

The Lurking Horror and Stationfall

Do panic! A demon on the loose at GUE Tech

It's a dark and stormy night. The wind howls around the monolithic buildings of G.U.E. Tech, sending the heavy snow into blinding swirls. In the Computer Center, you huddle over your terminal, struggling to complete an assignment.

Suddenly, strange images appear on the screen, hinting at a ghastly fate close at hand. Darkness overcomes you as you're drawn into a fiendish world full of unimaginable horrors. When you struggle awake (for surely it must be a dream), you find yourself clutching an object last seen in your nightmare...

Thus begins *The Lurking Horror*[™], Infocom's first interactive horror story.

G.U.E. Tech

In *The Lurking Horror*, you're a student at George Underwood Edwards Institute of Technology. Although you're dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, once you "awake" from your nightmare, you've got more on your mind than your term paper. As though pulled by a powerful force within the object you've so mysteriously acquired, you leave your computer and venture into the dark nether regions of the Institute.

Now you're treading on dangerous ground indeed. For beneath the Institute lies a warren of dimly-lit corridors and storage rooms, some so ancient that they contain only rotting piles of unidentifiable junk. There are miles of decrepit tunnels, crumbling into hazardous piles of timber and brick. But negotiating the terrain is the least of your problems.

Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so horrifying that they will feed your nightmares for weeks. A ghastly presence is at work here, committing unspeakably loathsome acts. Can you stop it... before it stops you?

H. P. Lovecraft and Stephen King

The Lurking Horror follows in the tradition of H. P. Lovecraft and Stephen King, as author Dave Lebling turns an everyday world into a frightening web of uncertainty. The numerous puzzles will challenge both first-time and experienced players, and Lebling's chilling descriptions will leave you with images you'll never forget.

As with all Infocom games, the package includes items to introduce you to your role as the main character in the story. There's a copy of "G.U.E. at a Glance," chock-full of photos, tips, and inside info on George Underwood Edwards Institute of Technology. And to make sure you can get your delicious dining hall lunch, there's also a genuine G.U.E. Tech student I.D. card.

Please turn to page 4



That Lurking Horror package really makes eye contact, doesn't it? And the cover of Stationfall features you in your new job as a member of the Stellar Patrol's Paperwork Task Force.

Marathons from coast to coast

The motley crew of seven settled down at the two-foot-high table for the big game. Six-foot-four Steve Meretzky was a bit uncomfortable on the 18-inch seats—but it did not matter. The stakes were high. "I'll raise you two paper clips and five rubber bands," bluffed Tim Anderson. Another Monday night of poker at Infocom? No, it was the first "international" Marathon of the Minds, at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto.

As Infocom and Science Centre staff battled it out with a deck of cards, 15 teams, representing high schools from the entire Province of Ontario raced to be the first to solve *Stationfall*. The overnight event on March 6-7 was the eighth such grueling competition. In our last issue, Stu Galley reported on

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Floyd returns in boffoid sequel to Planetfall

When the results came in from the recent Status Line poll, high on the list of favorite Infocom games was Steve Meretzky's *Planetfall*[®]. We weren't surprised. *Planetfall* has long been popular with interactive fiction fans. And Floyd, your mischievous robot companion in the game, easily takes the prize for best-loved Infocom character.

Planetfall is also a favorite of reviewers and critics. Meretzky won a Best Computer Software Designer award for *Planetfall* in 1983, and additional awards include Best Adventure Game of 1983 from InfoWorld. One reviewer mirrored the enthusiasm of many when he said, "*Planetfall* is just about worth the purchase of a computer."

Requests for Planetfall sequel

Steve Meretzky has received countless requests for a sequel to *Planetfall*. Now he has made everyone happy by writing *Stationfall*[™]. All the elements which made *Planetfall* one of Infocom's best-loved games are here in *Stationfall*: the ever-efficient Stellar Patrol, the comical characters and situations, the amazing tools and machines of the future, the ingenious puzzles, and the endearing little robot Floyd. Although *Planetfall* fans will delight in meeting old friends, it's not necessary to have played one game to enjoy the other.

At the start of *Stationfall*, you're still enlisted in the Stellar Patrol. Your heroics in saving the planet Resida in *Planetfall* earned you a promotion to Lieutenant First Class, but that was five long years ago, and since then nothing has changed at all. You've merely gone from a scrubworker to a paper-pusher.

And today promises to be just as boring as every other day. You're being sent to a nearby space station to pick up a supply of Request for Stellar Patrol Issue Regulation Black Form Binders Request Form Forms.

But wait... all is not lost. By a happy twist of fate, your companion for the journey turns out to be your old pal Floyd! That's right, it's the very same mischievous little robot who was your playful buddy in *Planetfall*.

Floyd and his paddleball

With Floyd and his paddleball set in tow, you're soon on your way to the space station. As you can see from your packet of blueprints, the station has nine levels of offices and living areas, not to mention a huge plant for printing Stellar Patrol forms. Not included on the official blueprints, but fully visible from the spacetruck, is a space village, a seedy cluster of tubes, bubbles, and discarded rockets which has grown up around the space station in

Please turn to page 4

TSL Editor Susan Goldman resigns

"I must go, perhaps into oblivion, but to those with whom I've worked and sweated these past months I say move forward without regret. Keep the proud name of The Status Line as a beacon to all those who seek to interact. And remember, automatic hyphenation is just around the corner." With those words, Susan Goldman, editor-in-chief of TSL for the past year, bid a fond farewell to her former staff and other assorted cronies at an intimate affair held in the TSL press room.

Reacting quickly to the situation, Mike Dornbrook, chief theorist of the TSL, announced, in a terse communique, that "I am in control here." He went on to say that Goldman's time at the TSL had been marked by great strides in both hard news and publishing technology.

Although Ms. Goldman's departure was a shock to many of her co-workers, it was not totally unforeseen. "The heat she took on that religion article was tremendous," commented long time staffer Gayle "Red Pencils" Syska. "I think it was the questions about ANSI that did her in," added Customer Support columnist Curtis Montague.

However, there were persistent rumors that it was her introduction of desktop publishing technologies into the TSL that had played an important part in her departure. "The old boys just couldn't take it," commented an anonymous pressman.

Acting editor-in-chief, Dornbrook, has announced that a search committee would soon be formed to find a replacement for Goldman. "I will not let this publication be compromised for one moment. The standards that Ms. Goldman created will be upheld," he said.

The Status Line

Mike Dornbrook
Chief Theorist

Coming Soon
Editor-in-Chief

Writers:

Stu Galley, Elizabeth Langosy,
Steve Meretzky, Curtis Montague,
Jon Palace and Gayle Syska

For the desktop publishing cartel:
Hollywood Dave Anderson, Tom Veldran

Production Watchdog
Angela Crews

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125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

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Portal is a trademark of Activision Inc.

>Read the letters

Gentlemen:

You guys are just incredible! Can't find a name for the stuff you design, huh? You've been working at it for years, and you still don't know what it's called, eh? My god, if you would just take the effort to remove your heads from the dark hole they are stuck in, you would be able to see what this particular forest is composed of.

"Interactive fiction." Great zot, the hypertensive poobah who came up with that overinflated term ought to have some of the air let out of his ego. You see, it's quite simple to spot if you just put your minds to it. For no matter what you name them, *Planetfall* or *Suspended*, *Infidel* or *Trinity*, they are one and all, all of the same class and species...by all that's holy, they are ZORKS!!!

Really, folks, it's your term. Belongs to you, and you thought it up, now use it. Why is every tissue a Kleenex, and every photocopier a Xerox, and every cola a Coke? Because these great leading-edge products set the standards and defined the territory for everybody else. Now didn't *Zork* do that for your line of products? Of course it did. Use it proudly, and thank me for reminding you.

Now, as to the verb required to "do" a zork, we must also keep in mind that zorks are a type of game that people play. Your comparison of zorks to movies was inapt in that movies are a generic medium, consisting of many types of movies. We can just as easily say "Let's play a game" as "Let's go to a movie." The response to either statement is usually, "OK, but which one?" "How about a zork?" will become the classical equivalent of suggesting "Some horror flick with lots of blood and guts."

But if you must insist upon honoring the playing of a zork with a special verb, we have to get beyond the Valspeak mindlessness of "doing a zork." I am inclined to suggest that in the main we "suffer" zorks as innocent and guileless players of these masterpieces. But the phrase "to suffer a zork" lacks absolutely tons of cachet. Redmond Simonsen is supposed to have likened the zorks to "nothing more than refrigerator lights." (Never mind who Redmond Simonsen is.) But to suggest that we "light up a zork" smacks too much of Barry Manilow, not to mention the sensation that the exercise may very well be linked in some way to cancer. No, I think that in keeping with the nature of the beast (not grues, zorks) as being of the puzzle variety of games, we should think in terms of "solving a zork," for that is what we all struggle mightily to do. "To solve a zork" is the challenge Infocom repeatedly offers to the world of the unwise, and we are forever romanced into believing that this or that particular babel fish is indeed within our grasp.

As a last note, now that we have resolved the issue of the naming, what are we to use for the collective noun? As in "a pride of lions." "And here we have a _____ of zorks." Sorry, I am not touching that one with a ten-foot swizzle stick.

Bemusedly,
Stephen Hall, Arlington, VA

Dear Editor

(or Susan or whatever):

The enclosed list of games was found in my clothes dryer. Since I know for a fact that my socks enter the 8th dimension via the dryer, I assume that my counterpart at the other end keeps his important papers in his dryer, thus indirectly proving the existence of Infocom as a metaphysical constant.

Feel free to publish this in The Status Line, but please don't make any real games out of these without paying me lots and lots of real U.S. currency.

Infocom Games from the 8th Dimension:

A Mime Forever Voyaging: You're a mime on the Love Boat and you've got to convince people that you really are drowning in the pool and not just practicing your craft. Try to get saved without talking.

Bali Hai: You're stuck in an elevator and the record is skipping at Muzak. You've got to escape the elevator before you're driven mad. Make your way through the elevator shaft (good place for a grue) and break into the Muzak transmitting station before the city riots.

Deadbeat: You've borrowed money from every loan shark in town and you wouldn't have enough legs for them all to break if you were a millipede. You're broke, in the center of the city, a shark lurks at every corner, and you haven't had lunch. Get out of town by sunset.

Hitchhikers, Guy and Melody: You pick up two hitchhikers who offer you half of their million-dollar inheritance if you get them to Poughkeepsie by nightfall (don't forget you're travelling west to east). Fix the car, beat the cops, and find Guy and Melody when they skip out on you in Poughkeepsie.

In Fidel: Castro has swallowed a cigar! You are shrunk into a teeny weeny little Cuban scientist and must find your way through Fidel's digestive system (yuck!) to put out the fire. You must traverse the lower GI to win. Comes with a copy of Gray's Anatomy.

Beanstalker: You've traded the cows for beans...

Suspenders: It's the Prom and your pants won't stay up. Search through the darkened high school for a pair of suspenders and get back to your date before the band plays "Crimson and Clover."

Trinity: It's a kooky madcap scavenger hunt through the Vatican. Get the Pope's hat to win, but watch out for those lightning bolts!

The Witless: You're marooned on the isle of Crete. That's right, you're surrounded by Cretins! The natives insist on helping you whenever you try to escape and, of course, they always screw things up. Fool the Cretins into not helping you and get off the island.

Snark I: Finish Snark I and you get to buy Snark II.

Snark II: Finish Snark II and you get to buy Snark III.

Snark III: Finish Snark III and we've sold you three Snarks! We win!

COMING SOON...

Letter Carriers of Phobos

Alan M. Taren, Anytown, USA

InfoNews Roundup

Just like a baby

Infocom has often been noted for its packaging. On March 26 we received a very special tribute. Our peers in the Software Publishing Association voted *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* the Best Software Package of 1986. One thousand people crammed the auditorium at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, California, where Douglas Adams was master of ceremonies of the Second Annual Excellence in Software Awards. Infocom game player Robin Williams made a surprise appearance on stage to do a hysterical specially prepared routine related to software. Our thanks to the package design team of Carl Genatossio, Elizabeth Langosy, Gayle Syska, and Steve Meretzky. Special thanks to Angela Crews for her untiring nine-month effort to find just the right Scratch 'N Sniffs.

Bureaucracy star of TV, radio and print

After Douglas left the spotlight in Berkeley he began a nine day publicity tour de force on behalf of *Bureaucracy*. You may have seen him on either the Joan Rivers or David Brenner shows or on one of the local TV talk shows. Douglas and *Bureaucracy* were also highlighted on numerous radio shows and in many newspaper articles all around the country. Many magazine articles are due over the next few months.

Michael Jackson, move over

Two Infocom products were recently rewarded with Platinum Certification by the Software Publishers Association. Infocom's classic *Zork I* and classic-to-be *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* were named to this great honor. What makes this especially gratifying is the fact that these are the first and to this point only entertainment software products to be so named. The Platinum Certification is given to a product that has sold over 250,000 units in the United States.

Ahem... in our last issue we forgot to mention

In our last issue we had some exciting news which we completely forgot about. (Those of you who carefully examined our price grid may have noticed.) We dropped the prices on three titles! Because we think it is the best introduction to interactive fiction,

we've taken *Wishbringer* down to the unbeatable price of \$14.95. If you've never played it, don't miss it. Also, to keep interest high we've reduced the price of *Enchanter* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by \$10 to \$29.95 or \$24.95 (depending on system).

The Witness and Fooblitzky added to the \$14.95 classic titles list

Late last year we tried an experiment. We dropped the direct mail price to \$14.95 on five classic titles which we were no longer distributing to retail stores: *Infidel*®, *Seastalker*®, *Deadline*®, *Starcross*®, and *Suspended*®. The results far exceeded our expectations. (So much so that we ran out of some of them for awhile—we promise to be better prepared in the future.) We are happy to be able to extend the

savings to *The Witness*®, Stu Galley's hard-boiled 1930's mystery, and *Fooblitzky*™, our unique multi-player, strategy board game. Players rove the streets of the City of Fooblitzky trying to deduce and obtain the four items necessary to win the game.

We have plenty of inventory on all titles except *Fooblitzky*—which is first-come-first-serve.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

Now you can have them all

All the puzzles, all the humor, all the cartoons,
all the news, all the history, all the inside glimpses...

All 18 *New Zork Times/Status Lines* ever
published for just \$10

Includes the incredibly rare first 4 issues produced by
the Zork Users Group! (See Mike's mother!)

Hurry. Don't miss out on this incredible offer.

Send your request (including your name & address
along with a check made payable to Infocom, Inc.) to:

Infocom
N.Z.T. Offer
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

Checks only please.



Never, never, NEVER fall asleep while playing an Infocom game.

Bradley Schenck

Win the Imps' picnic basket

Ever say to yourself "How can I get one of those cool, square, blue picnic baskets like the game writers at Infocom use? You know—the one that the *Cornerstone* database used to be packaged in."? Well, here is your chance. Just fill out the coupon below, and your name will be entered in the "Win the Imps' Picnic Basket" Contest. No puzzles to solve. Everybody has the same chance of winning.

The prize: An old Cornerstone package filled with dozens of paper plates, napkins, plastic forks, knives and spoons. It's an exact replica of the picnic basket used by the Implementors for their weekly lunches. Three second prizes: Marathon of the Minds T-Shirts (size Medium only) left over from the marathon in Pittsburgh.

Win the Imps' Picnic Basket Contest

Please circle or smear jelly on the number that indicates your willingness to purchase the product. One: Would not purchase. Three: Maybe. Five: Gotta have it.

Great Underground Empire Tech T-Shirts emblazoned with the never before seen GUE Tech school emblem. 1 2 3 4 5

Same as above only in a sweat shirt. 1 2 3 4 5

A beer mug with the same never before seen GUE Tech school emblem. 1 2 3 4 5

An Infocom T-Shirt. Not game specific. 1 2 3 4 5

An Infocom Calendar with significant dates from various games. 1 2 3 4 5

A Zork T-Shirt. 1 2 3 4 5

A (baseball style) cap with the Infocom logo on it. 1 2 3 4 5

A (baseball style) cap with the Zork logo on it. 1 2 3 4 5

Bumper stickers. 1 2 3 4 5

A poster of _____ 1 2 3 4 5

Name: _____

Address: _____

Rules: All entries must be submitted on this form or on a photocopy of this form or on sheep skin. Entries must be received by July 31, 1987. Limit one entry per person. All entries must be mailed separately. Void where prohibited by law already. Send to: Infocom, Win the Imps Picnic Basket Contest, 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140.

Reader's Poll #3

The response to Paula's Poll #2 was so great, we couldn't compile it in time. However, we did think of some more questions, so here goes...

After the tremendous success of our first collaboration, *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (see InfoNews Roundup on page 3), we have seriously considered other collaborations. We'd like your input.

Please write in order of preference your top three choices of writers with whom Infocom should try to collaborate:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Another possible future route are games based on historical, legendary, or fictional characters (e.g. Napoleon, or King Arthur). (Please, no characters from the last 50 years.)

The Lurking Horror

Continued from page 1

The Lurking Horror is Dave Lebling's eighth work of interactive fiction. His previous works have won high acclaim and numerous awards. In addition to authoring *Spellbreaker™*, *Suspect®*, and *Starcross®*, he co-wrote *Zork® I*, *Zork II*, *Zork III*, and *Enchanter®*.

To introduce you to another popular work by Dave Lebling, each *Lurking Horror* package contains a coupon which you can mail in to get *Suspect* for only \$14.95. This is a special price only available through this offer. (In *Suspect*, Lebling places

you in a different sort of fiendish situation. You're a newspaper reporter who attends a high-society Halloween masquerade ball and ends up being accused of murder.)

Scheduled for release in late June, *The Lurking Horror* will be available for a wide variety of personal computers, including Apple II series and Macintosh, Atari XL/XE and ST series, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga, and IBM PC series and MS-DOS compatibles. The suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

Floyd returns with his paddleball in Stationfall

Continued from page 1

blatant violation of all Stellar Patrol regulations.

From the moment you arrive at the station, you can tell something is wrong. For one thing, no one's there to meet you. In fact, the whole place is deserted, save for an ostrich, an Arcturian balloon creature, and a brainy robot named Plato. As you explore the station and the derelict village, you find even more to worry you.

A creepy alien ship carrying only an empty pedestal rests in a docking bay. The commander's log describes the mysterious breakdown of machinery, demonstrated by a roving hull-welder that nearly does you in. And finally even Floyd begins acting oddly...

