

ALARUMS and EXCURSIONS

103

MARCH



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A FEW ~~WORDS~~ PARAGRAPHS FROM THE EDITOR (Lee Gold)

This fanzine is set up as a monthly discussion apa (amateur press association) for SF fans and others interested in role-playing steffantasy games. It should give us all a chance to discuss rules and share our own special ideas, and to write up expeditions we've been on. The opinions expressed in it are solely those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor.

1. If you have a contribution for A&E:
 - a. Type it up on a 9"-wide stencil (In America, NINE-hole) and mail to LEE GOLD, 3965 Alla Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90066. Include \$1/stencil. Or use an 8.5"-wide stencil (In America, FOUR-hole) and include \$1.50/stencil. Type 7" horizontally (centered), lines 5-64 vertically.
 - b. Print it yourself; copy count is 500. \$10 handling charge for bulky inclusions. Do not use the word "advertisement" to describe the contribution.
 - c. Send it to Lee Gold, and she will stencil and mimeo it at \$2/page (or fraction of a page). Typing automatically includes improving spelling and grammar (and may include a few new typos). It may also include editorial comments. Those who want their deathless prose left intact should type it themselves or ask for it to be photostenciled at \$2.65/page (or fraction).
UNPAID FOR MATERIAL WILL NOT BE MIMEOED NOR INCLUDED IN A&E.
2. The fanzine will cost as follows:
 - a. Non-contributors: POSTAGE PLUS
 - 1) \$1.50, if you contributed to neither the current nor previous issues.
 - 2) Nothing...if you contributed to the previous issue.
 - b. Contributors: Free, no charge for postage. US (non-APO/FPO) sent UPS; extra for First Class; Canada/APO/FPO sent First Class. Other countries sent Air Mail/Printed Matter.
 - c. For trade with other F&SF Gaming fanzines only; mailed BOOK rate.
 - d. No fixed cost subscriptions are possible, since postage rates and contribution credit may vary. But you may send a check or cash (US or foreign currency) to Lee Gold, and she will deduct costs and inform you each issue how much money is left. When there is no longer enough money to send A&E, she will so inform you--and at your specific request return the balance of your account to you.
 - e. Buyers at stores: pay the store whatever it charges.
3. Back Issues: check the Table of Contents page for available back issues. Cost is \$1.50 plus postage.

POSTAGE: please indicate your choice of mailing options.

US (non APO/FPO): First Class (\$2.58, 4 days); UPS (\$1.59, 1 week); or Book (63¢, 3 weeks). FPO/APO: only First Class and Book options are available. UPS cannot be sent directly to a PO Box.

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If no money is available for the type of postage requested, it will be sent as efficiently as possible. Mailing two issues at once costs much less than twice the cost of mailing one issue--by any of the options. PLEASE let us know if you move. Book and UPS are non-forwardable.

If any copy of A&E has missing or illegible pages, notify Lee Gold and send a self-addressed, stamped envelope--and a replacement page will be mailed to you.

NINE-hole stencils for sale at 20¢ plus postage. (PLEASE read the next page carefully before trying to type up a stencil.)

SOME NOTES FOR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS WHO HAVEN'T TYPED STENCILS BEFORE

1. Buy 9" wide (9 hole) stencils (or 8.5" wide, 4-hole stencils--and think a few kind thoughts for the printer). Your stencil will have a film sheet (transparent plastic), a wax-impregnated stencil attached at the top to a heavy paper backing sheet (DON'T detach it), and a cushion (tannish or white paper or black carbon).
2. Buy STENCIL CORRECTION FLUID aka corflu (usually blue or green). CORRECTION FLUID for xerox/offset typing will not work properly.
3. Type with the typewriter on stencil setting (or remove the ribbon)--with the film between the stencil and the keys--and the cushion glossy side up (next to the stencil) between the stencil and backing sheet. You can reuse the film and the cushion. (Throw out any tissue paper separator between film and stencil.)
4. Type the stencil lines 5-64. (If you bought "church bulletin stencils," start five lines below the top of the first box and type to the bottom of the second box. Type 7" across centered (70 spaces on a pica typer; 84 on an elite). Single space; double space between paragraphs. Don't type a paragraph longer than 15 lines if you want your stuff read easily.
5. Correct mistakes by daubing corflu over them, letting it dry, and retyping.

After typing the first stencil, hold the stencil up to a lamp. If you can't see the light clearly through the letters you typed, you aren't typing hard enough. (DOT MATRIX and DAISY WHEEL typers/printers usually need 3+ impressions on each letter.) If your underlining cuts through the stencil, you're typing too hard and may wind up with ink spots or a torn stencil.

For mailing: remove the film and cushion. DO NOT DETACH THE BACKING SHEET OR CUT THE STENCIL. Do not crease any folds in the stencil. Cardboard backing in envelopes is NOT necessary.

If you have over 15 typos or misspellings per page, the page will be retyped. Please note: ITS = of it, IT'S = it is; THEIR = of them, THEY'RE = they are. No space after an opening quote or parenthesis. Two spaces after a period.

DIAGNOSING PROBLEMS--after seeing how your stencil printed

If a few words or lines are too light, the problem may be corflu. Old corflu gets thick and doesn't spread well because the ether evaporates. Buy a new bottle--or use less corflu.

If your mistakes print even though you corflued them, use more corflu. (A vertical light streak or overall lightness is the fault of the printer.)

Remember to lift up the film and apply corflu directly to the stencil--and wait a minute for it to dry before typing over it. If you don't use a cushion, lift the stencil away from the backing sheet before corfluing; otherwise the stencil will be stuck with wax to the backing sheet and will smudge or tear. When correcting a large area, rub it with something blunt like a paper clip's rounded end before corfluing.

DRAWING ON STENCIL means scratching the wax with a sharp tip that won't cut the stencil. (Try a toothpick if you don't want to buy a stylus.) Put a stencil drawing plate (or a sheet of sandpaper) under the stencil.

If some of your typed letters (the ones with circles like a, b, c, d, e, g, o, p, q) seem blurrier than others, the typer's keys are dirty. Clean out the encrusted ink with a toothpick or unbent staple or old toothbrush. If your typer sometimes cuts out the center of an o or other circle letter, don't worry. If it does so consistently, type less hard or don't underline. NEVER underline more than 2-3".

Back issues: #68, 70, 76-101. Or check with Balboa Games, 630 N. Willow, Long Beach, CA 90806 at \$3.15 including postage. Or with Dragon's Lair, 8316 Blondo, Omaha, Neb., 68134 at the same price (for #58, 60, 63, 65-6, 68, 70+).

TO APPEAR IN #104: Goldberg, Larter, Phillies, Foster, Bolt, Long, Bambach, Wixted, Saunders, Clarke, Gehrke, Brooks & Flin, and Gilham....About 60 pages (as of January 31, 1984).

This issue includes

Cover
 A Few Paragraphs
 Tantivy
 Dragonsgold 21
 Terra Ferretae
 Duck! Here It Comes.
 Death Stars on the Horizon
 Ideasmith's Musings
 Fantasy Fills My Eyes
 Chronicles of Zonka
 FRP Herbalism
 The Chronicles of the Ancient Empire
 Golem's Corner
 Tales of the Golden Archers
 Montmorillonite Man-O-War Bird
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 Shards of Time

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Peter da Silva	1	PK
Lee Gold	4	WH
Lee Gold	5	PK
John Sapienza	5	PK
Robert Saunders	2	YE
John Redden	6	WH
Adrian Bolt	3	BL
Jonathan Woolley	1	BL
Jason Zalk	2	PK
James Robert	4	WH
Lee Gold	2	GR
Matt Stevens	2	PK
Hal Heydt	3	WH
Joseph Teller	5	WH
Nick Larter	6	YE
Mark Galeotti	3	BL
Mark Goldberg	1	BL
John Robillard	1	WH
Neil Fraser	5	WH
Paul Waters	2	GR
George Phillies	2	GD
Steve Gilham	3	WH
Vincent Foster	5	WH
William Pixley	2	PK
David Dunham	4	YE
Lewis Stead	2	WH
Brooks & Flin	7	WH
Rob Ellwood	2	GD
Jonathan Woolley	2	BL
Harry Robertson	3	WH
Phil Masters	5	WH
Mark Galeotti	4	GR
Mark Galeotti	2	PK
Denise Gerneth	9	WH
Elizabeth Wolcott	1	WH
David Nalle	3	YE
Mons Johnson	3	YE
John Sapienza	4	GD
David Union	7	WH
Quentin Long	5	WH
Scot Fritz	2	BL
Nicolai Shapero	3	GD
Phillip Adams	3	GD
Wayne Shaw	5	PK

PUBLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO A&E READERS

- ABYSS, ed. David Walle, bimonthly, 1402 21st St. NW, Wash DC, 20036; \$1.50/sample, \$7/6 issues; \$13/12 issues; offset, digest-sized.
- DIFFERENT WORLDS, pub. Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Offset, slick.
- DRAGON LORDS, ed. Ian Marsh, Avalon, Grams Rd., Walmer, Deal, Kent, CT14 7PU, ENGLAND; 60p/issue (checks payable to Mike Lewis); digest-sized, offset.
- THE FANTASY GAMER from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760; 3 issues/\$8; 6 issues/\$13; bimonthly.
- THE FANTASY HERALD, pub. Sun Reach Pubs., 44 Candleriggs, Glsagow, Scotland, 3 pounds/6 issues domestic; international rates on request; digest-sized, offset.
- NUTS & BOLTS of Gaming, 3753 W. 80th Pl., Chicago, IL 60652; \$2.25/issue; one year US \$10.20. Prozine.
- WHITE DWARF, pub. Games Worskhop, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd., London NW10 6JP, ENGLAND, 75p or \$3 per issue; slick, offset.
- THE WILD HUNT, ed. Mark Swanson, 40 Bow St., Arlington, MA 02174; \$1.50 plus postage; Boston-based APA, monthly.
- WYRMS CLAW, pub. Original Thought, 95 Norris Rd., Brooklands, SALE, Cheshire, M33 3GS, ENGLAND, 4 pounds or \$15 per year. Offset, digest-sized.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO OCCASIONAL ABBREVIATIONS FOUND IN A&E

D%	percentile dice	HP	Hit Points	RQ	Runequest
D#	#-sided dice	HD	Hit Dice	D&D	Dungeons & Dragons
SP	Spell Points	L	Level	VD&D	Variant D&D
2H	Two-handed	K	Thousand	AD&D	Advanced D&D
AC	Armor Class	EP	Experience Pts	LRS	Land of the Rising Sun
HTK	Hits to Kill	EP	Energy Pts	AG	Arduin Grimoire
PBM	Play By Mail	FP	Fatigue Pts	YRS	Ysgarth Rules System
HTH	Hand-to-Hand	BP	Body Points	LoA	Lands of Adventure
GP	Gold Pieces	XP	Experience Pts	OS	Other Suns

STR	Strength	BVC	Bardic Voice	POW	Power	CL	Cleric
WIS	Wisdom	INT	Intelligence	SIZ	Size	MU	Magic User
DEX	Dexterity	CON	Constitution	AGY	Agility	T	Thief
CHA	Charisma	APP	appearance	Wpn	Weapon	F	Fighter

RAEBNC = Read and Enjoyed But No Comment

ct = comment

A&E Alarums & Excursions

DW Different Worlds

WD White Dwarf

TWH The Wild Hunt

TD The Dragon

EGG E. Gary Gygax

PLEASE express all HP or damage ranges as dice instead of numbers.
That is: say 5D10 - or - 5xD10, but NOT 5-50. Thank you.

NOTE for those puzzled by A&E's Table of Contents:
a zine listing in the ToC includes the fan magazine's TITLE, AUTHOR, number of PAGES and COLOR of paper for easy location in the apa.

BL	Blue	PK	Pink	Wh	White
GD	Gold	GR	Green	YE	Yellow

TANTIVY

by Lee Gold; (213) 306-7456

January 28th UPS delivered a package from FGU containing an unboxed copy of LANDS OF ADVENTURE plus the first two Culture Packs and the character sheet. It didn't have the GM screen. It did have a note from Bizar that the complete set will contain dice. If it turns out that Bizar lost the tables that were supposed to go on the GM screen, I will make them available to A&Eers who send a SASE--and to other people at 10 cents plus postage. (Presumably you can handle taping them to a screen yourself.)

Anything else new? Oh yes, we finally got a computer and daisy wheel printer. This should improve the look of A&E a little. It will also mean that (probably by next issue) we will have a whole new way of taking contributions--at least for those whose computers speak UNIX. Just send the stuff over usenet--or call up our modem and squirt it through at 1200 baud. (Note that the machine's only languages are UNIX and C.)

NEWS FROM SCIATHOS

As you may recall, the previous gaming session had been somewhat affected by the fact that Rick Schwall who plays Brimus, King of Sciathos, had not shown up--and that my character sheet for Hieros had disappeared. The GM told the PCs that their two companions had gotten up early in the morning, gone outside to relieve themselves--and not returned. A search revealed that their footprints stopped mysteriously halfway back to the hut. And later on the party met a traveller who told of seeing a really huge bird flying overhead earlier that day. So this playing session began with a flashback to pick up what had happened to Brimus (now that Schwall was with us again) and to Hieros (whose character sheet had been found).

Brimus awoke a little before dawn and felt a call of nature. As he got up, Hieros forced himself to wake up and told the king that he would accompany him. They were on their way back to the hut when they heard a strange noise overhead--and looked up to see an eagle with a 50-foot wingspan dropping down into the clearing beside them.

The eagle spoke in the voice of Brimus's wife (!) and told Brimus to climb on her back. He did. Then she told Hieros that her friend would be landing after she took flight, and he was to climb on her back. Soon the two men found themselves borne on eagle-back through the sky, occasionally interchanging shouts.

The ensuing conversation revealed that Brimus's eagle was not his wife, Philomena, but someone far older and more powerful, the Goddess. He greeted his mother respectfully. She told him that he and his friend were needed to help her and her friend deal with a case of blasphemy. A king had been sent to Mt. Pelion to die. He had been entrusted to the Priestesses of the Bee Goddess. But instead of killing him, the priestesses had taken him as a lover. The eagles flew up towards the peak of the mountain and then landed--and began to change. Feathers melted into fur, and the two men found themselves now riding on the backs of huge she-bears. ["Ah," said Elizabeth Wolcott, "Brimus is riding on his furry God-mother." We threw pillows at her.]

The bears took the two men to the temple of the Bee Goddess, to the back of the temple where a third and noticeably older she-bear joined them. There they were told to dismount the bears and open the temple's back door. Inside they found three women--one asleep and two cavorting with a naked man. Brimus ordered the ones who were awake to leave the hut.

The two priestesses saw the bear Brimus had been riding and grovelled. Two of the bears led them away. The other bear who seemed older looked at the man and said in a woman's voice, "You're mine. Start running!" The man ran off into the woods, followed by the bear.

Brimus and Hieros looked into the temple. There they found a bird-cage in a small shrine. The temple was dominated by the lifesized statue of an extremely beautiful, naked woman tending a beehive.

Later on, the bears returned, their jaws bloody-flecked. His mother warned Brimus that one day the time would come when he must decide whether to die like a king and true hero--or to choose a long and inglorious life. She asked him if he thought he'd been attending to the duties of a king--as well as having fun trying to reshape the island's culture. He asked her what duties he had been neglecting. Surely he'd presided over all the festivals and the obligatory orgies. She mentioned that another part of his job was overseeing the island's courts of justice. He said he'd look into that when he returned.

The bears took the two men to a cave--and then transformed once more, into the forms of their wives. (This made Hieros nervous, and at his request his bear took another shape--that of the Bee Goddess's statue.) The next few hours were spent very enjoyably. Finally the two goddesses awoke the men and told them it was now time for them to join their companions. They were to walk down the path they would find outside, looking neither to left nor right nor in back of them.

They two men left the cave and found a beaten path leading downhill. They had walked it only a few minutes when Brimus heard a familiar voice coming from the right. His father's voice, begging him to rescue him. He had fallen into the hands of maenads and would be killed. Brimus reminded him that even a Hellene king took the office knowing that he must die when the gods called for a death. The voice said he had been bargained for death but not for being maimed as well. Brimus kept walking downhill, and the voice cursed him. Hieros urged that he treat the voice more tactfully, whether it was his father or merely (?) a spirit. Brimus called back his apologies for not disobeying the goddess and going to help his father--and promised to hold funeral games for him.

They went on down the road, and then Hieros heard a voice calling him. His mother's. (His father was Adonis, a minor god.) His mother told him it had been ages since they'd spoken and that he should come over and talk with her. She was only a little way off the road. ("Remember," said Brimus, "be tactful.") Hieros told her that he would love to talk to her again, but that she should come and meet him on the road rather than asking him to annoy the goddess. She did so, and he found himself promising her that he would go back home for a visit next year.

Meanwhile some of the others were off with the centaurs, attending a sacrifice. Then suddenly raucous female cries were heard in the distance and the sacrifice was hastily concluded. The maenads were coming, and it was unsafe for any male to be found by them. The centaurs hurried back to their school to make sure all the boys were safely indoors. And the party members went with them.

Back at the school, Biton (who had been badly wounded the previous afternoon by some bears) was being nursed by the Amazon. The centaurs burst into their room and told them they were to be moved to another, safer place, where the maenads would not find them. Biton was loaded onto centaur-back.

And Thera (Hieros' wife, who had come along on the expedition) went off to find what all the fuss was about--and ended up by going off with the maenads and their divine leader, Dionysos.

And Biton and Hieros finally got to the end of their road and found a dove waiting for them: the king's "son," (born to his wife during the Mysteries). The dove guided them the rest of the way to the centaur school and their friends (all except Thera). The friends told Brimus how the dove had helped save their lives the previous day, when they were being menaced by the bears. The king was quite proud of his "son" when he heard the tale.

COMMENTS ON #102

SAPIENZA: Foolkiller writeup enjoyed while typing but no comment. (TAEBNC?)

SAUNDERS: Nope, I don't follow rock music. Maybe I should put in some song-based spells based on stuff like "Hang on the Bell, Melly." (Or reach further back and have a spell titled "Young at Heart" or "Hail, Hail! The Gang's All Here" Or further back yet for "Black Moonlight" and "Mississippi Mud.")

GILLESPIE: Fascinating account of your FRP experiences in Iceland.

PETER MURRAY: I'll relay your comment. Hilda (now called Eclare) is coming for a visit this weekend.//You can also cover the rubber battlemat with a vinyl sheet--and then draw on it with oil pastels. This not only gives you lots of colors but also lets you put in two levels of information. Thus the oil pastels can show a grove of trees. Searching the area (rub away some of the green) reveals a hidden treasure chest (drawn in with water colors on the battleboard below).

FOSTER: You don't have to accept collect phone calls. //What I said was that several people told me that averaging two two-digit numbers and then rolling a D100 against that was unplayable. I found it quite easy but then I usually find arithmetic quite easy.//In our C&S campaign, our ancient languages were Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Runic Norse, Black Tongue, Quenya, and Numenorean. We also had Khuzdul for the dwarves as a secret language. Modern languages included Gaelic, Cymric, Devon, Eboracan, Saxon, London, and Franlaise; Urukish and Orcish; Sindarin; and finally for the continental races subjugated by the Balrog invasion...Norse, Burgundian, Ilian (from the Ile de France, i.e. Parisian), Italian, Hellenic, Provencal, Iberian, Gothic, Slavic, Lower Franconian and High Franconian.

UNION: Agreed that most games don't offer enough choices in combat; just a whole lot of dice-rolling with no particular way to maximize your chances or express your personality. I think LoA is an improvement in this respect.//For myself, I find that OTHER SUNS is overly encumbered with rules. The background universe is wonderfully interesting.//You should type your comic strip dialogue rather than writing it if you want it to electrostencil well.//I should like to register a creeb at the phrase "Judeo-Christian religions." Judaism at least involves a contract with God, rather than submission.

HEINSOO: Love the idea of PCs as psychic vampires, gaining increased skill and vitality by killing off creatures and gaining high mana treasure.

SADAYAMA: Castle defenses in Japan had to cope with ninja who were usually assumed to be able to slip in unseen (virtual invisibility). Some of the tricks used were floors built to creak when walked on and attics built with lots of strings that set off bells when disturbed (and others that set off bells when cut).//Battle tactics like the phalanx, turtle and shield wall might indeed be affected by airborne archers. Then again you might just get significantly better helmets for the average soldier. (After all the target size of a man's head--as aimed at by the flying archer--is a lot smaller than that of the man's silhouette--as aimed at by the kneeling archer.)//Scrying is usually accompanied by some sort of anti-scry defenses. Or should be.//In short, I think magic might change the tactics of war but not the grand strategy.

Do you assume that gods acquire personalities as they are anthropomorphized by a given culture--or have absolute personalities that are imperfectly revealed to various cultures. If the former, you'd have multiple Sun/Moon Gods; if the latter, only one each.

ROBERTSON: "Spanish Moors" did NOT use to rule the Netherlands. The Spanish did indeed at one point rule the Netherlands. But that was AFTER the Spanish had kicked the Moors out. In fact, one of the reasons the Netherlands revolted and formed the first European republic was in fear that the institution the Spanish used for minimizing Moorish influence (the Inquisition) would be imported into their own country too. Given that Nicholas was a bishop of Myra in Lycia (south-western Asia Minor), there are probably easier ways of explaining his black servant than putting it down to Spanish influence.//Personally I see quite a few differences between Persian, Celtic and Germanic fairies.

HEIN: "The Rescue" was episode #2 of Wizards and Warriors. I can send you a precis of #1 ("The Kidnap"), if they don't get around to showing it.

KEYES: Fat %age should also affect ease in floating in water for both sexes. And for women it seems to affect ability to get pregnant/have a healthy child. And I think Fat %age also affects cold resistance.//Most of your system is so complicated it could only be implemented by computer. This being the case, I am shocked at your having only one sort of Hit Points. Surely you want to have Bone Points, Blood points, Stamina/Energy Points, Muscle/Strength points, Vital Points (heart, lungs, brain). etc. That way you can have different sorts of weapons do different sorts of damage, each type affecting performance differently.

WILSON: I liked the psychic probe/conditioner used in THE STARS LIKE DUST, which allowed you to suppress an emotion (like fear). It could if misused reduce the victim to zombie-like state for awhile but he would eventually recover.

PLAMONDON: If your article ever grows up to be a magic system (as opposed to merely a preliminary section on theory), you will find that you end up writing a cookbook. But a good cookbook, with sections on the general theory of cooking various types of dishes--and then presenting several dozen recipes as examples.

You mention such things as fire-based magic and Earth magic and blood magic. Your system is going to need a long list of such types of magics (if not necessarily an exhaustive list of all types).

Even back in the old days of D&D, I typically let such things as Detect Evil or Detect Gold pick up a miasma left by the former presence of strong amounts of Evil or Gold in an area.

You mention informational spells as opposed to other types. Again, your system is going to have to have a list (this time, I think, an exhaustive one) of all types of spells. And a matrix showing which types are most affected by auras.

Intuition- rather than rule-based games are fine--as long as no one ever challenges the GM. That means they work fine for experienced players, with a highly competent GM--and no interpersonal hostilities. For the average players/GM (tyros, if not munchkins), such a system is totally inappropriate. Which means it can never be commercially viable. But then you already knew that, didn't you?

Got a letter through the net from Dan Pierson. (In response to the stuff I published here a few issues ago, in response to his last letter.) He suggests that LoA Duration Power cost be modified to have 10 years as maximum spell duration, with permanent duration reserved for Spell Weaving. He liked Spell Weaving except for casting time, and wrote, "I envision Spell Weaving in the following sorts of plots:

"1. The opposition has captured someone and wishes to indoctrinate him to their side. To do this, they start a long ritual of Spell Weaving a Compulsion on him. In the middle of the ritual, his friends attack.

"2. You're approaching the domain of a group of Illusionists who have had years to fill the area with Illusions. Good luck...

"Note that neither of these are battle magics (and one depends on the spell not being a battle scale spell). Therefore I will change the casting time for Spell Weaving to 1 *hour* per PL."

Dan adds that "automatic permanence might not be desirable for Force Weaving. For example, it makes the only possible form of Haste permanent! Of course this might be okay if you imposed all the appropriate rapid aging effects...."

"It might be interesting to allow a duration option on Woven spells at a modest extra cost. If the cost increased as the time decreased, this would work well with things like the Haste problem. It would also permit, say, temporary curses with an incentive for long durations."

PRELIMINARY DRAFT ON PSI SKILLS FOR LANDS OF ADVENTURE

Each Species has a general Rating (ranging from -8 to +10), with each individual having an individual modifier to that (-.8 to +1.0). An individual's Psi Rating determines his Skill Acquisition, not his Skill Success. Thus chance of having a Psi Skill in a given Skill Category is: Psi Rating x Category Rating. (Thus someone with Communication 30% and Psi 2.2 would have 66% chance of having a Psi Skill.) If hesh rolled 66 or below on D100, they would get Telepathy. If hesh rolled 07 or below, hesh would get Xenotelepathy.

RANGE = Psi Rating Squared x 10' for most species.

DURATION = Psi Rating rounds

BEINGS AFFECTED = Psi Rating

RATING

COMMUNICATION

Psi Skill: Telepathy

EP COST

1 EP + (1 EP per INT pt difference); double cost if subject is nonconsenting.

Max Skill: Xenotelepathy

as above

KNOWLEDGE

Psi Skill: Skill Teaching
(to half amount known)

1 EP per 1% of Skill learned PLUS 1 EP per INT pt different; 2xCost if subject is nonconsenting.

Max Skill: Compulsions

1 EP per (PL+1) of spell

MANIPULATION OF INANIMATE MATTER/ENERGY

Psi Skill: TK. (up to Max Enc)

2 EP per Load (no damage possible)

Max Skill: Energy Fields

1 EP per (PL+1) of spell;

Damage: 3 EP per Unit of Damage.

Units x Psi Rating BP damage. (Double if Crit)

MOVEMENT OF ANIMATE MATTER

Psi Skill: Energy Drain/Heal

2 EP per Unit; Units x Psi Rating EP Drained/Healed. (Double if Crit)

Max Skill: Body Blast/Heal

3 EP per Unit. Units x Psi Rating BP Blasted/Healed. (Double if Crit)

OBSERVATION

Psi Skill: Clairvoyance

1 EP per 10% of range

Max Skill: Precognition

3 EP per Magic Power Level Factor of Time

PERSUASION

Psi Skill: Illusions

1 EP per (PL+1) of spell

Max Skill: Blast/Heal Ego

4 EP per Unit + 1 EP per CHa pt lower than victim. Units x Psi Rating Blasted/Healed.

(Life Points)

Crit: victim must roll within 5% x remaining LP or die.

MEGA-PSI effects on Psi Skills next time, if there's room.

LEE: The membership rate for attending LACON II is \$50 until the end of June; \$75 thereafter. People planning to attend ought to join immediately, not merely to save the \$25 but also to improve their odds of getting into a nearby hotel. After my experiences at the last three worldcons, I feel it is worth spending the extra money to stay in the main convention hotel and save endless walking back and forth to one's room at odd hours of the night. Write LACON II, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409. The convention will be held at the Anaheim Convention Center. I don't yet know the main hotel. (I'm writing this on 23 December; hope you had a nice solstice.) Considering the number of apahacks I expect to be there, maybe we should refer to it as L'A&Econ.

I wonder how many of us would be willing to pay for a complete set of your herbalism pages collected together. I would. Do you have enough extras to put together a few sets.//I'm enjoying your continuation of WIZARDS & WARRIORS. Pity they'll never be produced now that the series is dead.

MARK GOLDBERG: Glad to see you appear as a whole page occasionally.//I'm not sure your observation that D&D is seen as an introduction and AD&D for the hardcore gamer is how TSR is marketing the two games. D&D3 (I think that's the current edition) is really a distinct design, with growth planned to about twice the maximum levels of AD&D. There's nothing wrong about that, but I wonder whether supporting two different versions of the same basic concept is worth it. It would have made better sense, I think, to have a paperback introductory set that led directly into the hardcover game. I'll never understand how TSR operates, I guess.

MIKE LEWIS: Welcome back. I think you misunderstood what I was trying to say in A&E 92 about rolegaming as a social activity, judging by your comment about RPGs as a "focus for an evening of chat and drinking, ... a superb way of passing time." That's much farther out on the casual-serious axis of gaming towards the casualness end than I am or any US gamers I know. The attraction of rolegaming for me is experiencing adventure in a participatory medium, as distinguished from reading a novel and identifying with the protagonist. This takes devoting the time to gaming primarily, not to party activities like chat and drinks. I was discussing the problems with carrying this devotion to the game farther than the other participants want to go toward utter seriousness, to the extent of excluding some players from playing for extended periods. The problem is reaching an understanding on what kind of activity everybody came for.

My comment on chainmail bikinis was not based solely on one fanzine cover. It also was based on other pieces of British artwork, including the revision to the RQ2 cover and numerous lead figures. There seems to be a considerable amount of misogyny in Britain that shows up in odd ways.//Congratulations on having your own column in WHITE DWARF. Thanks for the comparison between IMAGINE and WD.

STEVE GILHAM: I enjoyed your discussion of what's good, bad, indifferent, or merely strange in RQ.//Your Tiphareth story covers interesting ideas on color magic that would be worth your doing a follow up essay on the topic.

JENNY HEIN: I used to go through A&E making notes for comments, which I would type up later in somewhat different form after rethinking them. I gave that up as too much work. Now I read each issue and put it aside a few ~~days~~ weeks, then read it again at the typewriter and type the comments I'd had brewing in the back of my mind from the first reading.

COMPUTER USERS: Who is printing on stencils and who is having their zines electrostenciled? I'm curious to find out which degree of illegibility is worse.

PAUL MASON: Enjoyed your comparison of the hobby in US vs UK.

BILL KEYES: Welcome back. I too contributed ideas to RQ but got too late into the discussion to have much chance to mess up the works. I'm curious to see what the published version contains. (Hmm, it may even be out by the time you read this.)) Since you helped playtest ELFOUEST, I trust you've seen Julie Guthrie's EQ figures from Rai Partha. They're a lovely reproduction in three dimensions of the Pini drawings.

It was not obvious to the others that SZ was wearing three cloaks because of the cloaks' magical nature, which transformed them into a three-colored-oriental outfit that merely looked like formal wear. That and the fact that the referee care-fully did not tell any of the other players the legend of the dragon cloaks, so we didn't know to ask questions until it was too late to avoid confrontations. I think the ref enjoys allowing players to blithely get themselves into trouble by taking on more than they can handle, by making major artifacts available for anyone foolish enough to get greedy. I have a feeling there are a number of long-term nastinesses lurking in the campaign that are going to bite characters eventually.

Rulbender sounds like the best term suggested so far to describe players who seek advantages they haven't earned by arguing rules interpretations. The problem is that no single term can describe arguments arising between people with significantly different mindsets. Compare the player whose goal is to have his character crowned king with the one whose goal is to experience the process of working toward gaining noble rank, for example. One wants gain quickly; the other feels that getting there is all the fun. The way they read the rules will be at very different stants, yet can it always be said that one is bending the rules? is a puzzlement, sometimes.

MARC WILLNER: The only reason I became heavily involved with the ROLEMASTER rules by ICE is that Bill Jaffe wanted to start a new campaign using them to try them out. After over a year of experience with them, I'd say they seem much in need of consolidation and revision before being able to stand on their own as a complete game. The referee's guidelines should be out by the HIA show, the major missing section. But the current version is badly overpriced because of its unconomical format (and considerable reprinting of rules among the sets). And I have considerable reservations on the combat system, which makes it impossible to add new weapons without the aid of ICE's computer program and which seems to me too complex (or maybe it just doesn't appeal to my biases).

I think the ICE rules would appeal most strongly to someone who's played AD&D for several years and wants supplementary rules to experiment with. That's really what the law series was designed to do, and its intended market. CHARACTER LAW in particular is better designed than AD&D's character creation system, but once you've adopted that you've moved onto a different game system, as CL simply is not compatible with AD&D. For anyone with AD&D and CL, I'd suggest trying SPELL LAW in combination with CL. Using the AD&D combat system, I feel that CL is the best part ICE did, SL the next best (and subject to relatively easy referee modification), with ARMS LAW the least attractive and most rigid component.

BRUCE V. EDWARDS: Actually, Bill Jaffe has structured his campaign so that if players don't cooperate, they won't achieve things that are possible to the group as a whole. Since the players are keeping a lot of secrets to themselves, I suspect a number of people will discover after it is all over that comparing notes early on would have made it possible to discover that they had misunderstood a number of significant trends. *sigh* This is not a cooperative group in general, although several of the more confrontational players have dropped out.

THE UK CONTRIBUTORS: Welcome, nice to hear from you, and can we have the use of the apa again now that you've had your party? These congregations of special interests do prevent the normal flow of traffic.

BULLETIN: ORIGINS '84 will be held 21-24 June instead of the original July date. Write PO Box 59899, Dallas, TX 75229 for information.

PHIL MASTERS: Welcome to A&E, but in future please type single-spaced. You took five pages to say what would have fit on three, adding to the crowding.//Try inquiring of GDW whether they'd be interested in your magic system for a TR variant or as an article for the JOURNAL.

DANIEL JAMES: If self-contained underwater breathing apparatus is available for reindeer, do you have to use the flutter of snowflakes spell underwater to give them the proper comfort; and if so, how much unobtainium do you have to use per cubic centimeter/second of reindeer to power it? The preceding comment is random and may be ignored. RAEBCN.

IAN A. ENGLE: I enjoyed your piece on aliens; it seems to me that once you get beyond such science-oriented questions as stellar type and planetary formation, many of your principles apply equally to fantasy campaigns.

DANIEL NOLTE: Welcome back, and happy new family member. ERIC's typing is pretty good, considering he was doing everything in code....//Apposite comments on credibility.//I think I like Bill Keyes' suggestion of "rule bender" better than "system exploiter." The latter sounds like someone who uses what he is entitled to use, to the maximum. The former conveys the intended flavor directly.

APRIL LEE: A nicely done drawing of a dragonewt on his demibird. He looks like a contributor whose zine arrived too late to get into the issue, though. And lest I seem too disgruntled, let me wish everybody a retroactive Serene Solstice and a Bountiful Beethoven's Birthday.

PETER DA SILVA: I don't remember if this came up in the earlier dust storm over sexism in writing, but I recently read a suggestion that we could avoid one overemphasis on gender in language by removing one of the peculiar exceptions to normal structure in English. Considering that we are already accustomed to having the same word for both second person singular and plural (i.e. "you"), why not stop using "he," "she," or "it" distinctions except when we really need to distinguish the gender of the subject. Instead, you could use "they" as the universal term for third person singular or plural for general application. It would seem awkward for about six months until it became automatic.

DAVID NALLE: You seem to have had a stressful summer, judging from your apparent state of irritation the last few months. I hope things are improving. Trying to get a graduate degree, keep a game company afloat, and write for several magazines would seem to preclude sleep!//Your comment on game styles was very thoughtful. I expect to have more to say on that.//I agree on the thieves guild. One could exist only in a chaotic society, since once the government started protecting people's property, thieves would have to go underground. Of course, the distinction between thieves guild and the castle and following of your friendly local baron may be a fine one....

SIMON J. CORNELIUS: Happy new job. Clever of you to make sure you got first crack at all new game materials, and at an employee discount to boot.//I enjoyed your discussion of the differences between science fiction, science fantasy and fantasy. There have been many attempts to define them, none of which have stood the test of time, however. My favorite starts with the proposition that all fiction is fantasy because it allows the reader to fantasize being the lead character. All genres are broken down by type of fantasy.

With that approach, the concept of science fantasy becomes a bit easier to accept. Note the interface between fantasy and religious fiction in this definition: religious fiction deals with a specialized form of magic, after all. Then your fantasy category (which you define as requiring using Earth as background) would be redefined as magic fiction subcategory, which may be easier to conceptualize. Most of this category is also part of the medieval fiction category, but some had earlier or later settings, even modern times. The emphasis tends to be on the same subject

as myth: essential human problems exposed to exotic forces to bring out the good and evil parts of human nature for study. I think this is why this type of fiction leaves the background very similar to what we are familiar with, so as to concentrate on the people.

Science fiction tends to reverse this emphasis, by concentrating on the sense of wonder to be found by examining the exotic background against which the characters act out simple plotlines. Only the best SF breaks out of this mold and creates believable people problems in exotic settings.

Because it is apparently impossible to distinguish the various forms of fiction that underlie our games, we cannot satisfactorily divide game types. For example, is there really a good distinction between fantasy and science fiction in a story set in modern times employing teleportation and telepathy? One side calls it magic and the other psionics, but they really mean the same thing: the effects are produced by unexplained powers. Perhaps a more useful question is whether it matters what name you apply to a particular novel or campaign? If you want to know what to expect before spending your time and money, maybe we need a longer descriptor covering more factors more particularly. For instance, it might cover the planet, races, tech level, use of magic, etc.

I think your critique of the RQ skills system might have been better organized if you had described in particulars what RQ does before disagreeing with it. Your list of complaints states what you think ought to be done but not why the reader should agree with you. (You did do both, but very sketchily.)

Your first point is that some skills should be harder to learn; this is built into RQ mechanics in a way. The learning curve is the same for all skills; the better you are, the harder it is to improve further because you must roll against an increasingly smaller odds of improvement. By giving some skills higher starting %ages than the base 5%, RQ in effect gives the character a distinction between harder and easier skills. I do, however, agree that easy skills should go up faster than hard ones. In RQ3 (as of the last version I saw, anyway) skill increases will be D6+1% or +2% to reflect the idea that they are easier to learn.

Your second point is that people with high characteristics should get skill gain bonuses. I think this is misplaced benefit to a factor already having a built in benefit in the system. High specs give bonuses to skill use (+5% and +10% in RQ2; it will be more graduated in RQ3), which is benefit enough, I think. I've had a running argument with Glenn Blacow over even that. Glenn is annoyed at the stat inflation this approach produces, with people discarding characters with average stats because they don't have built in bonuses. This is a matter of taste, of course.

Your third point is that successful use of a skill after the first time gives no mechanics advantage in RQ, leading to the weapons caddy approach to weapons on the part of the rulebenders, who change weapons during a battle to get an experience roll after the expedition in several weapons. Your suggested method is not unreasonable but I think it is too complex in application. I have a prejudice in formulas, I guess. Why not just say that for every regular success roll, the character adds 1% on the experience roll attempt? In preparing your rebuttal, please remember the Simplicity Principle. With any luck, RQ3 will be out shortly after you read this, giving you further material to critique.

Confrontational gaming seems to be more a matter of personality than of circumstances. The personality keyed to winning becomes frustrated during periods of inaction and is tempted to pick on companions for entertainment. Stealing and interparty assassinations are variants to this. Choosing character class for maximum power seems to go with choosing character goals in disregard of what your companions are likely to be doing; after all, anybody who gets in your way can always be either intimidated or killed off. But the above description is the extreme case. I've observed various degrees of the same behavior pattern, with varying degrees of tact. And every gamer is oriented to winning in some fashion. It's a matter of approach to the game and one's fellow gamers, a matter of expectations.

MARTIN WIXTED: Your system seems also to be a promotionless combat system, which is my main criticism of it. You key everything to personal statistics, so that an average character with STR&DEX averaging $10.5 \times 5\% = 53\%$ attack/parry/dodge skill is stuck there forever. This means the promotion is through stat increases and equipment acquisition in your game, which seems rather rigid to me. Besides paragraph one could be deleted, and you'd still have the roundless aspect of combat, with the combat round redefined as the second--and all actions defined in the number of seconds required to execute them.

I note that the only 2H weapon on your table is the quarterstaff unless battleaxe is the 2H version of the hand axe. I doubt that, since you key weapon damage to size, and battleaxe does the same damage in your table as longsword. Am I correct in assuming that you peg greatsword and greataxe at +4 seconds, 2D6 damage, and a best speed of 10 seconds? I suspect that our SCA friends will disagree with either 8 or 10 second action times on weapons, though.

ARLEN P. WALKER: There is a problem with your moral formula that companies that overcharge for products are in the same class as swindlers. You mistake the differences between the two activities. A swindler intends to take your money and give you nothing for it; an overcharger is simply giving you value in exchange for what could be provided at a profit for less money. Your solution is to encourage someone else to copy the product and sell it for less. Yet this is the theft of the product of the creative process, as the copier did not originate any value and only contributes a possibly less expensive manufacture and distribution. You praise the thief for selling you effectively stolen goods. Possibly worth rethinking.

The purpose of free enterprise is to reward hard work and creativity by allowing you to make as much money as the market will bear, thus encouraging people to exert themselves. Let the man who thinks he can sell a product cheaper do his inventing independently, if he is to deserve moral approbation. The use of the product is its value, not the price charged--the whole concept of "overcharge" has no meaning in a market that offers competing independent inventions.

No need to apologize for doing only comments. You did five pages of condensed print, and it amounted to as much a series of essays as many zines. Well done, and good luck on catching up on back issues.

SAGA AGE FRP by Laurence Gillespie

As noted last issue, I am currently in the final stages of design work on a game set in saga-age Iceland. It features a fast, simple but very realistic combat system, extensive research (in both English and Icelandic), and over six years of intensive playtesting in several different gaming communities (including Iceland). It stresses roleplaying, low level adventures, and authenticity to its sources. And it does so with a very simple, easy to learn game system.

I am interested in communicating with people who might be interested in contributing art for this project. The game will be published professionally, and all art used will be paid for at competitive rates.

People seriously interested in being informed of future developments as to the game should send a self-addressed envelope with an International Reply Coupon (available at your post office) to Laurence Gillespie, Myjagardur, v/o Sudurlandsbraut, 101 Reykjavik, Iceland. (Or after July 14, 1984 send it to 23 Robert Allen Dr., Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 3G9, Canada.)

And another riddle (very easy)

By light of day this race never appears,
Men see them not then.
But at night all the time
They are light on the way.

27/11/83

Robert Saunders,
4, Viewforth,
Edinburgh,
UK.

Tel: 031-223-5152

Well, I did attend Games Day, and it was very good to meet all/most of the British A&Eers. I won't bore you with a list of names (I'd probably forget someone anyway). Most of the weekend seemed to be spent in the bar, which turned out to have remarkably liberal licensing laws for England. The only game I actually got into was "Victorian Adventure", which Harry subsequently bought (and will review for A&E). First impressions were favourable, though I do have some reservations. Inevitably played GoC, but the GM seemed rather apathetic.

The only purchase that I made was the Uthulhu Companion, and I may review this later, if there is sufficient space. One noticeable thing was its variable price. I was given a free copy of a book entitled "Fantasy Role Playing Games", by someone called J. Eric Holmes. This book is good in places, but not consistently so. Some chapters are valuable, such as the history of D&D itself. It does, however appear to have been written in a rush.

Anyhow on to the shortest Ferret Mumbles yet.

CLARKE: I'm in the process of attempting to prepare a game based in Domesday England. The references you sent have proven to be a very good starting point for research into this. It's also becoming a bit of an obsession with me, and I'm interested in the period for its own sake now. The system I'm planning on using if this ever gets off the ground is a modified RQ, with little or no skill advancement (PCs will be established adults). Oh yes, no magic, of course. More on this in a later zine.

Magic in FRP Games and Worlds

Magic in one form or another is ubiquitous in FRP game systems. In TFl, I briefly mentioned some ideas I had regarding the frequency and importance of magic in FRP campaigns, mentioning my newly renovated campaign. Since that date, my campaign has run with no magic use at all (although it does exist should the players seek it out). None of the players have objected, if indeed they have noticed at all.

Three clearly defined options are open to the GM. Firstly there may be a situation where there is no magic, secondly only a moderate amount, and thirdly, magic could be commonplace, as much so as digital watches are today.

In the case where there is no magic, realism is easy to maintain, both in the pure sense of the word (there is no magic in the real world), and in the sense of internal consistency. This is because there will be no anomalies of the type where castles and other fortifications exist side by side with vastly powerful pyrotechnic spells, and, on a smaller scale, people would need to climb walls rather than levitate over them. When you think about it, life in a magical world (not necessarily magic rich) would not be the same as that in the real world. Other ways of life that would be profoundly influenced by magic would include medieval arts, trading, and law enforcement.

In my current campaign, mentioned above, there has, to date, been no magic use by the players, and virtually none witnessed by them. Despite this, the campaign does fall into the second category listed above, as the limitation

of the distribution of magic is just rather severe at present, due to various circumstances.

My VaRQ campaign uses a modification of the magic system from C&S (I'll give a brief outline of this later in the zine). It should be noted that this option is harder to maintain than either of the others. Initially the GM must determine the extent to which magical prowess is distributed through society. Subsequently, the means by which this limitation is achieved must be defined.

There are several ways by which magic can be restricted. Firstly, it can be restricted to particular groups within the world's population, and secondly, it can be limited in power (ie it's relatively common, but not very powerful). A third possibility is a combination of these. In each case, several options exist as to the precise means by which these are effected.

Magic can be limited to a particular class of persons by two means; by rules fixed, as in D&D, C&S etc., or by societal pressure within the world. As purely personal preference, I have chosen the latter strategy. One problem some will find in such an approach is with play balance, especially with what is effectively a character class in an otherwise class-free rule system. Personally I have little regard for the concept of play balance (for example how can you worry about balancing classes when PCs are of widely varying stats anyway), except at a gross or superficial level. My own opinion is that if an NPC of similar ability to a particular PC should not be capable of achieving greater skill or power than that PC.

A further possibility is to make magic consistently weak, or that PCs rarely encounter powerful magic. However this does stink of rules kludging. To me, it seems that one of the attractive features of magic and FRP simulations of it is the feeling of increasing power as one's PC grows wiser and more knowledgeable, and to effectively prevent this would be unpalatable.

I shan't write much on the subject of those systems/worlds with vastly powerful and/or incredibly common magic, as most of us have played in such games, mainly in the infancy of FRP, the days when D&D was all there was. It is true that sensible societies can be constructed round rules systems allowing this, but at greater expense of time and effort by the GM.

In my VaRQ campaign, magic is limited in the initial stages of a PC's career by his literacy. This creates the effect of restricting magic use to PCs of certain classes of society. I find few players early in a PC's life want to spend lengthy periods of time studying. Being C&S based, it does require the expenditure of long periods of time on study. In addition, this feature prevents all but the most dedicated students from achieving great power.

The basic rules follow those in C&S quite closely. It is however level-less (or, rather, finely levelled), with skill in the different groups, or classes of spells being expressed as a % PMP (Personal Magic Factor for those unfamiliar with C&S) is calculated as the skill % of 3xPOW. For example a PC with POW 15, and Command spells at 55% has a PMP of $(55/100) \times 15 \times 3 = 26.4$. Don't worry about the decimal places, these are common in C&S stats. This produces a ceiling on any particular PC's ultimate power.

This system also involves a modified BMR (Basic Magical Resistance) table, keyed to PMP directly. (The original was keyed to level, which increases roughly as the PMP and MA (magical ability) in C&S).

Magical advancement is further limited in my world by virtue of its being rare and frowned upon by the authorities and Church. The libraries system in TP3 is a major source of spells new to the PC, and success at this is dependent on his or her persistence and literacy.

The Cthulhu Companion: A Review (of sorts)

As mentioned in the intro, this represents the whole of my Games Day purchases. Its full title is subtitled as "Ghastly Adventures and Erudite Lore". The first thing I noticed was its variable price: I picked mine up for £4.95, but at other stalls, it was going for £6.95, which is rather more extortionate.

The introduction contains some rule changes that are present in the second edition, for those with a first edition copy, as the companion is written using 2nd Ed rules.

Next, there is a four page piece on "The Cthulhu Mythos in Mesoamerican Religion", which would provide the basis of some very interesting adventures in the central America. In a similar vein, there are "Further Notes on the Necronomicon" which again is a mine of ideas.

"Sourcebook Additions" is a list of prisons in which miscreant investigators may be incarcerated, and a Lovecraftian timeline, listing events from various of his stories in chronological order. This is followed by some rules additions, comprising new phobias and insanities, and new Mythos beasties. A short series of prayers and excerpts from various obscure tomes is followed by four good to excellent scenarios. At least they look excellent, as I haven't played them yet. The rest of the book is filled with Lovecraftian poetry (including a magnificent filk

called "The Lair of Great Cthulhu", to the tune of Chatanooga Choo-Choo, which gave us much fun singing in the Games Day bar) and two pages of Lovecraftian Adjectives and adverbs. The book is very nicely illustrated throughout, with no typos that I've noticed.

The book is certainly well worth a purchase, especially at the lower of the two prices I've seen it at. As a matter of interest, all the Call of Cthulhu stuff on sale in this country is rather overpriced, for example, Asyluma and Ygg-Sothoth are £7.95 each. [Just received A&E 100 today, 5/12/83, wow!!! 78 pages for 102 already?]

As ever with Chaosium products these days, this is a well produced piece, with few/no typos, well-written, and imaginatively conceived. As a supplement/sourcebook, the material here is pretty ace, but perhaps this book is overpriced if you don't like running ready made scenarios (though having said that, such are always useful to have, just in case).

On Games Day 1983 (November 4th and 5th)

This was the first Games Day that I'd attended, and as such, I didn't really know what to expect. In the event, I had a pretty good time, though this was mainly due to the company and people I met. However I did have one idea concerning next year's event. One thing noticeable was a lack of games and things to do suitable for the more advanced gamers, such as the A&Eers and famous fannish types.

What occurred to me shortly after returning to Edinburgh was that we should organise a Games Day Fringe next year. I envisage this having the same relationship to the official Games Day proceedings as the Edinburgh Festival Fringe does to the Official Festival (a comparison useful only to those of you who've been to this, I suspect).

Immediately apparent is the possibility of decent RPG scenarios, unrestricted by competition styles of gaming. Other goodies would be (yes, my liquid paper is dry) discussion groups regarding game mechanics, world design, etc. We did effectively do this to an extent in the Games Day bar though it would be more involved if participants came prepared, bringing material relevant to the subjects chosen.

I've already written to Pete Clarke on this, and he seems interested. I shall probably also communicate with the other A&Eers in the UK regarding it. If I get round to it. On first consideration, the most obvious problem is the hiring of accommodation for it, unless a suitable flat in a convenient location can be found.

Anyway, I'll throw this open for consideration, and any thoughts on the subject would be most appreciated.

More Ferret sumbles, as A&E 100 is now here. BROOKS: As you know by now, I'm not Roger Mueson. However, I have now made contact with him. About time too: I've only been at the same address for 4-5 months.

Again in the SMALLWORLDDEPARTMENT, BAKER (in M. Larters zine) Yes that is me.

GYGAX: Wow! Nice to hear from you. I do hope you keep on with the hobby, and I'm pleased you approve of personalised rules modifications. I do agree with you that D&D should not be allowed to slide into constant bickering.

A LAST MINUTE COMMENT TO
ROB ELLWOOD. SORRY ABOUT THE
ULTRA-MUDDLED COMMENT TO YOU IN
TF 4. IT MADE SENSE TO ME AT
THE TIME. (IT DOESN'T ANY MORE!)

DUCK HERE IT COMES!

John Redden 4056 Sawtelle Blvd. Los Angeles CA 90066 PN=(213 391-6068)

First a few comments starting with #93

LEE GOLD(93): Re NPC character profiles. What I use is a set of linear graphs similar to those presented in Chaosium's *Griffon Mountain*. Sometimes I expand or simplify this system. My experience has shown me that if you have time to include a FEW characteristics like GOSSIP or FLATTERY and add a simple paragraph about the NPC (often family or social background).

When I actually run the game I often add "more" to the character and add it to the campaign notes for later reference. I try to include an obscure one like "sleeps soundly" or "picks nose".

PHILLIP McGREGOR(93): Re SO. If it doesn't work right for you, fix it! Have fun! Oh well, sorry, I guess you don't have to if you don't want to. Actually I have been using ideas from SPACE QUEST (TYR Game Makers), SO, other games to patch TRAVELLER for years now.

BILL KEYES(93): In all my campaigns I try to generate copious action but keep PC abilities at a relative low level. One thing this policy has allowed me to do is easily present different game systems within the same campaign. Your comment tells me that this has been tried before, any results?

ROBERT PLAMODON(94): I have always had this insane, chaotic idea to simplify (f.i.t.b.) D&D. Define all NPCs, PCs, etc. as "monsters" (using the monster matrix only). Then as the campaign progresses tweak them so they develop character classes as they go along.

LEW WOLKOFF(94): Consider your illusion on the horse stolen.

RICHARD SCHWALL(95): An excellent fanzine. I'm inspired to contribute something along this line in the future. I do have one nit though. The characteristics seem to HUMAN.

MARTIN ELLISON(95): CIVILIZATION is an excellent board game and a good simulation of human natural history.

JENNY HEIN(96): Consider the voice table stolen for MUSIC and/or ORATORY skill in my TRAVELLER variant.

SELF(96): Re HPs for body location in Ducks and Dragons variant. I have discovered that non-PCs need a minimum (not a % as originally stated) of the total. I might be reinventing RQ inside D&D, oh well, just having fun.

RANDALL STUKEY(96): Re CT to SCHWALL. Rationality in our own natural history certainly varies from period to period and from culture to culture. This same phenomenon can also be seen in other character profiles (patience, tolerance, etc.). RICHARD SCHWALL's system really gets interesting when his species categories are considered as variables and not constants. Another roleplay experience system -- good!

JOSEPH DIEN(97): Read and enjoyed. Actually I consider your system to be a D&D+RQ variant, a positive step in FRP. If you fool around combining RQ and D&D -- just think! -- you can tick off two groups of OTWs at the same time!

ROB ELLWOOD(97) Re skills of a high order. This is precisely why in FRP games a successful use of a skill, a "hit", damage, etc., is an abstraction of MANY ACTIONS over a period of TIME (a metarule or possibly a metarule**2 sneaking in here folks).

JOHN BURT(97): Oh! No! If this is true what will happen to QUACK OFF, QUACKERS, DRAKEULA, JACK WEBB FOOTE, WEB TIDE, DOCTOR DUCKTUR, EARTH QUACK, DUCK DOWN UNDER, HOLLAR BILL... ..

DAVID NALLE(97): So does a large plurality of ALL the groups I run with, it has little to do with age.

PHILLIP McGREGOR(97): Actually I find SO rules to granular in some areas and not nearly granular enough in other areas. So far it has served as a source book for my greatly modified (yes!) non-Imperium TRAVELLER campaign.

ROBERT LOUTZENHEISER(98): Sorry you never made it but it was good to talk to you. It seems to me that isolating the cause of shock necessitates sufficient medical knowledge, i.e., death in a society without detailed knowledge of biology will occur without the dying person knowing why. I do want to adapt some of your ideas to my LEAGUE COSMOS TRAVELLER campaign. I have two basic questions to be answered. The first is how to deal with

aliens that have different nervous systems (two brains?). A second is I think there is needed a more definitive way, shock and weight are related (thus avoiding a different combat system for animals/aliens and humans.

STEVE GILHAM(98): My analyst lives in an underground/thermal house on the fourth planet of an F2 star system. Her name is BELINDA BUNZ. She charges a flat rate of 100 CR for each 28 24 universal time cycles. I'm not entirely sure but I think these are her basic STATS: STR:7 END:A DEX:A INT:DE DU:D SOC:A APP:variable. Her skills (that I know about) are somewhat unusual: SOC SCIENCE 4, HUMAN PSYCH 3, COMPUTER 1, SOC DYNAMICS 1, MATH 2, MEDICAL 2, J O T 1, COMPUTER AIDED SEX 0, ORATORY 0, STORY TELLING 0, UNUSUAL FURNITURE DESIGN 0, UNDERGROUND GARDENING 0, STREETWISE 0. She really is a nice person, though a bit of a night owl. You might consider her a bit expensive, but I've been dealing successfully with her for some time now.

CAPTAIN PATIO BLOCKS(98): I must make a habit of not reading your zines in the bathroom.

WIFE: "whats going on in there?", ME: *snicker*snicker*giggle*chortal*giggle* (the one about barbie and ken really got me).

ALISON BROOKS(98): Would you please explain to me what tournament sex is?

GENERAL COMMENTS:

(I'm really having trouble with the left margin of this machine). On illusions: in all my games I take just about any reasonable system for illusions and use them as schools or cults. Example, one school teaches illusions that THEMSELVES do not cause damage and you can't take a picture of with a camera. Another school teaches illusions that DO cause damage and would show up on film. Another school teaches PSIONIC illusions that DO cause damage but DO NOT show up on film. // At a local con near Los Angeles I played in a TRAV game where we had to save a city from nuclear attack. It was an interesting roleplay scenario, but I won't go into the details. The GM told us that an earlier groups solution was to reprogram the missiles so they would come straight down again when launched. *sigh*// Another silly moment in FRP: In my own LEAGUE COSMOS TRAVELLER campaign some of the PCs have gained effective control of a frontier planetary government. When discussing a constitutional theocracy one PC quipped "lets have annual elections every ten years". In another TRAVELLER group one player actually tried to convince the GM that our starcruiser could accelerate towards and away from a certain planet at the same time. // Has anybody out there factual information about a completely non-trained person attempting a landing of a large modern aircraft? Like what happened?

----- E O C -----

----- E O C -----

LEAGUE COSMOS TRAVELLER variant: Human Character Generation

A common complaint about TRAV is it can take an hour or more to roll a character. When I started running my campaign I came to realize that a character generation was needed. It is adopted from the "standard" TRAV tournament method for character generation. I have divided the method into two parts. The first part is used to generate the fundamental characteristics. It is a compromise of the player distributing points as they choose and dice rolling. In addition to the standard UPP some new characteristics are used. I have tried to make it easy to incorporate traditional TRAV characters into this variant. The second part is an extension of the first and is used by those players that desire richer character background. This system is the combined work of myself and another TRAV GM. We have playtested it for about a year and have revised it several times. Comments positive and negative more than welcome.

1. The player divides 48 characteristic points among STR, DEX, END, INT, EDU, SOC
2. The new PC has a base of 3 skill points to divide among those skills associated with previous experience. To this base more points are added depending on the PCs INT, EDU, or SOC (to which the player cannot assign more than the species max). If any of these characteristics are below 7 then no gain but no penalty (see chart below)

	INT	EDU	SOC	#pts gained
3. Roll 4D-3 on PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE	7-9	7-8	7-8	1
CHART # 1. If an 11 or 12 is rolled	A-C	9-B	9-A	2
then roll on PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE	D-E	C-D	B-C	3
CHART # 2 or use as a non-descript	F	E	D-E	4
character (players choice). Those PCs	-	F	F	5

with a background of SCOUT, LEAGUE SECURITY, SOLDIER, SAILOR, COLONIST automatically get Jumping-1, Swimming-1, Climbing-1 at NO cost of skill points.

Skill points are added to the current base amount. The base amount is then used to pick specific skills depending on previous experience. The highest initial level for any one skill is 2.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE CHART #1

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE CHART #2

Number rolled	background descriptor	number pts gained	background descriptor	number pts gained
1	Scout	3	Professional Student/Educator	3
2	Scout	2	Professional Student/Educator	2
3	Scout	1	Professional Student/Educator	1
4	Dropout/Criminal	1	Miner	3
5	Security	2	Miner	2
6	Security	1	Miner	1
7	Soldier (Army)	2	Colonist	4
8	Soldier (Army)	1	Merchant	2
9	non-descript character	1	non-descript character	1
10	non-descript character	0	non-descript character	0
11	optional roll on P.E.C. #2	0	non-descript character	0
12	optional roll on P.E.C. #2	0	non-descript character	0
13	Merchant	0	non-descript character	0
14	Sailor (Navy)	1	Colonist	4
15	Merchant	3	Scientist	1
16	Soldier (Special Forces)	2	Scientist	2
17	Sailor (Navy)	2	Scientist	3
18	Sailor (Navy)	3	Media	1
19	Soldier (Mercenary)	2	Media	2
20	Soldier (Mercenary)	3	Media	3
21	GM special	*	GM special	*

A GM special might be a character that owns a starship, a separately generated alien species, a child prodigy, or a character that knows magic or psionics as an extra skill. The skills that are associated with the characters background descriptor are listed on the next page.

Non-descript character chooses ANY listed skill BUT NOT:

Cbt Engineer, FA Gunnery, Fleet Tactics, FWD Observer, Gunnery, HVY Weapons, Instruction, Liason, Magic, Navigation, Pilot, Psionics, Recon, Recruiting, Shields Engineer, Ships Tactics, Steward, Tactics, Vacc Suit, Zero G Cbt.

Scouts:

Admin, Biology, Bontany, Chem, Climbing, Communications, Computer, Diplomacy, Electronics, Engineering, FWD Observer, Gravatics, Gun Cbt, Gunnery, J O T, Jumping, Leader, Math, Mech, Medical, Meteorologist, Navigation, Perception, Pilot, Physics, Stealth, Survival, Swimming, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Wilderness Camouflage, Wilderness Tracking, Xeno Contact, Zoology.

Dropout/Criminal:

Acting, Artist, Arts of Love, Athletics, Bargaining, Brawling, Bribery, Carousing, Climbing, Forgery, Gambling, Hide Item, J O T, Jumping, Law, Lock Systems, Martial Arts, Mech, Medical, Music, Oratory, Perception, Pharmacology, Security Systems, Skiing, Slight of Hand, Stealth, Story Telling, Streetwise, Survival, Urban Camouflage, Vehicle, Wilderness Tracking, Writing.

Security:

Admin, Bargaining, Battle Dress, Blade Cbt, Brawling, Bribery, Carousing, Climbing, Communications, Computer, Cryptography, Demolitions, Electronics, Engineering, Forgery, Gambling, Gun Cbt, Interrogation, J O T, Jumping, Law, Leader, Lock Systems, Martial Arts, Medical, Perception, Pharmacology, Propaganda, Security Systems, Slight of Hand, Social Science, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Swimming, Urban Camouflage, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Wilderness Camouflage, Wilderness Tracking, Zero G Combat.

Soldier (Army):

Admin, Battle Dress, Biology, Brawling, Climbing, Demolitions, Electronics, FWD Observer, Gambling, Gun Cbt, Jumping, Leader, Liason, Math, Medical, Perception, Tactics, Vehicle.

Merchant:

Admin, Bargaining, Blade Cbt, Brawling, Bribery, Carousing, Computer, Diplomacy, Electronics, Engineering, Forgery, Gambling, Gun Cbt, Gunnery, Hide Item, J O T, Law, Math, Mech, Medical, Navigation, Oratory, Perception, Pilot, Physics, Steward, Streetwise, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Zero G Cbt.

Sailor (Navy):

Admin, Athletics, Blade Cbt, Carousing, Climbing, Communications, Computer, Electronics, Fleet Tactics, FWD Observer, Gravatics, Gun Cbt, Gunnery, Interrogation, J O T, Jumping, Liason, Math, Mech, Medical, Navigation, Perception, Shields Engineer, Ships Tactics, Steward, Survival, Swimming, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Zero G Combat.

Soldier (Special Forces):

Admin, Athletics, Battle Dress, Blade Cbt, Biology, Brawling, Climbing, Communications, Demolitions, Electronics, FWD Observer, Gravatics, Gun Cbt, Interrogation, J O T, Jumping, Leader, Liason, Martial Arts, Math, Mech, Medical, Perception, Physics, Recon, Recruiting, Riding, Security Systems, Skiing, Stealth, Survival, Swimming, Tactics, Vacc Suit, Vehicle.

Soldier (Mercenary):

Battle Dress, Blade Cbt, Brawling, Climbing, Cbt Engineer, Demolitions, FA Gunnery, Gun Cbt, Heavy Weapons, Interrogation, Jumping, Leader, Martial Arts, Math, Mech, Perception, Recon, Recruiting, Skiing, Stealth, Survival, Swimming, Tactics, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Wilderness Camouflage, Wilderness Tracking, Zero G Cbt.

Professional Student/Educator:

Acting, Artist, Arts of Love, Athletics, Blade Cbt, Biology, Brawling, Bribery, Carousing, Chem, Computer, Diplomacy, Electronics, Engineering, Forgery, Gambling, Genetics,

Professional Student/Educator (continued):

Hide Item, Instruction, J O T, Law, Liason, Linguistics, Lock Systems, Martial Arts, Math, Mech, Medical, Meteorologist, Music, Oratory Perception, Pharmacology, Poetry, Physics, Propaganda, Riding, Security Systems, Skiing, Slight of Hand, Social Scientist, Stealth, Story Telling, Swimming, Vehicle, Writing, Xeno Contact, Xeno Medical.

Scientist:

Admin, Biology, Botany, Chem, Communications, Computer, Cryptography, Electronics, Engineer, Gravatics, Genetics, J O T, Law, Linguistics, Math, Mechanical, Medical, Meteorology, Music, Oratory, Perception, Pharmacology, Physics, Security Systems, Social Scientist, Swimming, Writing, Xeno Contact, Xeno Medicine.

Medic:

Acting, Admin, Artist, Arts of Love, Bargaining, Brawling, Bribery, Carousing, Climbing, Communications, Computer, Diplomacy, Electronics, Forgery, Gambling, Gun Cbt, Interrogation, J O T, Jumping, Law, Liason, Linguistics, Lock Systems, Martial Arts, Math, Music, Oratory, Perception, Poetry, Propaganda, Recruiting, Riding, Security Systems, Skiing, Slight of Hand, Social Science, Stealth, Steward, Storytelling, Streetwise, Swimming, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Writing, Xeno Contact.

Miner:

Admin, Bargaining, Blade Cbt, Brawling, Bribery, Carousing, Climbing, Communications, Demolitions, Electronics, Forgery, Fwd Observer, Gambling, Gravatics, Gun Cbt, Hide Item, J O T, Jumping, Law, Leader, Lock Systems, Martial Arts, Math, Mech, Medical, Meteorologist, Navigation, Perception, Pilot, Physics, Recon, Recruiting, Riding, Security Systems, Skiing, Slight of Hand, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Swimming, Urban Camoflage, Vacc Suit, Vehicle, Wilderness Camoflage, Wilderness Tracking, Zero G Cbt.

4. Roll 2D to determine APP. This is appearance or beauty. Because this game society is technologically advanced, APP may be adjusted upward (or downward in some strange cases) for a cost of 1000 CR per point by someone with Medical-4. This is a characteristic the player can simply have fun with ("but I wanna be ugly Mr. GM").
5. Roll 2D to determine FOR. All living things and even some "non-living" things have a force binding their relationship to time, energy and space. Among other things FOR is the characters ability to withstand and manipulate Magic. A high FOR does NOT constitute an automatic knowledge of Magic.
6. Roll 3D-3 for base PSI ability (count 0=i). If 'Extended Character Generation' isn't used then determine PSS and PSR. PSS is the ability to attack and actively use psionics (Psionic Stamina). PSR is the ability to resist psionics and psionic attack (Psionic Resistance). For the most part PSS is useless to a beginning character until 'psionic awakening'. A base roll of 4 or less means the PC is 'psionically dead' and can't be trained.

$$PSS = 2 * PSI + STR + END$$

$$PSR = 2 * PSI + INT + END$$
7. Roll 2D to determine the characters current worth in CR and yearly salary. To this throw add 1 for each money related skill known (Admin, Bargaining, Bribery, Diplomacy, Forgery, Gambling, Law, Oratory, Propaganda) at levels 1 or 2. If one of those skills is known at level 0 instead then 10+ must be made for EACH SKILL, PC modifications (INT, EDU etc.) still apply. Next add or subtract to the roll using the SOC DM Table. Take the total accrued roll to determine the PCs salary and CRs on the PC CR Table.

SOC DM Table		PC CR Table		
SOC	DM	ACCRUED ROLL	PC WEALTH IN CRs	YEARLY SALARY
1	-5	1	1K	3K
2	-4	2	2K	4K
3	-3	3	5K	6K
4	-2	4	9K	7K
5	-1	5	10K	8K
6	0	6	12K	10K
7-8	+1	7	15K	12K
9-A	+2	8	18K	15K
B-C	+3	9	20K	20K
D-E	+4	10	25K	40K
F	+5	11	40K	60K
		12	50K	100K
		13	60K	150K
		14	80K	200K
		15	100K	250K
		16	150K	300K
		17	200K	.5M
		18	300K	1M
		+ each pt	+100K	+.5M

8. Roll 2D to determine the PCs age. Next add or subtract to the roll using the AGE DM Table. Use the total accrued roll to determine age on the PC AGE Table.

9. If the player isn't going to use extended character generation then the PC is assumed to have an average build and have grown up in an ecological environment that is more or less identical to our own. Family background is left entirely up to the player.

AGE DM Table				PC AGE Table	
SOC	DM	EDU	DM	ACCRUED ROLL	AGE IN YEARS
		1	-5	- each pt	-1 to 18
		2	-4	5	22
		3	-3	6	23
		4	-2	7	24
		5	-1	8	25
		6	0	9	26
		7-8	+1	10	27
		9-A	+2	11	28
		B-C	+3	12	30
		D-E	+4	+ each pt	+2
		F	+5		

Discussion:

The skills that the PC gains from previous experience are entirely that, they DO NOT limit what the PC can train for once in play. In other words there are no "character classes" in LEAGUE COSMOS TR V. Damage is always removed from END first. Thus END represents the mass, constitution and the hit points to unconsciousness. It's done this way to make the game mechanics homogenous for animals, humans and aliens (in the current version of the rules this is not true). SOC is no simple rank or title. It represents the visibility of the PC to LEAGUE COSMOS society. It COULD also mean fortune and fame. Each society and culture is considered to have a level or degree of socialization. The species max for SOC becomes the maximum level possible for the PC in that society. Youth are still undergoing the socialization process of being integrated in the society, hence the negative age DMs for low social.

DEATH STARS ON THE HORIZON #1

cumulative contribution #1; intended for A&E #101

a commentzine from Adrian Bolt, 87 Lydalls Rd., Didcot, Oxon, OX 11 7DT
Telephone (0235) 814769. (c) copyright 1984, Adrian Bolt

This zine produced on the soon-to-be released "Mabel" microcomputer, the only computer with "unlimited" storage facilities (see the December, 1983 Issue of PRACTICAL COMPUTING for full details). Watch out for my non-comment zine "Death Stars for Fun and Profit" soon to be appearing in an A&E near you.

COMMENTS ON #95

LEE GOLD: Thanks for listing the differences between LRS and LoA's Japanese Culture Pack. I'll use using this list when LoA gets over here.

MASON JONES: The trouble with players not knowing PCs' exact HP, Skill %ages, etc. is that it makes more work for the GM. I intend to try it when I've got a computer but not before.

NICK LARTER: Nice rationale for giant insects, though I don't think I like the slimy covering idea. On the one hand, it restricts the insects' freedom too much for my liking; I prefer to have giant insects able to appear anywhere in the world. On the other hand, the idea of a band of adventurers entering such an area gives me the feeling of a great roleplaying atmosphere. I'd use such an area sparingly for the change of scenery but would still have free-ranging insects.//I like the Firemold and Fireslime! I can just imagine the looks on the players' faces as this lump of green slime starts hurtling towards them at a great rate!

HARRY HENDERSON: Like the cat's name.//Keep up with the LEGENDS updates please. I'm very interested.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Re Roll High: to compare the two dice ranges:

RQ: 1-5 Crit 6-20 Special 21 - Skill % Hit Skill % - 95 Miss 96-00 Fumble
RM: 1-5 Crit 6-20 Special 21 - 95 Miss 96-00 Fumble 101+ Hit

I prefer to stay within 01-00% Range, but I like the idea of having the fixed percentages for Critical hits and Special Hits on one part of the scale and the variables for situational modifiers in another (below and above 100 respectively). Your RM Scale fixes the criticals and specials based on 01-05/96-00 or Skill % only. If you do that, why not use the RQ scale and base Criticals and Specials on Skill % only and not adjust it for situational modifiers? That still leaves the +s are bad/-s are good problem, as I think most people would prefer to modify the die roll rather than the Skill %age.

It's a bit silly to modify the Skill % but not the critical and special %s. I suppose you could rationalize that situational modifiers are opportunist bonuses and hence affect basic skill but not the more accurate/skillful techniques which produce critical and special hits. I'll have to think further on this; thanks for writing it.

I like the damage idea with armor being more important at low levels than at high ones. How realistic is this? It seems more fantastic/heroic to me. Hmm, perhaps I mean more D&Dish (as in gross HP, etc.).

PETER DA SILVA: Who is the author and publisher of "RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE SITTING NOW"? Please give full references in future.

RICHARD SCHWALL: RAEBNC as yet. I'm still awaiting other people's reactions; thinking about it. Well done.

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Please don't chop up/mutilate Bharatavarsha if you can possibly avoid it. Pretty please.

COMMENTSON #96

JONATHAN WOOLLEY: Fascinating idea but I've no constructive comments to make, I'm afraid. I guess I'll have to think about it some more.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: There is a "good, sound business reason for adopting the high-rolls-win' approach. One recurring objection by D&D players to RQ is that they prefer strongly to have high rolls succeed and low rolls fail." I object very strongly to this as an argument for changing. Just because a different game system uses high rolls succeed does NOT mean this is a good reason to change RQ. Arguing for change on the basis of mechanics or psychologically pleasing methods is okay, but don't bring a different game system's methods into the proposal. You could just as easily claim that D&D should conform to RQ. (If you say there's more D&Ders than RQers, my reply is that there are probably more Diplomacy players than D&Ders!)/I think I object as much to D&Ders criticizing RQ (the pot calling the kettle black) because it's not like D&D as to the use of "D&D does it" as a reason.

JOHN M. BURT: re ct DANIEL JAMES: being turned to stone doesn't normally kill you. I run it as immobile consciousness. Though if it's a Basilisk's stare, you not only get turned to stone but the gaze will then crumble the very stone itself; that kills you.

MIKE DAWSON: I agree with your essay on roleplaying. My current problem is finding players with similar playing style. I'm stuck with a group with the following playing styles: Characterization by playing themselves or wargaming, consistently stupid play, Chaotic-Greedy Alignment/Powergaming, trying to ruin/mess up/kill/steal from the party just for the players' amusement. All will gladly sacrifice PC integrity when necessary or they feel like it. The group runs an open universe system, so each DM (yes, DM!) has different house rules, so I'm in the situation of not playing when certain people are DMing, using only a subset of my characters for other DMs, etc. If I could only find some decent players, I'd drop this collection of @\$%c&*s instantly.

PETER SHAPLEY: A nice simple EP system. I like it and will use it in the new campaign I am about to start up. Let me know if you'd like some comments after I've tried it.

COMMENTS ON 97

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Re Cloak & Dagger: The Dragon Cloaks are a nice idea.

JOSEPH DIEN: A very nice system. I intend using it for my next D&D-type campaign, though I might only use parts of it (which ones I'm not sure at the moment). Further comments to follow next time, I guess.

ROB ELLWOOD: Very well done high order skills essay. A tree structure skills system....Could be tricky defining the relations between individual skills. Perhaps define for each order?...Hmm....

JOHN PATTERSON: RAEBNC on RQ Threat.

DAVE NALLE: Given the number of comments already re your RQ gripes, I think I'll pass on commenting.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Re reply to MIKE DAWSON: As you say, Mike's classifications are really developmental stages of roleplaying but I hardly think he expressed "clear contempt for people who aren't doing his thing." I wouldn't interpret his comments that strongly. Introducing the term "Style Snobbery" seems to be one hell of an over-reaction. While I agree he should not have used you as an example, I don't believe his comments were meant as strongly as you've taken them. It didn't seem to be a personal attack or that he viewed your opinions as meaningless.

On minimaxing or cheating: the problem seems to be that "minimaxing" is used under two circumstances: 1) when a character does it and 2) when a player does it. I would suggest that if a character is being properly roleplayed and is the type of person who would minmax, then this is fine and acceptable; but if the player is using the rules to minmax then, no, I wouldn't call cheating too strong a word.

IDEASMITH'S MUSINGS #7

by Jonathan D. Woolley, 405 Serrano Dr. #6D, San Francisco, CA; (415) 585-9123
retyped by Lee Gold

AGING SYSTEM: Inspired by Howard Mahler's zine in #100

Each year, on the character's birthday, the player should check Column 1 on the table below to determine the effects of aging. (The use of the other columns is explained below.)

Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-44	X	X	X	X	X	X	105-124	A	C%	C%	C%	X	X
45-64	C%	X	X	X	X	X	125-144	A	A	C%	C%	C%	X
65-84	C%	C%	X	X	X	X	145+	A	A	C%	C%	C%	C%
85-104	A	C%	C%	X	X	X							

X = No Stat Loss

A = Lose one point from a stat of the player's choice, and then check next column

C% = Roll D%ile. If roll is less than total of stats, treat as A; if greater, treat as X.

This system assumes a character with six stats of 3-18 each.

QUESTION: has anyone got a good system for deciding the age of an NPC?

COMMENTS #99

LARTER: Could you give more detail on Secretaries? You've caught my interest.

ROBERTSON: re ct ME: 1) Spellcasters do get EP for not casting spells.

2) I want to keep the magic in my world down by discouraging magic users from casting spells. 3) Play is "constructive" when the GM feels the players aren't wasting time. 4) I didn't have that in mind. 5a) I don't want the characters to take certain actions just to get EP. 5b) Characters don't have to stay alive to get EP; I never said they did. (nitpick) 5c) I don't give EP for killing monsters because I think it encourages a "shoot first, melee later" attitude.

COMMENTS #100

STUKEY: I think you are objecting to situations in which CHAMPIONS characters are encouraged to look/act like comic book characters. Seriously, how often are comic book characters shown buying anything in stores? How often does what they buy affect their capabilities? Do you want PCs to be in the habit of visiting gunstores in the middle of an adventure? I wait for a reply.

NALLE: re ct SHAW: Your memory of the term PPC is different from the way I am using it. For me, PPC = potential player character. //Thanks for the suggestion.

LARTER: Your system is not entirely clear to me. Perhaps an example.

CLARK: WONDERFUL STUFF! WONDERFUL STUFF! Keep up the good work.

CORRECTIONS: It should be *3 and *5, not +3 and +5. Thus a MU wishing to train to +7 with longbow but unable to find a trainer would take 4,550 days (130x5x7) to learn it.

This zine was written in September and only now am I finally typing it up, most comments will probably be way out of date. Bear with it.

COMMENTS ON ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS NUMBER NINETY FOUR COMMENTS ON AL STEVE GILHAM:Ashes to Ashes was incredible.

ROBERT PLAMONDON:What are rules for:For me, certain rules systems dealing with the same genre make me develop amazingly different types of characters. For instance, characters I design for SUPERWORLD tend to me more super powered fantasy characters then those I design for CHAMPIONS which tend to be modern-type super heroes.

COMMENTS ON ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS NUMBER NINETY FIVE COMMENTS ON ALA RICHARD SCHWALL:re ALIEN PSYCHOS:These are great for helping to develop character personalities, but using one figure for an entire race?/Your write-ups on the events in the realm are great but could you please go into the game system you're using, P L E A S E !

HARRY HENDERSON:PARANOIA sounds great.

PETER DA SILVA, STEVE GILHAM, RANDALL STUKEY:re CALNAR:SPI (the average of STR and Dex) works so as to make a persons STR affect her DEX and vica/versa. The conceptualized reason for this is that in TFT I wanted damage done to a person to lessen that persons overall prowess and I also felt that there could be no prestine clear devision as to what stat controls what types of actions. In TFT (and thus in CALNAR as well) STR acts as a measurement of hit points so my task was made consideraby easier. This goal is achieved by having all roles that would be made against DEX in TFT made against (DEX PLUS SPI)/2 and all roles that would normally be made against STR made against (STR PLUS SPI)/2.

FOR EXAMPLE:Kadal has a STR:8 and a DEX:15 (the two extremes) his SPI would be 13, his SPIDEX roll would be 14 and his SPISTR roll would be 11. Kadal fails his SPIDEX roll and falls into a pit wherin he takes 2 points damage. His functional STR is now 6, his functional SPI Iis now 11, his DEX remains at 15, but his SPIDEX is now 13 and his SPISTR is now 9.

Intelligence ends up being that of the players as is the way I've usually found things to be even if there is an INT stat.

I got a copy of NECROMANCER #4 to review but its already been reviewed a couple times and that was months ago anyway but thanks for the copy Beckett.

ROLLING HIGH? YOU CAN'T BEAT IT (to DR JIMMY)

Laugh and play you may
I've played games you'll never play.
Talk behind my back
But I'm off my campaigns back.
I'll take on anyone
Ain't scared of dice loaded, those.
Play 'em till I drop down
With one eye on your rolls

What is it? I'll take it.
Whose is 'e? I'll heal it.
Rolling High? You can't beat it.

Gary Gygax and Dave Arn-sin
In the books you don't notice him
He only comes out in OD&D.
You say she's a virgin?
Get her a Unicorn*
Her powers gonna kill me?
Oh fucking bull-sheet
I'm rolling double
But don't miss him, if you can.
There's gonna be trouble.
When she kills* this man

What is it, etc.
Gary Gygax and Dave Arn-sin, etc.

This page is to be considered the second page of the zine entitled FANTASY FILLS MY EYES (whether it actually is or not.

*:Unicin pronounced with a hard C/ him pronounced heem/kills pronounced kill-is.

REVIEW OF ABYSS @26/V5N5/SEPT 1983

COVER:Incredible, but Dave don't you feel at least a bit guilty using peoples work without asking them for it? Even if they are dead.

CONJURINGS:An editorial by Dave Nalle apolagizing and explaing past anti TSR/D&D behavior. Until TSR upgrades their products I personally see no reason for explanation or apologees for bugging them to get their act together. They consider all gamers to be of 3RD (OK, maybe fourth) grade level and they deserve to be told that is a definite falsehood. Possibly their own intelligence could have something to do with it.

BESERKERGANG THE IMAGE OF GAMING:Yet someone else (JON SCHULLER)tell us to step out of the closet with our games. The thing is, I doubt anyone really hides the fact that they roleplay or that they don't explain role-playing when asked. The problem seems to be that -ature people in our society are not supposed to play games.

IN THE SPECULUM:Reviews or the Red Sonja series, Storm Season, a bunch of re-released Kane Wagner books, Fantasy Newsletter and Fantasy Books Standard reviews, at least one of them though (Storm Season) is considerably out of date.

GAMES:C&S, Sourcebook II, ASYLUM & OTHER TALES, PEDDLER' _ FERRY (for SILVERDAWN and DEATH IN DUNWICH (for CoC).

CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS (a fiction write-up) and INFLUENCE & RENOWN (some additional stats to replace nice narrative writeups of character social standing) didn't thrill me.

WELCOME TO THE OBSIDIAN WOMBAT (which was credited to no one) served nicely for a bar fight. I liked the floor plans and the characters took little conversion from YSG to CALNAR (one studyhall).

ECHOES FROM THE ABYSS:Z letters zar not interesting.

THE WORLDS OF JOHN MORRESSY:Nice DW style reviews/pseudo-adaptions.

YOU ASKED FOR IT...MORT MUNCHKIN:No I didn't!! If this stuff was funny it would be one thing but its cruel humor (similiar to the E-Man/X-men issues).

LIABILITIES:Give character disadvantages a la CHAMPIONS to all gaming systems. If you want these and play TFT see The Space Gamer#s 51 and 57.

Overall I liked the issue, 'specially for free.

Now to fill up five lines with nonmindless drivel...hmmm... I'm gonna be at BOSKONE this year (actually) that'll be next year by then. I'm being incredible selfish and capitolistic (YECHHH!) by using up all 64 lines so I'll stop it right now.

Till Next Time.....

JAZ

CHRONICLES OF ZONKA

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THE UNINVITED VISITOR

SUMMARY: Zonka is a Dwarf Innkeeper played by James Robert in BOB MOORE's world, Tefara. The Chronicles are taken from Zonka's diary and represent Zonka's point of view. Wayside, Zonka's mountainside Inn, conceals a powerful machine which can teleport and/or fire missiles to any place on Tefara's surface. Zonka and his cleric friend, Chester, have taken an oath never to abuse the machine's powers. John Smith, a Mutant, newly arrived on Tefara, has constructed a large arena near the inn. On the morrow, Delila and The Lord of Gold plan to leave Wayside; Sam Plowfoot, who has served for three weeks as cook at Wayside, will return to his family in Gold Piece Bay; Tweel, the off-Tefara, Ulgan mage and his slave, Grog, will also leave Wayside.

Zonka is concerned with securing help to run the inn: naive, as ever, he thinks his adventuring days are over. At present the party has gathered for the evening meal.

My plans for making Wayside well known throughout Tefara were progressing nicely. John Smith, the Mutant, had constructed a two thousand seat arena near the inn. There remained, then, only the matter of servants: I needed help to run the place. We were eating when the subject came up. Everyone was on edge: Sam Plowfoot, Delila, The Youth of Gold, Ig, Tweel and Grog were all leaving the next day. As I recall, Alice, not quite in 'synch' with the rest of us, got angry during the meal. But then, Alice frequently got angry. The conversation during supper went like this:

Sam: "Dig in. Tomorrow I return to ..."

Alice: "Game for what?"

Tweel: "Me too."

Chester: "You got a girl there? Grog, does he?"

Delila: "And us. Stew again! Sam cooked, right?"

Me: "Agreed, the usual. He runs Tintangle called ..."

The Youth: "Can't believe he made it in four days."

Sam: "I don't want to brag, but this stew is delicious!"

Alice: "Who made what? The stew took four days?"

Tweel, blushing: "Sort of ..."

Me: "I've been thinking, perhaps some servants ..."

Grog: "My lips are sealed. Sam, great stew."

Sam: "Pass the biscuits."

Delila: "... called Camelot, or the Port of Alexandria."

Grog: "Wise thought, frees you for important matters."

Alice: "The stew is called 'the Port of Alexandria'?"

Alice: "Frees who?"

Sam: "Port, love some. It's great with stew."

Me: "John Smith. Will the Youth of Gold go?"

Chester: "Game for the adventure ... I'm up for doing the dishes. Anyone want to earn ten gold pieces?"

Delila: "The Dukes of Alexandria have some."

Sam: "OK if I finish the bowl? Can't see wasting any."

Alice: "Who?"

Grog: "Sure, so long as Tweel doesn't object."

Me: "Me, of course; don't you ever listen?"

Delila: "Grog is right, as usual. Zonka needs help."

Sam: "Pass the honey please."

Alice, screaming: "HE NEEDS HELP! ALL OF YOU CLOWNS NEED HELP. WHATEVER ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?"

The Youth (passing bowl): "Here. The usual percentage?"

Tweel: "I'm game also, then it's back to Bay de Gree."

Sam: "Pass the wine ... Oops! ... Sorry."

Alice left us and locked herself in her room. That was her routine whenever she had these fits of temper. She had a small altar in her room. I suppose, she spent her time praying. I could only hope she wasn't including me in her prayers. Why Alice got mad was beyond me. The conversation at supper had been clear enough. I had requested help obtaining servants to run the inn. Tweel agreed to help, as did the Youth of Gold. The Youth had asked for 'the usual price': sixty percent, plus first & third choice of items. Of course I had agreed. It was a bargain, since this price included both Delila and Ig. Somehow, don't ask me how, Alice misconstrued everything. She had thought The Youth was talking about the stew when he mentioned it had taken John Smith four days to build the arena. She hadn't understood the purpose of the trip we had planned at all. Moreover, Alice was confused about where we were going. Actually, her confusion on this point was reasonable; Delila had suggested I purchase servants from the Dukes of Alexandria. The Port of Alexandria is called by three names: Alexandria, Tintangle, and Camelot. I can see how a person could get confused about the name of the city, but why they should lose their temper is beyond understanding.

Anyway, the evening's "adventure" was set. After Grog had finished washing the dishes, the entire crew, except for Alice, of course, went to the teleport machine hidden in the cave beneath the inn. By then it was dark. Delila, the most adept of the group at running the machine, soon located the Dukes' flagship on the viewing scope. Since we didn't want to alarm anyone by suddenly appearing aboard ship, we sent Ig on ahead, alone, to tell the watch we were coming. He had no sooner been teleported on board when something hit him and bowled him over. On the screen we saw Ig wrestling an invisible foe. From what little we could make out of the struggle through the viewing screen, something was on his back. Quickly Delila brought Ig back to the cave. For a few moments he continued the struggle: his opponent had been brought back with him, an opponent we couldn't see. Then, abruptly, whatever had seized Ig released him.

Both Tweel and The Youth of Gold threw *see invisible* spells, but saw nothing. Having no idea what we were facing, I reached for my sword. But it wasn't in its scabbard. Others, too, noticed their personal belongings missing. "Look," Sam shouted. "Our stuff, it's beside the machine." To be sure, our items were being stacked, in an ever growing pile, beside the machine's control panel. Someone, Some Thing, a Thief Supreme perhaps, was methodically removing our gear and placing it in a pile by the machine. Frankly, I was scared: I knew of nothing that could do such things. Whatever was in the cave with us could remain *invisible* even when the spell to *see invisible* was cast; it could steal anything it wanted from any of us; and, it fought while remaining *unseen*. A most unwelcome guest, this monster. All of us were a bit unnerved, even The Youth.

We grouped together and called out we came in peace. That's when the wall appeared, an iron wall blocking the cave cavern. The wall barred our access to the machine and separated us from our items. I had just lost control of the teleport machine. Whoever, or whatever, it was, that controlled the situation was taking no chances. Outraged, I picked up a rock and began beating on the wall.

Laughter! Laughter filled the cavern, mocking the futility of pounding on an iron wall. Never had I felt so helpless. Wayside and its teleportation machine were lost, lost to an opponent we couldn't even see.

... to be continued ...

RIMON SIMON

I will share with you my oldest NPC. His name is Simon, though adventurer and peasant alike, call him "Rimon' Simon". Simon is at once, eighty years old, a twentieth level sage, neutral good, and a complete fool. Yet I love him. He wears a dirty burlap robe and always carries a burlap sack. Players can meet him on overland encounters, about one chance in a thousand. However, all players meet Simon at least once, the very first time they play in my world.

Before players begin play in my campaign they are given some background of the medieval society, etc. This background includes a brief justification of Magic, the hint that Clerical Powers are *not magical*, family background, details of their childhood contract to learn a trade or skill from a Master, as well as some five nursery rhymes.

One such rhyme is:

Cheat the Ref and you will find,
All good luck is left behind.

Three of the rhymes are Hermit sayings and, as such, vary depending on the local where the player begins his adventuring. The fifth nursery rhyme is:

'Rimon' Simon,
His hearing does lack.
So dishes, not wishes,
Come out of the sack.

The Master to whom the PC is apprenticed stakes the player, gives him minimal equipment, supplies him with enough wine and rations to last a week, and, usually, gives the PC a few coins. In exchange for the skills the PC learned during his apprenticeship, and for the grub-stake, players agree to pay from 10 to 80 percent of their profits to their masters. Such payments continue until the PC reaches the age of twenty-five, which equates to fifth level. [PCs who have not so agreed, receive NO skills and have a much, much harder time getting started. From such players are sewer rats made.] When it is time for the PC to leave his Master (Barber, Tanner, Locksmith, Baker, whatever), the Master, showing probably the first signs ever of affection for his charge, tells the PC where he might, if he is careful, find some fellow adventurers, say in a local bar, a bar the PC has previously been forbidden to enter.

On his way to seek fortune and fame, on his way to meet some fellow adventurers, the player has his first solo encounter. [Usually, this is where I teach players who are new to FRP to carefully distinguish between what they are saying, what their Player Character is saying, and what their PC is doing. For brevity, I will spare you the details.] Let's suppose, for purposes of this writeup, that the new adventurer is a warrior named Kusol.

A typical encounter with 'Rimon' Simon goes something like this.

GM: About a block from your former home you are joined by an old man. He is wearing a simple burlap garment and is carrying a large burlap sack slung over his left shoulder. He has a kindly face, but is unkempt. You notice his garment is soiled, as if it hasn't been washed in a long, long time. How does your character respond?

PC: Kusol will say "Hello".

GM: The old man looks surprised and snorts, "HELL NO, WHAT? Simon, he hasn't asked for anything. Kids, these days kids have no respect for their elders. Why in my day ...

Kusol: I didn't say *that*. I only said 'hello'.

Old Man: There, you see ... interrupting ... Simon, he doesn't wear one because he chooses not to, that's why! As if it was any of your business, anyway.

At this point the PC usually mumbles to himself.

Old Man: Speak up, Simon, he don't hear so well. What is your name anyway, and why are you dressed in a warrior's garb? Why, you're just a kid.

Kusol: My name is Kusol. I am just setting out on my own. I meant no *offense*, really.

Old Man: All right, don't tell Simon if you don't want to. And, this is no game, fella. Adventurers get killed every day. Sure is warm today, isn't it. Now then ... what's this nonsense about fences?

Kusol: *fences?*

Old Man: Oh, Princes! Never mind ... Simon, he doesn't meddle in the affairs of princes. Sure is hot today, got any wine? Old Simon, he is always thirsty ... sure could use a drink.

PC: Kusol says nothing. He hands the old man one of his wine bottles.

GM: The old man drinks it, the whole bottle, and then says, "Thank you. