

alternate REALITY

NEWSLETTER

Volume I

Issue 3

Greetings Alternate Reality Adventurers:

Well, we're back from Chicago CES, an exhausting but stimulating experience. Visitors to the show were able to preview a number of new Datasoft products, including Crosscheck, The NeverEnding Story, Mind Pursuit, 221 B Baker Street, and Alternate Reality-The City for the 16-bit machines. Unfortunately, we were not far enough along on The Dungeon at that time to have a demo, but the program is moving along at a good pace.

We recently acquired the license for Mercenary and Theatre Europe, two of Europe's **HOTTEST** games that all you AR fans are sure to enjoy! Mercenary is a flight simulation, adventure done in incredible Vector graphics. You're a 21st century soldier of fortune who has crash-landed on the planet Targ. There's a war going on and you need to escape. **YOU** decide whether to work for the native Palyars or the invading Mechanoids... or work for both! There are plenty of ways to earn money and lots of interesting things to explore.

Theatre Europe is a strategy war simulation game that gives you the option to choose which side you want to command - NATO or the Warsaw Pact - and lets you participate in the battles as a tank commander, bomber pilot, etc. Your strategy options include the usual types of limited warfare, as well as chemical and germ warfare, and the ultimate - a nuclear strike.

To change the subject for a moment -- we still have a few Alternate Reality T-shirts left in sizes Small, Medium and Large. This is your last chance to get one, so it's going to be first come, first serve. Remember, it's \$10 per shirt and please specify size.

CONTEST!

We've received quite a few **Awesome characters!** There is some tough competition out there and it's going to be difficult to choose the winner. Make sure your stories are descriptive and creative. The deadline for the contest is now September 15th.

In case you've forgotten, you must prove your character. Send a backup copy of your character disk with a descriptive story, your name, address, phone number, and computer type. If you want your disk returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed mailer.

HINTS

The following helpful tips are from Peter Olafson of Warwick, NY.

- This may sound funny, but walk the way you're facing, because when you walk backwards (especially in what Peter calls the "Urban Renewal" area, which is the open area of the Royale Walkway in the NW quadrant), the chances of being "surprised" with no options, are greater.

- If you are broke and hit-point poor, head for the Northern City Wall in the NW quadrant. The water is free and Packets and Flasks don't come any cheaper!

- Peter has learned from experience in The City that when beginning the game with no weapons, extended Parrying is a better technique to increase your stats than Lunging, although Lunging inflicts maximum damage.

- As of June 2, 1986, Peter's Awesome AR Character, Peterod of Isar, had the following stats: Stamina, 20; Charm, 31; Strength, 30; Intelligence, 21; Wisdom, 23; and Skill, 20. He is almost a Level 11 character with over 280,000 experience points. Peterod of Isar carries a magical flamesword as his primary weapon and a magical battle axe as his secondary. His armor is plate mail. Peterod of Isar also carries a longsword and tower shield. The fellow is quite comfortable money-wise with 55,000 coppers spread among 3 banks and 3,000 in his pocket. (Didn't your mother ever tell you not to carry so much cash on you?) He has killed a Night Stalker or two, has visited all businesses, and is familiar with 38 potions.

Thanks for all the hints, Peter!

Here are some more hints from Robert Ashley of Elsmere, Kentucky.

If you are an evil character and happen to run up against a Guard, the best thing to do is Give Up. The Guard will go away. But if you Attack and then Give Up, you'll be dead for sure!

Most Guards can be Tricked if your Intelligence is at least 25. There are a few that can't be Tricked on the first time, but can the second. Don't try fighting Guards and Knights unless you're at least a Level 9 character.

If you want to be a good character, you'll have to fight mainly at night. During the day, most of the lifefroms you encounter are good guys (except muggers and thieves).

When you are stronger, it's a good idea to buy a lot of food packets and water flasks. This way, when you're coming out of an Inn, you won't be in a panic to get to a Tavern. If you buy more than 255 food packets and 255 water flasks, you waste your money since you can't carry more than that.

The places that are harder to find are cheaper for you. For instance, the Smithy in the City Square charges the most. The one hidden in a wall near the Arena is cheapest. The hidden bank pays more for jewels and gems and has better interest rates.

Robert has entered Gluson as his Awesome AR Character. We don't want to give you too much information about the competition, so we'll leave the rest to your imagination. Thanks Robert!

MORE HINTS

Staying in Taverns until closing is not wise. This causes you to be thrown out and will not allow you to enter Taverns again. This could mean serious trouble. Where will you eat and drink?

If any COMMODORE users are finding problems with Disk 2, Side 1, there is an error in your disk. Please send it in and we'll recut it.

We cannot stress enough how much of an advantage it is to make **back-up** copies of your character disk. If you're killed or an unusual situation occurs, you won't be crying in frustration. Just back-up regularly. And remember, any fast copy program will work.