To prepare you for your important

position on the Paperwork Task Force of the Stellar Patrol, the *Stationfall* package includes your three assignment forms, a set of blueprints for a Gamma-Delta-Gamma Class deep space station, and an official sew-on Stellar Patrol patch. The package also contains a coupon which you can send in to get *Planetfall* for only \$14.95. This is an exclusive offer only available with the coupon.

Stationfall will be available in late June for a wide variety of personal computers, including Apple II series and Macintosh, Atari XL/XE and ST series, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga, and IBM PC series and MS-DOS compatibles. The suggested retail price is \$34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and \$39.95 for all other systems.

Once again, in order of preference, what are your top three choices for historical/fictional characters:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other Suggestions:

Name _____

Send to: **Infocom, Inc.**
Paula's Poll #3
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

>Tell me about Customer Support

Question: How do I order one of your challenging games, or that fabulous *Cornerstone*™ database? How can I check the status of an order I already placed with you guys? What are all these different phone numbers and addresses which I keep finding on my packaging?

Answer: To order any of our products or check on order status, call our fulfillment house at 1-800-262-6868, or write them at the following address:

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

For technical assistance with our products, call the entertainment hotline at 1-617-576-3190 for help with any of the games, or the *Cornerstone* hotline at 1-617-576-1851. You can write to us at:

Infocom, Inc. 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140

(If you have old packaging, please note that we've moved from the old Wheeler St. address.) Remember, we don't have a hotline for hints on the games. But you can order *InvisiClues*™ hintbooks by calling the 800 ordering number above.

Question: I lost a piece of my game. How can I get a replacement?

Answer: You need to send proof of purchase, along with a check or money order for \$2.00 per piece, \$5.00 per manual, to the Cambridge address above. Proof of purchase consists of one of the following: the master game disk, an internal game element, or a sales receipt with the name of the game on it. However, we do not sell the entire package separately from the disk.

Question: Can I buy *Cornerstone* manuals separately?

Answer: No. Since the price of *Cornerstone* is so low, we feel that it's now affordable to own several copies for your home or office. And since we've removed the copy protection from our disks, the only protection we have against software piracy is by keeping the software 'bundled'.

Question: I think my disk is defective. What should I do?

Answer: Send the disk only, NOT the entire package, along with a note explaining the problem to our Cambridge office. If you are within our 90-day warranty period, include your sales receipt and we'll replace the disk free of charge if it is defective. If you are beyond the warranty period, we require a \$5.00 fee per game for processing and handling.

Question: I had a Commodore, and recently traded it in for an IBM PC. I really don't want to go out and buy another set of the same Infocom games for my new PC. Is there any way of exchanging my old Commodore disks for IBM disks?

Answer: We will exchange game disks for a different computer version for \$10.00 per disk. Just send your disks and check or money order to our Cambridge address. Please note that we will only exchange disks for different computer versions of the same game. We do not exchange for a different game.

Question: What's the safest way to mail in my diskette?

Answer: You can purchase a floppy-disk mailer in a stationery store, or simply put some stiff pieces of cardboard around the disk and put it in a manila envelope. We suggest writing 'DO NOT BEND' and 'MAGNETIC MEDIA ENCLOSED — DO NOT X-RAY' on the front of the envelope. You can send it through regular first-class mail for about \$0.40 postage.



The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Zork,

June 1987

Congratulations on reaching your tenth birthday! I knew that one day you would join the ranks of this long-lived group of computer games. Everyone here in Washington is happy for you.

Why, it seems like only a decade ago that you were born, small and riddled with bugs, inside a mainframe at a great technological university. Your proud parents -- Bruce, Dave, Marc, and Tim -- watched you struggle to your feet, parse a command, then execute it! And not just once, but over and over! Soon you had visitors from all around this great land of ours, from sea to shining sea. Little did anyone know, at that point in time, how you would grow and multiply and become commercial, how you would visit over a million computers, how you would become so famous that, well, even I would write you a letter. Here's hoping that you and I both will see another decade pass.

Congratulations,

The President

The President

Mapping Made Easy!

If you're tired of drawing-and redrawing, and redrawing-funny little boxes, you need

The QuestBusters Cartography Kit:

50 sheets of mapping paper designed specifically for adventurers. You'll never get boxed in again!

With each kit you get the manual "Adventures in Mapping," which details the system, plus 10 record sheets for keeping track of objects, characters and other discoveries. The kit is \$6—or \$5 if you subscribe to *QuestBusters* when you order.

Clues & Walkthrus!

If you haven't heard about *QuestBusters*, then you must have been lost in a maze for a long time (or sniffed too much bat guano in that last cave). In its third year, *QB* offers news, clues and reviews of new adventures, plus coded solutions to two recent ones in each issue. So when you order your *Cartography Kit* be sure to enclose \$16 for the next 12 monthly issues of *QuestBusters*. (Int'l, \$28 in US funds).

QuestBusters™

Dept. I

POB 525, Southeastern PA 19399-9968

Today's Entries

AMERICA'S CRAB AUTHORITY

AMERICA'S CRAB AUTHORITY



Friday, April 3, 1987

Drink'em Downs

CambridgePark, Cambridge, MA
Track Record

1

20Mar87
20Mar87
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2

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Drink'em Downs

Race # _____ Crab # _____
Win _____ Place _____
Amount .10 .20 .50 Other \$ _____

Parimutuel Wagering Ticket



Guest
Announcer
Contest

Guest
Announcer

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Turl

Lurking Grue

Steve Stables

\$ 25 1 lifetime 16 0

Drink'em

The Sport of Kings has come to Infocom. That's right—Hermit Crab Racing.

It all started when Hollywood Dave Anderson returned from the Marathon of the Minds in Los Angeles yakkling about a lounge he had been to which featured hermit crab racing. Several employees kicked the idea around for a few days and decided to attend an auction. (Well, actually Hollywood went to the pet store.) The crabs were auctioned off to employees at a weekly Friday party where a race track, Drink'em Downs, had been constructed.

Next it was time for the racing to begin. But not before high tech was brought to bear on the age-old sport of hermit crab racing. Tester Gary Brennan set up Lotus 1-2-3 to handle parimutuel wagering. Resident hacker Tim Anderson constructed a database using Cornerstone to keep track of the crabs' statistics. And Hollywood put those stats in the Weekly Racing Form with the help of PageMaker.

