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(54) Board Game.

(57) A strategy game is disclosed having a playing board, playing pieces to be moved along prescribed paths from separate starting points to a common goal, "gates" which may be placed in the paths to block them, and "keys" which may be used to open the "gates". The advance of the pieces along the path may be controlled by the participants answering trivia questions or the pieces may be advanced a step at a time with each turn of the participants, but the advance is also controlled by the gates placed in the paths.

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TITLE OF THE INVENTION

Board Game

INTRODUCTION

This invention relates to games and more particularly comprises a strategy board game that may or may not also include a testing of the trivia knowledge of the participants.

Recently, a number of trivia games have enjoyed great popularity. The outcome of the prior art games is determined solely by the participants' knowledge of different categories of trivia, and little or no strategy skills are employed in the playing of the games. The present invention is embodied in a board game, and the moves of the participants on the board may or may not be determined by their knowledge in different trivia categories, but their strategy skills are tested. The ability to answer trivia questions correctly may control the movement of the participants' tokens or playing pieces on the board, but movement may also be made on a step-by-step basis like checkers without imposing a trivia test upon the participants. However, the participants' strategy skills are an integral part of the game, and players are provided with obstacles in the form of "gates" which may be placed in the paths prescribed for movement from the start to the goal on the board to obstruct the progress of opponents. The participants are also provided with "keys"

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which "open" gates in the prescribed paths. The participants "spend" keys to open gates, and the participants may acquire additional keys by moving away from the goal and crossing certain locations delineated on the board. The introduction of strategy into the game increases its excitement and renders the game more versatile than others by allowing for different criteria to control movement of the participants on the board.

In accordance with one embodiment of this invention, the game includes a playing board, a number of "surprise" cards, recording devices to keep count of the keys owned by each participant, playing tokens and small plastic or wooden pieces called "gates". The board bears indicia which delineates a central goal or "keep" and a plurality of concentric spaced barriers about the keep. Starting locations are delineated at the outermost barrier.

Openings are provided through the barriers, in some instances defined by stairs and in others by doors, and the various openings in the barriers are interconnected by paths formed by connected stations which define steps along the

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path. The players move their playing pieces or tokens along the paths, and the players are also able to place gates at the openings in the barriers to block the paths of their opponents. The opponents in turn may open the gates by expending the keys assigned to or earned by them during the course of the game.

The present invention will be better understood and appreciated from the following detailed description read in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF FIGURE DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a playing board along with the playing pieces and gates used by the participants;

FIG. 2 is a plan view on a larger scale of the playing board shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a diagrammatic view of a recording device called a "key chain" used by a participant to keep track of the number of keys he possesses;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a "surprise" card constructed in accordance with this invention;

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FIG. 5 is a bottom plan view of several "surprise" cards showing their normally concealed faces; and

FIG. 6 diagrammatically depicts the front and back of a trivia card.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The board 6 shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 depicts a castle having a keep 8 at the center surrounded by a moat 10 and four concentric walls 12, 14, 16 and 32 which describe between them first, second and third courtyards 18, 20 and 22. In the illustration, the walls and moat are generally hexagonal in plan. The walls 14 and 16 at their six corners are shown interrupted by stairs 24 and 26 which delineate passages or openings through the walls to allow access from the first to the second courtyard and from the second courtyard to the third courtyard, respectively. In the center of the straight sides of outer wall 12, ports 28 and drawbridges 30 are depicted. The innermost wall 32 of the castle also has doors 35 at the center of each straight side 34, which provide access to the keep 36. The various ports

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28, stairs 14 and 16, and doors 35 are connected by paths 38 (denoted sometimes by numeral 38 in combination with a letter) made up of connected elliptical stations 40 described in greater detail below.

The object of the game is to advance from the moat 10 to the castle's keep 36 which is shown on the board to contain a treasure chest 42. The first participant who reaches the keep and gains access to the locked treasure chest 42 is declared the winner. For this purpose, each participant, whether the participant be an individual or a team of individuals, is provided with a playing piece or token 44 which is shown beside the board 6 in FIG.

