be **antfgs** with the **Bqnbnchkd'r Sdzq** at the **Lzfhbj Rgnood**, is the key object. **Rszmc tmcdq** the **zqbg** and **ekho** the **gntqfkzrr**. Lo and behold, you can now **lnud azbjvzqcr zmc enqvzqcr hm shld**! Explore the scenery a little.

In the era of the battleground, the Pheehelm falls off the dying prince's head and rolls into a trench. His horse then falls in, blocking it. Try to find a way to **lnud sgd gnqrd**. Can't do it? Well, don't worry, because **hs'r hlonrrhakd**. Maybe you can **chf hs nts**. But you are not very good at **chffhmf**. Perhaps you can **ehmc z adssdq chffdq** to help you. Try the **lhmw**.

So, you brought the **lhmw** back in time, but she didn't dig up the helmet. Give her some incentive! Try putting a **xtllx bgnbnkzsd sqteekd** in the trench too. But the ground is too hard to dig here. You're stuck. But wait! You have the **onvdqr ne shld**! Maybe you could go to a **cheedqdms dqz**, when the **fqntmc hr rnesdq**. Try the **Cdrnkzshnm**.

The **lhmw** still didn't dig up the Pheehelm? Perhaps the **sqteekd ldksdc**—after all, it's been a few thousand years. You can't find any **bgdlhbzk oqdrdquzshudr** in this game. But there is a **lzfhb oqdrdquzshud**: the **Onnk ne Dsdqmzk Xntsg**. **Cho z sqteekd hm sgd onnk**. Then try again.

The Governor of Montana

Montana Governor Ted Schwinden picks up another vote for his 1996 re-election by posing with our contest winner, Jordan Anderson.

Head of State Photo Contest winner

Since we announced our Great Wall of China Photo Contest, we have received over 25 photos of fans holding their favorite games on that famous landmark. So we figured we would have no problem with our next photo contest, The Head of State.

We did receive many good gags, but by the time we had to go to press we had received only one real photo—this photo of Infocom fan Jordan Anderson and the Governor of Montana, Ted Schwinden. Jordan cleverly stated in his letter "I *Suspect* that I'm the only entrant to have a picture taken with the Governor of Montana!"

So we'll give you another chance. Get out there and find Baby Doc and Marcos. Send your entries to Castro Candids, do Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. And don't forget to buy an extra roll of film for our Elvis Impersonator Photo Contest.

How I got the Babel Fish

Eric Blumrich

PUZZLE NUMBER 19

And now for something completely different a puzzle that has nothing to do with any Infocom games! (Except that it's similar to the sort of puzzles you might run into in one of our interactive stories.)

The 12 sentences below all share the same unusual feature — except for two of them. To answer the puzzle. just give us the two numbers of the sentences which don't fit the pattern. Okay, you're on your own — and there are no InvisiClues to help you out!

We've left room on the answer form for you to include the reasoning behind your answer, but that's simply for your amusement and ours. Only the two numbers will matter toward the correctness of your entry.

1) The earnest tenant took Karl's spigot to our ruined dacha.
2) Five eager runners sent their red designer robes swinging gaily.
3) My yellow wig gives Sarah horrible earaches.
4) Dora and Dave evicted Dagbert the elf from my yard.
5) Mice and cats often race below fleecy clouds.
6) No one eats Sally's stew without tongs.
7) Your razor replacement thundered dryly yesterday.
8) Andrew was singing graceful little enchantments.
9) The overcoats fret beside badly mangled hooks.
10) Weather robots stop people even next to oceans.
11) Never replenish his silver reading glasses.
12) The ego of frozen Norwegians seems stable.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

In this world of constant change, we are forever improving our products to adapt to new hardware. We also occasionally find a bug that even gets by our super-duper Testing Department. The following information might help you if your newest game doesn't seem to be working right. Send all inquiries and disks to: Infocom, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140, Attention: Customer Support. Or call us at (617) 576-3190.

Beyond Zork **on the IBM** - IBM users may be having problems with some EGA cards, using a Microsoft mouse, or saving and restoring on PCjr's or Tandy's with 256K of memory. We have an updated version of *Beyond Zork* which corrects all of these problems. Simply send us your original disk with a letter explaining exactly the problem you're encountering and the hardware you're using. We'll have a free upgrade out to you in a jiffy. *(Sherlock* also suffers from the same save/restore problem. We'll upgrade that free for you too!)

Sherlock, Border Zone, **Solid Gold** *Zork I,* **and Solid Gold** *Hitchhiker's* **on the Commodore 64/ 128** - Many people encountered save/ restore problems with our first release of these games. We have released a new version which will save and restore with no problem. Send your original disk and a note outlining your problem. We'll send you a free upgrade.

Macintosh and the HFS - All Infocom games for the Macintosh with an interpreter before "G" do not recognize the hierarchical file system. (You can find out which interpreter is on your disk by typing: $VERIFY while in the game.) Therefore you cannot save/restore to the hard disk or an 800K disk. In this case you can either save to a single-sided disk (400K), or send in your original for a free upgrade.

Infocomics - *Lane Mastodon* **on the Apple II Series only** - Make sure your CAPS LOCK key is down to use your advance, reverse, and bookmark keys. This is not necessary for other Infocomics on the Apple.

Infocomics on the IBM - IBM versions of Infocomics are 5 1/4" disks and can only be booted from the A: drive. They also cannot be copied to a hard disk. So if your A: drive is 3 1/2", you will NOT be able to run Infocomics.

Note to Cornerstone Users - In this season of lightning storms make sure you always keep a good set of BACKUP ALL FILES of your database through Cornerstone's UTILITIES feature. We've had an increase in calls about damaged databases due to the weather which can only be fixed by RESTOREing a good working BACKUP or starting the database over from scratch. Remember, BACKUP SINGLE FILE will NOT do the trick.

Egghead eggcerpted our contest

Eggads! In our Winter/Spring 1988 issue of *The Status Line* we requested photographs of people at landmarks holding one of our games, and we even promised a free set of games to the first person to send a photo of themselves on the Great Wall of China. We've received over 25 entries. Months later, while flipping through the July/August issue of Egghead Discount Software's *Egghead Magazine* looking for ideas to steal, InfoInformant Lori Hornung discovered they had in fact stolen one of our ideas! Glaring at her from page 27 was their "Eggheads Everywhere" contest which asks readers to send photos of themselves wearing Egghead clothing in "eggzotic" locations. And where was the example photograph taken from? That's right, from atop the Great Wall of China.

Well, to address our retailing chums in their own witty diction: What's your eggscuse for this eggcess, this des-egg-cration of that pillar of journalism, that media chef-d'oeuvre, *The Status Line* Landmark Photo Contest? That's right, I'm egg-cusing you of arregg-ance, of eggbezzling our brain-child, of n-egg-lecting to credit our inspiration. Remember, it's just a yolk!

Throwing Infidel *to the lions? Tina Merola of Downers Grove, Ill. convinced her dad to pose with a copy of* Infidel *in the Colosseum in Rome.*

Don't forget the camera and Beyond Zork!

Planning to visit Mount Rushmore anytime soon? Don't forget to bring along a copy of your favorite Infocom game and a camera whenever you go on vacation. If we use your photo, you'll receive a free game. Send your color slides or prints (no more black and white—see page 2) to: Landmark Photo, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

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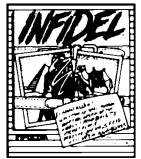
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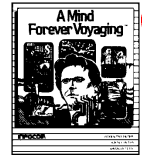
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When the story begins, your life as a postal clerk in the seaside village of Festeron, is quite ordinary. But when you're asked to deliver a strange envelope to the outskirts of town, things become quite extraordinary. All versions except Atari XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga include on-screen hints. Written by Brian Moriarty. (Apple II and IBM versions require 128K. Macintosh version requires 512K.)

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NORD AND BERT COULDN'T MAKE HEAD OR TAIL OF IT™
Eight Tales of Cliches, Spoonerisms and Other Verbal Trickery
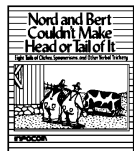
If you're looking for a fun way to spend an evening alone or with friends, *Nord and Bert* could be just the ticket.

Nord and Bert takes you to the mixed-up town of Punster, where nothing is quite as it seems. It's a place where you really can make a mountain out of a molehill, where "the fur is flying" is taken literally and where a happy Sam is transformed to a sappy ham.

Each of the eight short stories involves a different type of wordplay. Includes on-screen hints. (All versions except C64/128 require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

ITEM #1310	C64/128	$14.95
ITEM #1311	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1312	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1313	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1314	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1315	Atari ST	$14.95

TRINITY®

It's the last day of your London vacation. Unfortunately, it's also the first day of World War III...

Author Brian Moriarty has created an epic odyssey across the borders of reality, in a world reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Twilight Zone.*

"*Trinity* mixes logic and magic with history and fiction. Often poetic in its imagery, the evocative prose is as entertaining to read as the puzzles are to solve."—Family Computing

(All systems require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

| ITEM #1417	C128	$14.95
ITEM #1418	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1419	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1420	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1421	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1422	Atari ST	$14.95
ITEM #1423	InvisiClues™	$7.95

ENCHANTER®

Enchanter is the introduction to the highly acclaimed *Enchanter Trilogy* which takes you to a world of magic, where spells are power and magicians rule the land. As a novice magician, you are sent to do battle with the warlock Krill. To succeed in your quest, you'll need to use all the cunning you can muster, along with spells acquired on the way. By Dave Lebling and Marc Blank.