The first and second races zipped by as racing fans wagered and eyed the paddock area. Then it came time for the third race, the feature race of the day—The Drink'em Downs Cup. Track announcer Hollywood presented the crabs to the fans. "Crab number one, Dr. Funk of Tahiti, owned and trained by the Five-0 Syndicate (Max Buxton, Tom Veldran, Tomas Bok and Hollywood). Crab number two, Itchy, owned and trained by Debbie Reilly and Gabrielle Accardi of Kwell Acres. Number three, Lurking Grue, owned and trained by Steve Meretzky of Stevo Stables. Number four, Ima, owned and trained by Linda Carlough and the MSPCA (She wasn't too hot on this racing idea). Crab five, Hold the Celery, owned and trained by Diane'n'Harry (Diane Murlock and Harry Regan). And number six, Form Over Substance, owned and trained by Dornbrook of Green Acres," stated the announcer.

Parimutuel

20Mar87	4DrkmD	Buffed	.0025 1:00	NonStk	Green Acres
27Mar87	2DrkmD	Glossy	.0025 1:42	NonStk	Green Acres

Entries



1987



etime 16 0 0 4

shell

Downs

The crabs were placed in the starting gate as the announcer's voice called, "One minute to post time!" The wagering was furious as fans hurried to get their bets down on their favorite crab. A minute passed, the wagering ceased as the starting gate was raised. First out of the gate was Hold the Celery, followed by Form Over Substance and Ima. Dr. Funk, Itchy and Lurking Grue hadn't come out of their shells yet. Down along the back stretch it was Hold the Celery out in front by a claw, followed closely by Form Over Substance. Ima was now making a move along the inside rail. Back at the starting gate the others had not moved. Now they were coming out of the turn and Ima had taken the lead. Battling down the stretch it was Ima followed by Form Over Substance and Hold the Celery. At the wire it was Ima in 1:16, followed by Form Over Substance and Hold the Celery. The others never left the gate. Linda was awarded the Drink'em Downs Cup. Ima paid \$.24 to win on a \$.10 bet.

Since that first day there have been many races at Drink'em Downs. Yes, even some races where all the crabs leave the starting gate.

Photos: (left) An unidentified hand helps Form Over Substance pose for the camera. (upper left) Diane and Harry pose with the Drink'em Downs Cup which they won recently. (above) A publicity shot from the Drink'em Downs Public Relations Office featuring stampeding crabs and excited racing fans. (upper right) Yet another shot from the public relations office featuring a near photo finish. (right) Track announcer Hollywood with track timer Stu Galley.

Photos by Tomas Bok and Hollywood

Wagering Ticket

Green Acres Form Over Substance
Green Acres Hold the Celery, Ima

AMERICA'S CRAB AUTHORITY
Weekly
Racing
Form

Friday, April 3, 1987

...the third running of the
Cup Race. Heavily favored to
winner Ima, trained and owned
and the MSPCA.

Turf Club is looking for empty
As crabs grow they move into
Friday Party Turf Club spokes-



Drink'em Downs

Quinella - - Circle combination

1&2	1&3	1&4	1&5	1&6	2&3	2&4	2&5
2&6	3&4	3&5	3&6	4&5	4&6	5&6	
Amount	.10	.20	.50	Other \$			

Parimuel Wagering Ticket

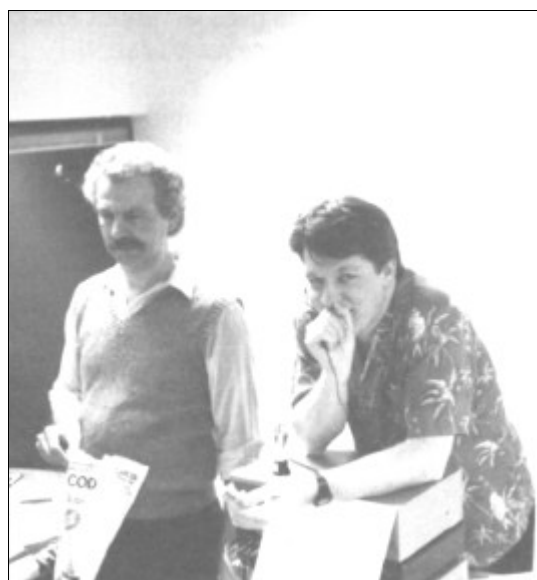
20Mar87 1DrkmD Buled
20Mar87 2DrkmD Buled
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5

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20Mar87
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27Mar87
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6

20Mar87
20Mar87
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27Mar87
27Mar87
27Mar87
27Mar87



4DrkmD	Buled	.0025	1:00	NonStk	Green Acres	Ima, Itchy
27Mar87	2DrkmD	Glossy	.0025	1:42	NonStk	Form Over Substance
27Mar87	2DrkmD	Glossy	.0025	0:58	D'DCup	Hold the Celery, Itchy
27Mar87	3DrkmD	Glossy	.0020	1:00	NonStk	Itchy, Hold the Celery



Ever since you arrived at G.U.E. Tech, you've heard stories about the old campus basements and storage rooms, some so ancient that they contain only rotting piles of unidentifiable junk. You've heard about the decrepit underground tunnels, crumbling into hazardous piles of timber and concrete. And you've vowed never to set foot in any of them.

But tonight, with a blizzard raging outside and the classrooms empty of all but a few diehard hackers, something draws you into the dark nether regions of the institute. Perhaps it's the howling storm, making the outdoors as threatening as anything you could imagine within. Or perhaps it's the terrifying dream you had, hinting at horrific mysteries below and leaving you with a strange object that seems to lead

you inexorably downward.

Suddenly, you're in a world that rivals your most hideous visions, a realm of horror lying in wait beneath the calm corridors and study halls. Shapes emerge from dark corners. Eerie sounds draw closer. Slimy passageways lead to sights so ghastly that they will feed your nightmares for weeks.



Infocom's interactive fiction gives you the leading role in a vividly-descriptive story. In *The Lurking Horror*, author Dave Lebling turns an everyday world into a frightening web of uncertainty. You'll face ingenious puzzles, unique characters, and chilling twists of plot as you explore the nightmarish depths of the institute and confront the horror lurking below.

INFOCOM™

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Infocom interactive fiction is available for most personal computers.

The Lurking Horror is a trademark of Infocom, Inc.

Portal: Is this Interactive Fiction?

Emerging from the mists of the "Vaporware" list in *PC Letter*, *Portal*™ has at last been published by Activision. Having thus established that *Portal* is not vapor, its creator, novelist Rob Swigart, has some further observations about what *Portal* is and is not.

"It's not a game," says Swigart. Nor, apparently, is it interactive fiction as we have come to know it. "There is no parsing language in *Portal*," he adds, "no puzzles to solve."

Then what is it?

"It's a computer novel."

And that is...?

"A novel that can be told only through the medium of the computer."

If you could expand on that...

Swigart says "The narrative, the story, is organized like a database of real information, by category—historical data, facts about characters, and so on. In this way, a person's experience of *Portal* imitates the style of traditional kinds of computer use. You uncover the story section by section, layer by layer, learning how parts of the story relate to other parts."

So this is interactive fiction then?

"Neither game nor adventure," writes Bob Lindstrom in *A+ Magazine*, "*Portal* represents an entirely new form of entertainment software."

To its author, *Portal* is the dawn of

the new in more ways than one. Says Swigart, "*Portal* is a simulation of future computers—AI systems that will be able to process, filter, and organize information for the user as an individual with very particular, even quirky, needs."

"A computer that can forecast the future could also tell plausible stories about the future—predictions cast in narrative form. Futurists of today, who realized the importance of intuition some time ago, already engage in this kind of 'narrative' forecasting."

Get the feeling that Swigart has hung around with futurists? He has. In a career that has included a stint as a textbook salesman, a Ph.D. in comparative literature, and a wide range of poetry, essays, stories, computer game scripts and nine novels, he has also written futurist scenarios for the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park, California. His latest novel, *Vector* (Bluejay Books, 1986), has been described as a "biotechnology thriller."

The plot of *Portal* is reminiscent of many science fiction stories. The year is 2106. You—the user, or player, or reader, whatever—are a lone space traveler who has returned from a 100-year star voyage to an Earth devoid of human life. Plants thrive, birds sing, animals burrow but no people. You find a single operating system (yours,

of course) connected to 12 Worldnet "dataspaces."

As you begin to dip into the data available, you soon make contact with a biological computer named Homer. The sole survivor of a vanished civilization, Homer is your link to the past and your conduit to the future.

Together, you and Homer set out to solve the mystery of an unpeopled world. Your knowledge grows organically. As you uncover bits of data in one category, you're granted access to more and more data in other, related categories. And Homer is enabled to "remember" more and more, as his understanding of the past grows with yours.

You learn, for example, about 21st-century geopolitical affairs; about the fantastic technology of the era, including neurophage weapons, agrobotics, nightvision thermography, and Mozart, the great aesthetic application of neural induction; and about *Portal*, the phenomenon at the heart of the mystery.

Portal is on two or three disks, depending on what kind of computer you have (Activision has released *Portal* for Amiga, Apple II and Macintosh, Commodore, and MS-DOS machines). Also in the box is a "Prologue," written in "your" voice; a map of the Intercorp Council World

Administrative Regions, dated 14 August 2077; and a copy of Worldnet Emergency Operating Instructions, dated 11 November 2088. These are your tools for exploring the world of *Portal*, and solving its mystery.

As you say to yourself in the "Prologue," "I will read the instructions, and then I will try to find out what has happened to the world, where the people have gone, and if I must remain alone for the rest of my life...I have been too long without other people."

In developing *Portal*, Swigart envisioned a future, like any science fiction writer. Here's the twist, though. Placing us at the end of the Earth's future, *Portal* challenges us to reconstruct that future as the past, so that a new future may begin to unfold.

It also challenges our notions of what "interactivity" in computer fiction can be, and of what "narrative" is, in any kind of medium, and how it works. As futuristic as *Portal* is, it borrows much from traditional storytelling. Readers will not find themselves stumped by difficult puzzles, rather the story unfolds itself with some gentle coaxing. Can interactive storytelling work without challenging puzzles or conflict resolution? *Portal* proves it can.

SPECIAL OFFER

Buy *Portal*, The Computer Novel
And Get a \$5 Rebate

Redemption Instructions

1. Buy *Portal* at your local software store.
2. Collect the following items:
The tab from the *Portal* box with the part number BD-133-02.
The original sales receipt with the product price circles.
This coupon, with all information fully completed.
3. Mail *all* of these items to:
Portal Rebate Offer
P.O. Box 729
San Francisco, CA 94101-0729
4. Must be postmarked on or before September 30, 1987.
5. Allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your rebate.

Customer Information (please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Hardware _____

Store _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____



"Don't 'oh shucks' me, mister! You march up those stairs right this minute and caskly that messy room of yours! And while you're up there, young man, make sure you apologize to your little sister for frothing her cereal during breakfast this morning!"

Bob Prokop

Marathon

Continued from page 1

Marathons 3 and 4, held in San Francisco and Seattle. Since then, Infocom has managed to survive Marathons in Pittsburgh, San Diego, Los Angeles and of course, Toronto. Below are the highlights.

February 6 and 7 found the Marathon of the Minds in Pittsburgh. David Shim, Bill Burky, and Darren Lasko of North Allegheny High School solved *Hollywood Hijinx*™ in a record time of 10 hours—previous Hijinx Marathons lasted between 13 and 17 hours. The second-place team solved the final puzzle at 6 a.m. That was good news for the Infocom crew of "Hollywood" Dave Anderson and 18-year-old son of Harvard President Derek Bok, Tom Bok, who were eager to get some sleep, but bad news for the news crew that arrived at the Buhl Science Center at 7 a.m. to cover the finish live. One third of the forty-five players (15 teams of three) were female—including an all-woman team from Union City High School.

At the San Diego Marathon, on February 20-21, it took until noon for the team of Paul Ashley, Joel Pratt and Tetsuji Gotanda from Gompers High School to crack *Bureaucracy*™. Due to the difficulty of the game, Infocom Vice President and *Bureaucracy* collaborator Chris Reeve offered to give each of the 15 teams one hint. They steadfastly refused until it became clear at 8 a.m. the following morning that the competition was likely to continue for several days. Oddly, not one female showed up for the event at the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theatre in Balboa Park. But the camera crews did, at 10 a.m.—just in time to film one participant diligently dozing under a stairway for the evening news.

In Los Angeles, Infocom's February 28th Marathon coincided with the 2nd annual Los Angeles Marathon. Ours started earlier and finished later. Twenty teams from local high schools gathered at the California Museum of Science and Industry to attempt *Bureaucracy*. This time, it took the team of Chad Jones, Eric Allegado and Sean Peacock from San Gabriel High School 20 exhausting hours and four hints to finish. (Make you feel better?)

In addition to the crew of Tim, Hollywood and Cindy Weiss, we had several surprise guests: Marc Blank, now residing in L.A., Sales Development Manager Gabrielle Accardi who was in Palm Springs "on business," former micro hacker and current Caltech student Andy Kaluzniaki and

Cornerstone Designer Brian Berkowitz, who flew in from Seattle just for the occasion. The "regular crew" even managed to get Mike Dornbrook to come to this one in an attempt to get even with him for coming up with the Marathon idea in the first place. Only he outsmarted them. Mike and the other "surprise" guests came for a glass of wine, then promptly headed off to Beverly Hills for a feast while Tim, Hollywood, Cindy and former Infocommie Joy Pulver ate cold

Mexican take-out at the Museum.

The Toronto Marathon was without a doubt the high point. Over 80 teams wished to compete, but space considerations held the number down to 20, selected by lottery. The Science Centre treated everyone to a sit-down dinner, complete with cloth napkins and waiters! Berkley Barnard, Finnegan Southey, and Stefan Kremer from Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute solved *Stationfall* in 17 hours. The competition was fierce and play-

ers searched for help from other sources: St. Mary's High School posted a sign reading, "We have God on our side," while the school sitting opposite responded, "666, we have the devil on our side."

Special InfoThanks to Radio Shack, who donated the Tandy 1000 EX computers and color monitors for the winners of the Pittsburgh, San Diego and Los Angeles Marathons, as well as computers for the teams to use during the competitions.

Mommy, where did Zork come from?

According to Infocom oral tradition, the name "Zork" was chosen for a new computer game ten years ago because it was a nonsense word: no one would be able to guess anything about the game just from its name. But recent archeological research has revealed that "Zork" is not nonsense at all. It was known as early as thirty-three years ago, at least among a company of zany people on Madison Avenue in New York, as this shard of a comic book proves. This excerpt is reproduced by permission of MAD magazine, ©1954 by E. C. Publications, Inc.



Premier puzzlers pound puzzle #12

In Puzzle 12, we asked you to answer eighteen trivia questions, on topics ranging from chemistry to opera. All were multiple choice questions, but the answers were lettered N-E-S-W instead of A-B-C-D. Based on your answers, you were supposed to trace a path through the geography of an Infocom game: beginning from the Round Room in *Zork I*, the Library Lobby in *Planetfall*, or the Chamber of Ra in *Infidel*.

The correct answer to the puzzle: the name of the room where you would end up after trying to move consecutively in those eighteen directions. You could choose any of the three games for your answer. The answers to the trivia questions:

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|
| 1. S | 7. N | 13. S |
| 2. S | 8. N | 14. NE |
| 3. NE | 9. N | 15. W |
| 4. NW | 10. W | 16. E |
| 5. W | 11. N | 17. N |
| 6. E | 12. E | 18. W |

The solutions, based on those answers: Dam Lobby for *Zork I*, or Library Lobby for *Planetfall*, or Fore Cabin for *Infidel*.

There were a total of 524 entries (the most since Puzzle Number 2!) of which 141 were correct (26.9%). 401 of the entrants (76.5%) traced their path through *Zork I*; *Planetfall* was chosen by 73 people (13.9%); the remaining 50 entrants used *Infidel* (9.5%).

Just looking at the *Zork I* entries, the most common wrong answers were Chasm (90 entries), Deep Canyon (50), Round Room (30), and East-West Passage (28), but nearly every room on the southern half of the *Zork I* map was mentioned at least once. Six people gave the unacceptably incomplete answer "Lobby." Other entrants, unsatisfied with the rooms in *Zork I*, created their own rooms: "East-West Room," "Echo Chamber," and "Deep Chasm." The two most interesting entries: "Mailbox" and "You can't go that way."

Since there were more than 25 correct answers, a drawing was held to determine the T-shirt winners. The drawing attracted a record-size Puzzle Drawing Audience of 2.

The results: Howard Scully, Mt. Clemens, MI; Marcus Johnstone, Belen, NM; Paul Feigelman, Bayside, NY; Lucas Campbell, Lexington, KY; Micah Barclay, Davison, MI; Imtiaz Rauf, Falls Church, VA; Rawson Chaplin, Wellesley, MA; James Lessard, Bloomington, MN; Susan Hewett, Greenville, NC; Betty Balas,

Akron, OH; Robert Brock Jr., Annapolis, MD; Daniel Sullivan Jr., New Kensington, PA; Crystal Armonas, Mentor, OH; Jacquie Buchanan, Canyon Lake, CA; Lael Sharp, Logan,

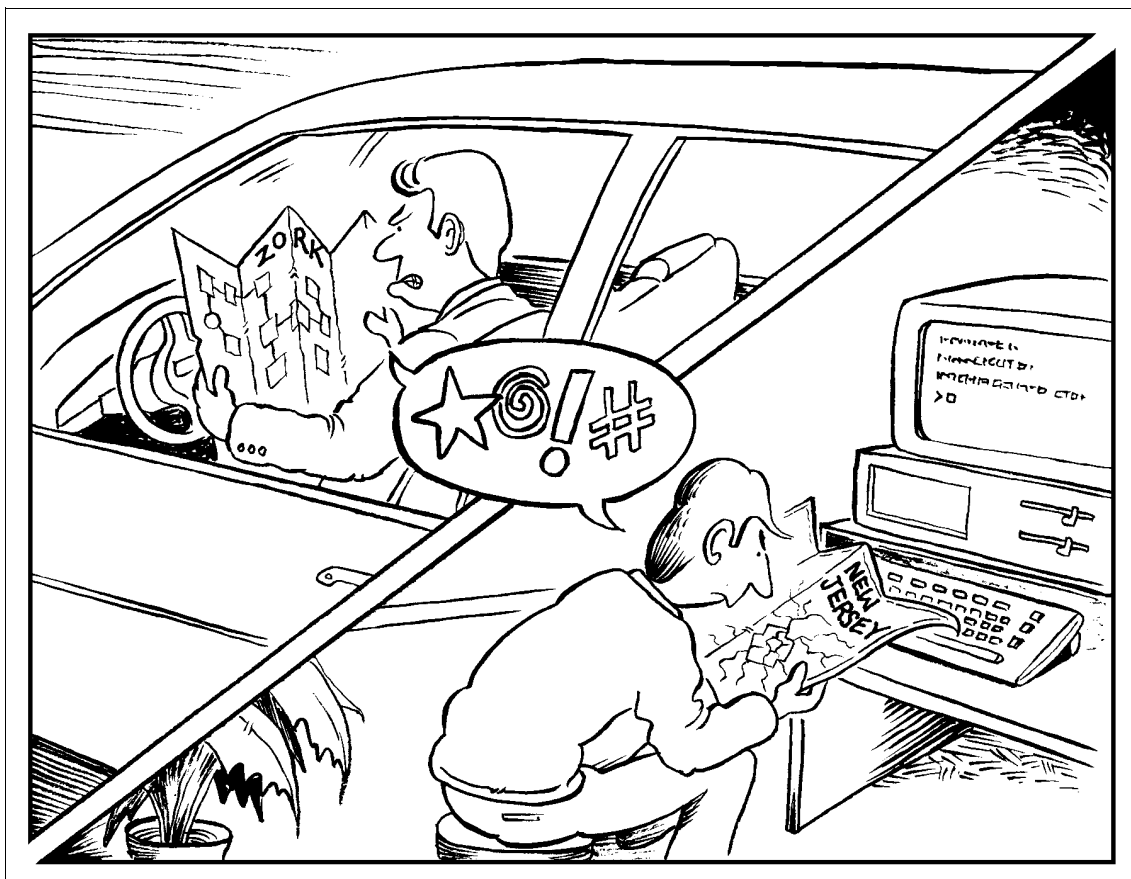
UT; Carl Walter, North Granby, CT; Ted Hall, Dothan, AL; Alex Joneth, Raleigh, NC; Mike Lahey, Munster, IN; David Powers, Christiansburg, VA; Doug Gilchrist, Bath, ME; Don-

ald Gasser, Napa, CA; Mark Joengen, Springfield, OR; John Silvestri, Addison, IL; Gary Vaughn, Atlanta, GA.

Our congratulations to all the winners.



Joseph P. Murray



Veronica Kosnac and Mark Cantrell

>Examine puzzle #14

The directions to Puzzle #14 are a little complicated, so read carefully. First, figure out the first clue, then put the resulting word into the diagram. The first letter of the word goes in the box marked with the number "1" and the subsequent letters go into the following boxes, moving clockwise around the spiral of the diagram.

Next, figure out the second clue, and put that word into the diagram beginning at the box labelled "2." Notice that the first word and the second word overlap! All the words that go into the spiral will overlap, sharing one or more letters.

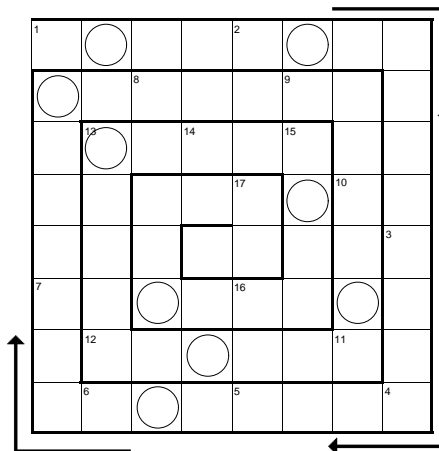
Here's a tiny example, in case you're confused:

1. Upper Sandusky's state.
2. It's near Illinois.
3. An adjective to describe editors of The Status Line.

1	O	H	2	I
	K	Y		O
	C	A	3	W

Once you have filled in the diagram, take the letters that fall within circles. Anagram these ten letters to form an Infocom-related name. This name is the answer to the puzzle.

1. A word in The Shanty's address.
2. The primary employer of the Great Underground Empire.
3. In *Suspended*, a Filter Computer reset code.
4. The month when you began cleaning grotch cages.
5. He invented the golmac spell.
6. A Borphee square.
7. A word in an Infocom title.
8. The best way to get around Rockvil, SD.
9. Floyd has been known to hum the death scene from it.
10. Belboz is your friend and _____.
11. "_____ to my VI'Hurgish warrior heart to hear it spoken!"
12. The planet in *Planetfall*.
13. The middle name of The Washington Representative's Editor.
14. Scenic _____, a good place to find a torch.
15. A location aboard the warship in *Leather Goddesses*.
16. The first word in the name of a Festeron video game.
17. No living room in a white house is complete without one.



Answer: _____
 Name: _____
 Address: _____

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

Puzzle Rules:

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by **August 15, 1987**.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct entries are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners.
6. Void where prohibited by law. (Is there someplace so mixed-up that innocent little contests like this are outlawed?)

Prize: The Status Line Puzzle Winner T-Shirt

Send to: Infocom, Inc.
 The Status Line Puzzle
 125 CambridgePark Drive
 Cambridge, MA 02140

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The ever-increasing barrage of cartoons netted more than 500 entries for our cartoon contest this quarter.

Congratulations to the winners for this issue. If you want to try your hand at cartooning, maybe you should enter our ongoing cartoon contest! Just send your cartoon, in black ink on white paper, to:

The Status Line Cartoons
 Infocom, Inc.
 125 CambridgePark Drive
 Cambridge, MA 02140

If we print your cartoon, we'll send you a free game, so be sure to include the title of the game you'd like, the computer system that you own, your address, and your phone number. Please don't fold your cartoon, let the Post Office do it. All submissions become property of Infocom.

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These games require 128K.

- Available exclusively through respective machine manufacturer.
- NOTE: Requires graphics card; Composite monitor recommended; Not available for PCjr.

INFOCOM Catalog Numbers and Prices

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