1. In order to distinguish one token from another, they may be made of different colors, shapes, sizes, etc.

In FIG. 1, rectangular plastic pieces 46 called "gates" are shown which are distributed among the participants. The game also includes "keys" 48 shown in FIG. 3, which are distributed among the participants. The particular configuration of the gates and keys is not critical to the operation of the game, and the keys, for example, may

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comprise individual key-shape pieces 48, or each participant may be provided with a simple recording device 49 with which the number of "keys" possessed by the participant may be logged. The recording device used instead of individual keys may have a scale and moving pointer to keep track of the number of keys held by each participant. Finally, the game equipment may include a number of surprise cards 50 as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5. Their function will also be described in detail below in connection with the playing of the game.

The paths between the ports, stairs and door on the six sides of the board are identical except for the color codes applied to each of the stations 40. The significance of the codes applied to the stations is described below. In light of the fact that the paths on each side are otherwise identical, only the side of the board below the keep 8 as viewed in FIG. 2 need be described in detail.

In FIG. 2 a pair of paths 38A and 38B diverge from port 28A and extend to the steps 24A and 24B at the ends of the side 14A of wall 14. Each of the paths 28A and 28B are composed of three stations which together span the first

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courtyard 18 between the outer wall 12 and the next inner wall 14. Identical paths 38C and 38D extend respectively from the ports 28C and 28D in the sides 12B and 12C of the outer wall 12.

Additional paths 38E and 38F span the second courtyard 20 and intersect one another at a shared special station 52 which depicts a trap door. Path 38E extends from steps 24A to 26B while path 38F extends from steps 24B to 26A. Each path 38E and 38F contains four stations 40 including the common station 52 depicting a trap door. A tunnel 54 is also shown extending from the trap door of station 52 under wall 14, port 28A and moat 10 to the tunnel exit door 55. The trap door, tunnel 54 and door 55 suggest that if certain conditions are not met by a participant when he or she reaches special station 52, the player's token is returned via the tunnel to the starting point at port 28.

Paths 38G and 38H, each made up of two stations 40 span the third courtyard 22 and converge at the door 35 of keep 8, in the side of the innermost wall 34A.

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As stated above, a selected number of gates 46 is assigned to each of the participants and a participant may place his gates across any of the stairs 24 and 26 or doors 35 to block passage to the keep 8 by way of the blocked stairs or doors. The keys 48 assigned to each participant in turn are used to "unlock" the gates so as to allow passage over the stairs or through the door blocked by them. When played in the preferred manner, different number of keys are required to open the gates 46 depending upon their proximity to the castle keep 8. For example, one key may be required to open a gate on the stairs 24 in wall 14, two keys to open a gate on the stairs 26 in wall 16 and three keys to open a gate at the door 35. It is also contemplated that a gate may be placed across the trap doors at the special stations 52 which would enable a participant to traverse the station 52 without returning to the starting point at the outer wall through the tunnel 54.

A variety of different conditions may be imposed upon the participants to permit them to advance station by station from the port 28 to the keep 8. In one form of play, a

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participant may be allowed to advance additional stations along any chosen path by correctly answering a trivia question. For example, trivia question cards from the very well known Trivial Pursuit game can be used. For that purpose, each of the many stations 40 in all the paths 38 are assigned one of six colors, with each color corresponding to a different trivia category. It will be noted in the drawing that six different colors are represented by six different cross hatching applied to the stations represented in accordance with drafting convention. Alternatively, the tokens of each participant can be advanced step by step as in the game of checkers. As yet another alternative, the right to advance may be determined by the flip of a coin, the roll of a die, etc. And under certain rules adopted by the participants more than one station may be advanced at a time.

As suggested above, the game is won by a participant entering the keep 8 and opening the treasure chest 42. The criteria for opening the chest 42 may be based upon the correct answering of a trivia question, the payment of a

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prescribed number of keys, or drawing a "surprise" card bearing certain prescribed directions. It is also contemplated that the category of trivia question to be answered by the participant who enters the keep 8 in order to permit him to open the treasure chest may be determined by directions carried by a "surprise" card 50 placed in the keep at the beginning of the game. When the game is played with trivia questions of different categories, it is contemplated that at the beginning of the game a surprise card either folded or placed face down so as to hide its directions is placed in the keep and is exposed only when a participant reaches the keep. In FIG. 4 a folded "surprise" card 50 is shown, and in FIG. 5 the faces of several cards are shown bearing instructions. The instructions carried by the "surprise" cards may either be in the form of color indicia or words which convey the instructions. It is also contemplated that a "surprise" card may bear the instructions "your choice" or "opposition chooses" indicating that either the participant reaching the keep 8 or his opponents may designate the trivia category.

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The game is played preferably by six or fewer participants, each starting at separate points about the moat 10 at the ports 28 and drawbridges 30. Each participant selects a chosen starting location at the moat, and the first one to play may be determined by placing the "surprise" cards with their instructions hidden and having the participants draw until one chooses the "your choice" card shown in FIG. 5. That participant would move first. The other participants would move in order as located clockwise from the first player. At the start of the game each participant may be given four gates 46 and six keys. The number of gates and keys given may vary with the number of participants. The keys may be separate key-shaped tokens 48, or the number may simply be kept on the record keeping device 49, or any other form may be used. To remove a gate in the path of a participant, keys are expended, and it is contemplated that a participant may acquire additional keys by moving down a stairway 26 separating the third courtyard 22 from the second courtyard 20 or a stairway 24 separating the second courtyard 20 from the first courtyard 18 in a direction away from the

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keep 8. A single key may be awarded for moving down a single staircase, and if a direct path is taken from the third courtyard 22 to the first courtyard 18 without reversing direction, an additional key may be awarded. A key may also be awarded as consolation if a participant falls through one of the trap doors at a special station 52 and returns to the starting point at the moat.

Yet other criteria may be imposed for acquiring additional keys. For example, when a trivia question is answered incorrectly, it is contemplated that the opportunity is to be given to the other participants in turn to answer the same question. If one of the other participants chooses to offer an answer, and the answer is correct, an additional key may be awarded. Conversely, a question answered incorrectly may cost the participant a key. As yet another alternative, the other participants may offer to pass on the question so as to avoid chancing the loss of a key. Further, the trivia questions may be given degrees of difficulty, and the more difficult questions may bring a reward of a greater number of keys.

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When play begins, the first player at a port 28 moves to one of the two stations 40 in the first courtyard 18 connected to his particular port. If the advance of the player's token is to be controlled by the answer of a trivia question, the player may then attempt to answer a question on a trivia card 60 as shown in FIG. 6 in the category determined by the color of the station to which the player has advanced his token. Note the questions on card 60 are color coded as are the answers to them on the back. If the participant answers the question correctly, he is then given the right to advance to the next station 40 and once again answer the trivia question in the category represented by the color of the next station. The participant may continue to advance step by step so long as with each step a trivia question is answered. When the participant fails to answer a question correctly, the next participant chooses a path 38 to move across the first courtyard 18 and similarly is presented with a trivia question. This procedure continues clockwise about the board with all participants having a turn.

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While it is contemplated that each participant will start from a different port at the moat 10, the paths to be traveled by each participant's token 44 is not limited to moving along paths on a single side of the board. Rather, at any intersection of two or more paths, the player may change from one direction to another and either advance toward the keep or retreat toward the moat.

As the players in turn move and advance toward the castle keep 8, they may encounter gates 46 as shown in FIG. 1 placed at the stairs 24 and 26 and at the doors 35. The participants may open any of the gates by paying the required number of keys, which will remove the gates from the path so as to enable the participant to continue. If the path of a particular participant is blocked, he may reverse direction and move back toward the moat 10 and earn additional keys by descending any of the stairways as described above. By earning the additional keys, the participant may then be able to move toward the keep once again and open gates in his path.

Finally, when the participant reaches the keep, he may draw for the "surprise" card 50 which indicates that he can

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open the treasure chest 42 or pay the requisite number of keys, or perform any other prerequisite established by the rules.

In the following section, an example of how the game may be played is described by presenting the rules of the game.

RULES OF PLAY

Object of the Game

The object of the game is to advance your token from the moat of the castle to the castle's keep, which contains a locked treasure chest. Answering a trivia question in the keep will allow you to magically "open" the chest, and therefore win the game. If playing without trivia, then the first player to the keep must open the chest with keys (many are supplied at the beginning of the game). Of course, there are ways to prevent speedy opponents from reaching the keep first, but that is discussed a little later.

Equipment

The game package contains one quad-folding board (some boards may be in four unconnected puzzle pieces), a card containing eight perforated "surprise" cards, six push-out

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recording devices ("key-chains"), six team tokens, and twenty-four plastic pieces called "gates", and the rules, of course.