Some people are confusing the difference between good and bad characters. Being a good character does not imply that you can't fight other beings. If this were the case there would be no way of surviving in The City. The difference is that a good character won't go out and aggressively attack every living thing he encounters. If you Leave a Nobleman and he doesn't let you go, then you **MUST** attack to defend yourself. A good character only fights in defense.

When you Disengage from Thieves, often they will steal your coins and food. However, if you Leave or Hail, they might leave you alone.

The healers' prices go up after each visit. However, if you wait 24 hours before returning, the prices will go down again.

Delusions, Poison and Drunkenness are very expensive to cure; it is best to wait 24 hours and sleep it off at an Inn.

The only way to find Treasure is through Encounters.

ATTENTION ATARI OWNERS:

Our programmers have discovered a cure for our Vitamin C - poor characters. You will soon be reunited with your characters and be able to resume life in Alternate Reality without getting scurvy. However, it's going to take a little while longer for them to heal properly. All it takes is a little patience and TLC.

The problem was a little more complicated than we realized. The program has undergone minor surgery and is now being tested. We are working as fast as we can, and your disks will be sent back to you (recut - of course) in about a month. Hang in there!

Many of you claim to be experiencing symptoms of what appears to be Alternate Reality withdrawals. We've consulted our programmers and they confirmed that there is such a thing. The best thing to do is try not to think about it and keep yourself occupied with other activities. It's hard to imagine, but there is life after Alternate Reality.

We would like to apologize for the inconvenience you have been experiencing with your version of the game. All of you who have returned your disks (some of you more than once) are being very understanding and we thank you for your support throughout this difficult crisis.

WHO IS MONDO AWESOME?

Many of you Commodore players are experiencing strange and bizarre occurrences with your characters. A seemingly "immortal" character who calls himself Mondo Awesome! suddenly appears on your character disk. No, you're not going crazy; you did not create that character some sleepless night while playing Alternate Reality and fail to remember the next day. This character showing up actually implies a few things. Most likely, there is an error on your character disk because you are forgetting to do something very important. Anytime the prompt "Insert Character Disk" appears, you need to take out the game disk, turn the **disk drive off** and then on again (SX-64 owners, push the drive re-set button), and **THEN** insert the character disk. The same goes for back-up disks. There is an addendum in every package stating this. This is essential if you don't want to lose an Awesome character that you've been putting all your effort into.

Also, if you have not been turning your disk drive off and on before inserting your character disk, you may find your character "corrupted". This means that various places, such as Inns, Smithys, and worst of all, Taverns, may not allow you to enter. They'll simply tell you to "Get out, Worm." (The only other time you'll get that response is if you have been thrown out or have continuously annoyed them by saying you want to buy something when you don't have any money.)

If you have experienced any of this, your character, unfortunately, cannot be saved. Even if you copy the character on an error-free disk, your character will still be seen as EVIL to everyone in The City and will eventually die of starvation, since no one will let him in.

A word to the wise...however awesome this Mondo Awesome! character appears to be, he will not be accepted as a legitimate entry to our Awesome AR Character contest.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Where can I find a Healer?

A. The entrance to the Alpha Omega Healer is at co-ordinates 21 North, 5 East.

Q. Can you earn money without fighting?

A. Not in The City.

Q. How can you stay alive in the early part of the game long enough to earn money to buy weapons and shields?

A. Don't worry about spending your money on weapons, at first. It's better to find them in Encounters and use your money for food, drinks, and Inns. The key is to start with the highest possible STATS, especially Charm, Intelligence, and Strength. Be sure Hit Points are high.

Q. There are a few places that are closed by order of the Palace; Will these places ever open? If so, when?

A. The Palace is one of the expansions to The City. As of this date, we cannot say when it will be ready.

Q. Is music an indication that you are near a secret passage?

A. Not necessarily. However, eerie music often indicates you're near a secret door.

Q. Will The Dungeon let you join guilds in the 8-bit version, or just the 16-bit?

A. Both

Q. How many entrances are there to The Dungeon?

A. Two, from The City.

Q. What is the advantage of making friends in different Taverns?

A. If you've made friends in a Tavern, and later come in broke, hungry, or thirsty, you'll get free food and drink.

Q. When will The Dungeon and the rest of the sequences be out? I can't wait any longer!

A. Well, The Dungeon will be out in late September, but the others are hard to say at this time. The City will be available for IBM, Atari ST and the Macintosh in September as well.

Q. Poors are easily identified, but who are the blind?

A. The blind are not in The City and will be encountered in The Dungeon.

Q. Can you ever reach a secure point without the risk of dying at any moment?

A. No. This is because Assassins can Surprise and Kill you regardless of your STATS. Make sure you ALWAYS have a back-up copy of your character disk!

Q. How do you beat a wraith without having your belongings taken?

A. The only way to kill a wraith is to Charm him.

Q. A tower shield is supposed to protect you from getting hit; why hasn't it been helping me?

A. It doesn't keep you from getting hit, it simply reduces how badly or often you're hit.

Q. How do I increase my stats (besides strength)? I am almost a 12th level character and Wisdom, among others stats, has not moved.

A. The increase in STATS by moving up a level is random. It is based on your Stamina; low Stamina results in lower chances of increasing your Stats as you go up.

Q. Why am I losing money in the bank? I realize that this can happen to evil characters, but mine is a good character who has never attacked unless forced.

A. Bank failures have nothing to do with how good or evil your character is.

Q. Is there any way to Disengage from an Encounter without having your items stolen?

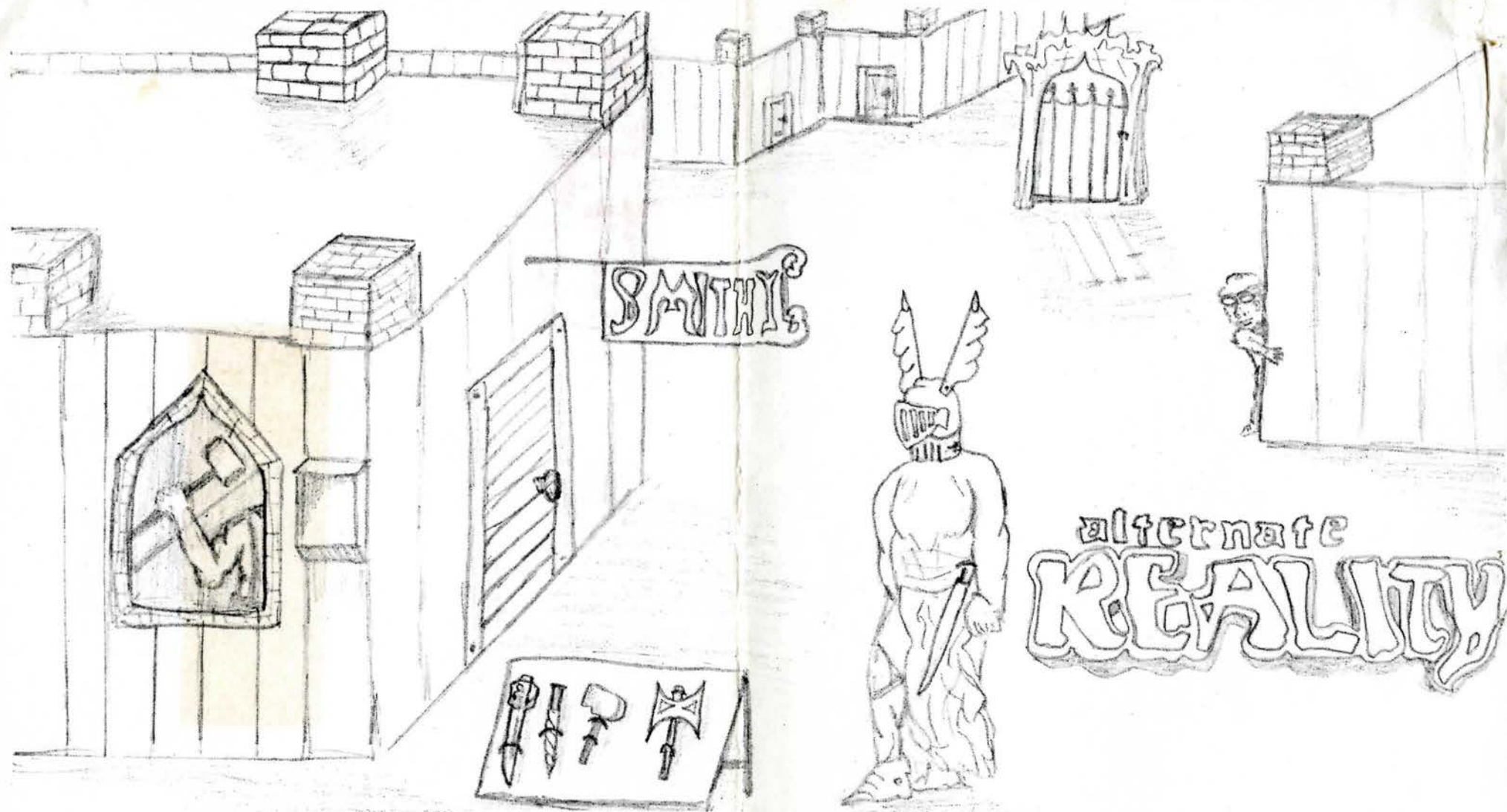
A. When Engaged, if you just wait a moment, the Encounter will usually change to Disengaged or your opponent will make the first move.

Q. If you come across a flamesword and decide to leave it behind (for fear of it being cursed), will you come across it at any other time in the game?

A. Possibly, but don't be so cowardly, or you'll never get anywhere in The City! A flamesword is always worth the risk!

The following illustration is from Jack Paccione, 12, of Staten Island, New York. He drew this picture to demonstrate a portion of his image of Alternate Reality - The City. He did a great job too! Thanks for sharing your creative talent with your fellow Alternate Reality adventurers, Jack!

Any other talented members, please do not hesitate sending us pictures, stories, or any other imaginative things you can come up with! We love hearing from you; you're what keep this newsletter going!



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