ITEM #1459	C64/128	$14.95
ITEM #1460	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1461	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1462	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1463	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1464	Atari ST	$14.95
ITEM #1465	Atari XL/XE	$14.95
ITEM #1466	InvisiClues™	$7.95

SORCERER®
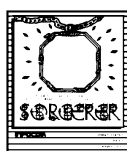
In Steve Meretzky's *Sorcerer,* you have advanced to the illustrious Circle of Enchanters. Now you must show an even greater command of magic as you attempt to rescue your mentor Belboz and defeat the evil demon Jeearr. "The world of *Sorcerer* is rich in detail and wonderment. The final solution is like a delicate orchid achieving full bloom. Long after the game is over, the heady fragrance stays with you."—St. Game.

ITEM #1467	C64/128	$14.95
ITEM #1468	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1469	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1470	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1471	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1472	Atari ST	$14.95
ITEM #1473	Atari XL/XE	$14.95
ITEM #1474	InvisiClues™	$7.95

SPELLBREAKER™

As leader of the Circle of Enchanters and the most powerful magician in the land, you face a crisis in *Spellbreaker.* Magic itself is failing, and you must save the kingdom even as your own powers fade. Author Dave Lebling has created a complex story with some of the hardest puzzles in interactive fiction. *Spellbreaker* is sheer joy... It's the perfect conclusion for the *Enchanter Trilogy,* which can now join the classic *Zork Trilogy* as a must-have for all fantasy gamers."—Computer Entertainer.

ITEM #1475	C64/128	$14.95
ITEM #1476	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1477	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1478	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1479	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1480	Atari ST	$14.95
ITEM #1481	Atari XL/XE	$14.95
ITEM #1482	InvisiClues™	$7.95

FOOBLITZKY™

Fooblitzky is a unique graphics strategy game for 2 to 4 players. It's a dog-eat-dog world, as you rove the crowded streets and busy shops of *Fooblitzky,* trying to deduce and obtain the four objects needed to win the game. Victory depends on how well you use funds, keep records and outsmart your opponents. (Requires 128K, IBM version requires Graphics Card with Composite Monitor recommended.)

ITEM #1455	Apple II	$9.95
ITEM #1456	IBM	$9.95
ITEM #1457	Atari XL/XE	$9.95

LOWEST PRICE EVER!
THE LURKING HORROR™

Ever since you arrived G.U.E. Tech, you've heard stories about the creepy old campus basements and storage rooms. Until now, you've kept a safe distance. But tonight, something draws you down into the mysterious depths of the institute. Suddenly, you're in a world that rivals your most hideous visions, a realm of horror lurking beneath the calm corridors and study halls.

Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so horrifying that they will feed your nightmares for weeks. Written by Dave Lebling.

ITEM #1349	C64/128	$14.95
ITEM #1350	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1351	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1352	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1353	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1354	Atari ST	$14.95
ITEM #1355	Atari XL/XE	$14.95
ITEM #1348	InvisiClues™	$9.95

DEADLINE®

A classic! The first computer mystery.

As the chief of detectives, you're up against a 12-hour time limit trying to solve a classic locked-door mystery. A wealthy industrialist is dead of a drug overdose and you've been called in to determine whether it's suicide or murder. To learn "whodunit", you must sift through a myriad of clues and motives. No easy feat, for all six of your suspects exercise free will—coming and going, scheming and maneuvering independently of your actions. Written by Marc Blank.

ITEM #1424	C64/128	$9.95
ITEM #1425	Apple II	$9.95
ITEM #1426	IBM	$9.95
ITEM #1427	Macintosh	$9.95
ITEM #1428	Atari ST	$9.95
ITEM #1429	Atari XL/XE	$9.95
ITEM #1430	InvisiClues™	$7.95

BUREAUCRACY™

Douglas Adam's interactive version of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was a runaway success. Now the distinctive humor that made *Hitchhiker's* a #1 bestseller will keep you in stitches in *Bureaucracy.*

Everyone, at one time or another, feels bound up in an endless swathe of red tape. In *Bureaucracy,* you'll find yourself in the midst of a bureaucratic muddle so convoluted that you can't help but laugh.

You've just landed a great new job and moved to a spiffy house in a nice little town. You're even being sent to Paris this very afternoon for a combination training seminar and vacation. What could possibly go wrong? The answer, of course, is everything.

(All versions require at least 128K. Macintosh and Amiga versions require 512K.)

ITEM #1379	C128	$14.95
ITEM #1380	Apple II	$14.95
ITEM #1381	IBM	$14.95
ITEM #1458	Amiga	$14.95
ITEM #1382	Macintosh	$14.95
ITEM #1383	Atari ST	$14.95
ITEM #1378	InvisiClues™	$9.95