How to Play (With Trivia)

Team play is recommended (when using trivia) because it helps the game move quickly. Select the team that moves first by putting the "surprise" cards in a bag. The team that chooses the "your choice" card will move first. Play will then move from team to team, clockwise around the board. At the start of the game, all teams place their tokens on a drawbridge. Teams will move their tokens to either of two colored spaces that diverge from the drawbridge. The idea is to move tokens along these paths of colored spaces, in any direction, and eventually reach the treasure chest hidden in the castle's keep. On each turn, a team moves its token one space. However, it may extend the turn by correctly answering a trivia question that corresponds to the color on the space. The colors will approximately match the colors in the most popular trivia games, and players match this game's colors to six categories

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in any given trivia question set. Every team's goal is to move its token through the "first courtyard", up the stairway to the "second courtyard", up another stairway to the "third courtyard", and finally through a door to the "keep". In the second courtyard, the round spaces contain trap doors that open into tunnels which lead back to the "drawing bridge". An incorrect answer in the trap door space will open the door, and the token must be placed on the drawbridge below.

How to Use Gates

To prevent another team from passing through a stairway or door, a team may place a gate, by putting one of his black plastic pieces on the board, across whichever stairway or door it chooses. More than one gate may be placed on the same location. Once a gate is on the board, it belongs to nobody. The first team to spend keys to open the gate may remove the gate from the board and hold it in its supply of gates, or place it somewhere else on the board. The closer a gate is to the keep in the center of the board, the more keys are required to open it. One key must be used to open a gate on the stairs between the first courtyard and the second.

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Two keys must be used to open a gate on the stairs between the second courtyard and the third. Three keys must be used to open a gate placed across a doorway to the keep. Gates may not be placed on drawbridges.

A gate may also be placed across the trap door found on the round spaces in the second courtyard. However, only one key is needed to unlock it and remove it from the board. A gate will prevent any token from falling through the tunnel, even if the trap door is "opened" because the team couldn't answer a question correctly.

Any team may place a gate anywhere on the board, at the start of any turn, or may open a gate anywhere on the board, so that it may be placed somewhere else.

How to Use Keys

There are six recording devices which each team may use to keep track of its keys. This device is called the "key chain".

Each team starts the game with a supply of keys, although the number may depend on how many teams are playing.

Once a key is used, it may never be used again, and you

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must move the indicator on your key chain down one notch. You may use as many keys as you have in your supply on a single turn. Here are four ways to use keys.

1. To unlock gates (See How to Use Gates);
2. By using one key, you may skip over one space;
3. By using one key, you may be allowed another guess at a question. This is a good way to extend your turn, provided your second guess is the correct answer;
4. Through using one key, you can put pressure on another team by giving it a five second time limit to answer its question. This may be done by counting out loud (fairly slowly) from five to zero, at any time after the team has heard its question. After hearing zero, the other team, if it hasn't answered the question yet, may elect to use one of its own keys to guess again without a time limit, in which case the correct answer will extend its turn.

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How to Gain Keys

Keys may be gained in three ways.

1. If a team moves its token from the third courtyard to the second courtyard, or from the second courtyard to the first, it may add one key to its supply, by moving the indicator up one notch on the key chain. However, if a team moves its token from the third courtyard to the first courtyard, following a direct route (the shortest possible), then it gains three keys. If a team is unfortunate enough to fall through a trap door, and go back to the "drawing bridge", it may gain a key as a consolation prize.
2. If a question is not answered correctly, the opportunity to answer it may pass clockwise around the board until a team can answer it. An unanswered question is called a "stray" question, because it passes from team to team around the board. It can be dangerous to answer a stray question, however, because an incorrect

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answer will cause the team to lose a key.

But

if a team can answer a stray question, it gains a key. There is no penalty for passing a stray question on to the next team.

3. For trivia questions that are given difficulty ratings, answering an easiest question will not give a team a key, but harder questions will. If the questions have three ratings, the hardest will gain a team two keys if answered correctly, and so on.

Unlocking the Treasure Chest and Winning the Game

To win the game, one team must enter the keep and "open" the treasure chest. To open the chest, a team must use three keys, or it may open it by answering a trivia question before any other players can answer the same question. In this way, the team can demonstrate its true supremacy and win the game. However, the category of the question given may vary from game to game. To determine what category it is, the team must blindly choose a "surprise" card. The surprise card will either have a color corresponding to one of the six

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question categories, or it will have words printed on it, which may read "Your Choice", or "Opposition Chooses". In the first case, the team chooses any category of its choice. In the second case, the opposition may choose any category of their choice.

How to Play Without Trivia

Game play without trivia can be exhilarating and challenging, and is faster than game play with trivia. Only a few alterations in the rules must be made to create a worthwhile strategy game in itself. Without trivia, the game is suitable for three to six players (teams are not necessary). Game play is the same as with trivia except for the following changes.

1. The "surprise" cards may be used to determine whether or not a trap door will open under a player's token. If the player blindly selects the same color surprise card as the trap door space where he has landed his token, then the trap door will open, and the token must be moved back to the drawbridge.

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2. When a player has entered the keep, he can only win if he has two keys on his key chain which he may use to open the treasure chest. If the player does not have two keys, he may only win by blindly selecting the surprise card which reads "Your Choice". The player may only select one card per turn.
3. Players may wish to change the pace of the game by incorporating a die, or flipping a coin to determine whether to move tokens one or two spaces at a time.

£ Oliver Komar and Alfred E. Wilson

Having described this invention in detail, those skilled in the art will appreciate that many variations may be made thereof without departing from the spirit of this invention. Therefore, we do not intend to limit the scope of this invention to the specific embodiments illustrated and described. Rather, it is intended that the scope of this invention be determined by the appended claims and their equivalents.

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What is claimed is:

1. A strategic board game designed to be played by a plurality of individual or team participants comprising a plurality of playing pieces assignable one to each participants,

a playing board having means delineating a number of starting positions and a single goal,

second means delineating a plurality of intersecting paths from the starting positions to the goal along which the playing pieces of the opponents are to be moved, each path being composed of a plurality of stations each defining a step along the path,

third means representing a plurality of gates distributable to the opponents and which may be placed on prescribed locations in the paths for obstructing movement of pieces along a path,

and additional means representing keys distributable to the opponents which may be expended by a participant to open a gate obstructing the path.

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2. A strategic board game as defined in claim 1 further characterized by

indicia applied to certain of the stations distinguishing them as special obstacles along the path which may require a opponent whose playing piece lands on such a station to return to the starting position.

3. A strategic board game as defined in claim 1 further characterized by

indicia applied to certain of the stations establishing them as special stations upon which a gate may be placed.

4. A strategic board game as defined in claim 3 further characterized by

additional indicia means applied to the board establishing the number of keys required to open each gate.

5. A strategic board game as defined in claim 1 further characterized by

cards intended to be drawn one at a time by each opponent

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in turn for determining whether each opponent may move its playing piece from one station to another along a path selected by the opponent.

6. A strategic board game as defined in claim 5 further characterized by

said cards containing questions which must be answered correctly to enable an opponent to move his playing piece to another station.

7. A strategic board game as defined in claim 6 further characterized by

each of said stations being color coded with one of a selected number of colors,

and corresponding colors assigned to each question to indicate a category of questions to be answered by an opponent to permit movement to another station.

8. A strategic board game comprising

a playing board having indicia which delineates a central

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goal and a plurality of concentric barriers, said barriers defining annular spaces therebetween,

means delineating starting locations at the outermost barrier,

means delineating a plurality of openings through each of the barriers,

means defining a plurality of paths between the openings in different barriers, said paths being composed of a plurality of connected stations each defining a step along the path,

playing pieces assignable to the participants in the game to be moved from station to station along paths selected by the participant to reach the goal,

means representing a plurality of gates distributable to participants and which may be selectively placed at the openings in the barriers preventing a participant from advancing along a path through the opening,

means defining a plurality of keys distributable to the participants and which may be expended to open any gate obstructing the path pursued by the participant toward the

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goal,

and means delineating certain stations as special obstacles requiring a participant to return to the outermost barrier unless a condition for passage through that barrier is met.

9. A strategic board game as defined in claim 8 further characterized by

more than one path leaving each opening in the different barriers providing different paths from each opening to other openings in adjacent barriers.

10. A strategic board game as defined in claim 9 further characterized by

cards adapted to be drawn one at a time by each participant in turn for determining whether each participant may move its playing piece from one station to another along a path selected by the participant.

11. A strategic board game as defined in claim 10 further characterized by

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said cards containing questions which must be answered correctly to enable a participant to move his playing piece to another station.

12. A strategic board game as defined in claim 8 further characterized by
each of said stations being color coded.

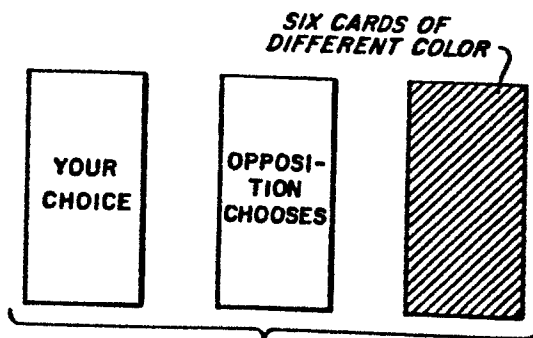
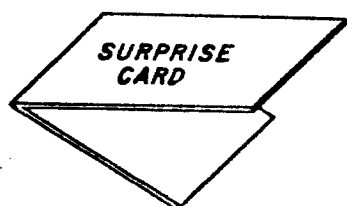
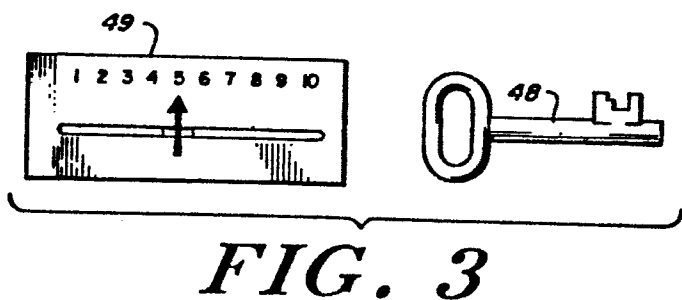
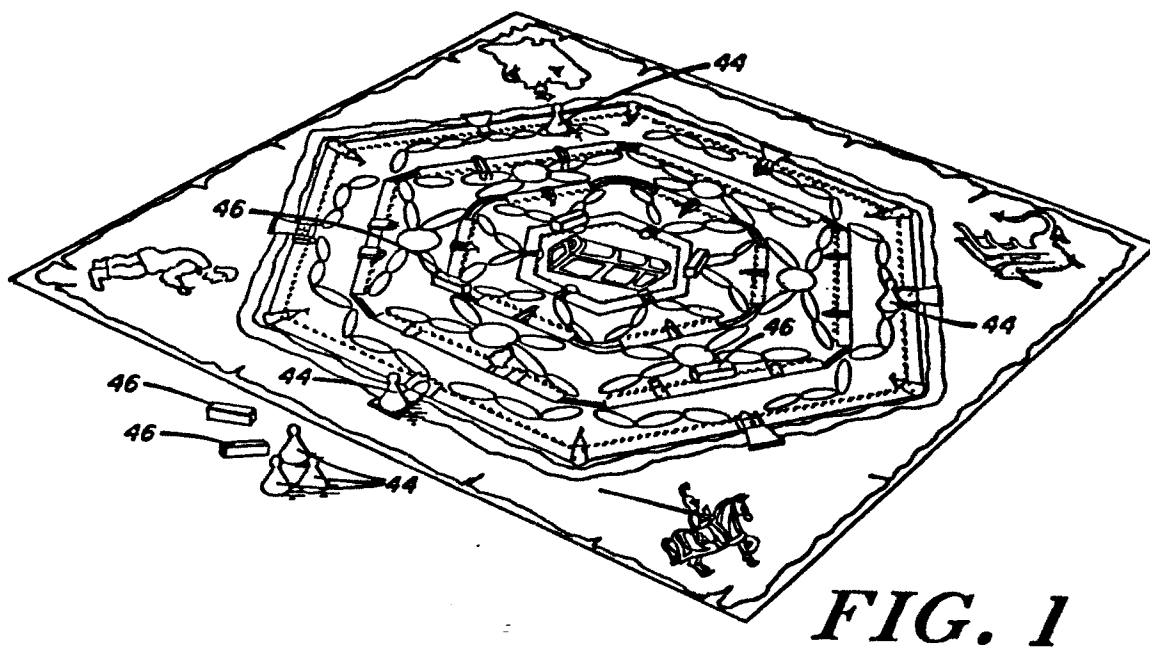
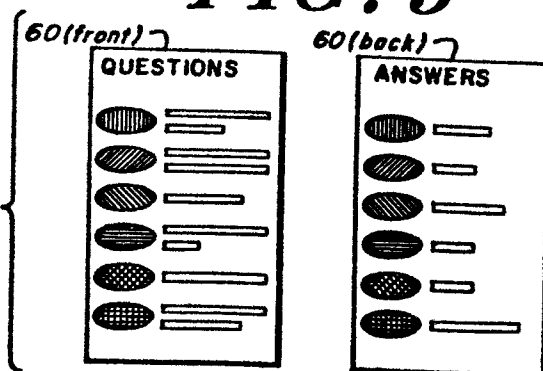
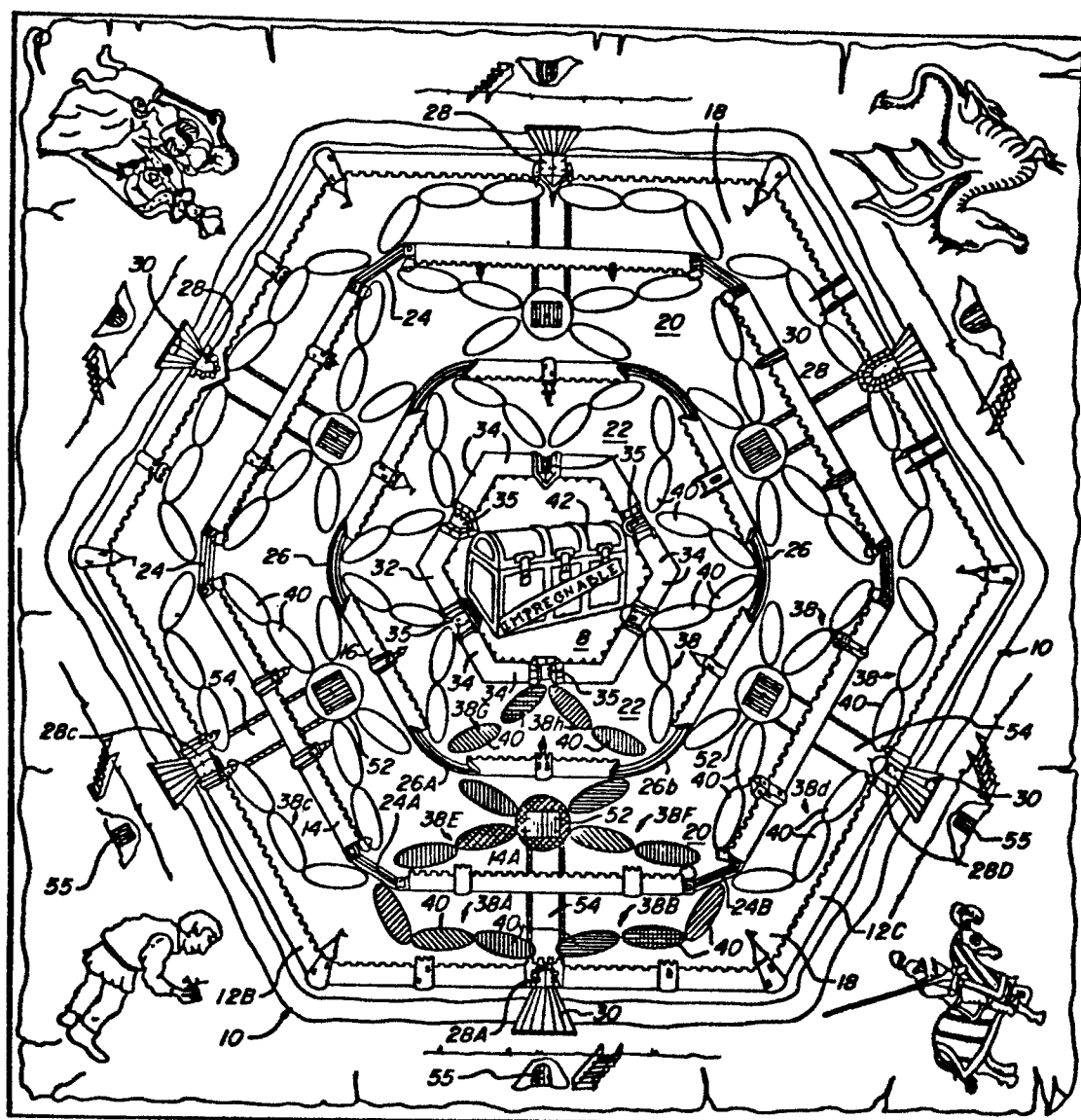


FIG. 6



**FIG. 2**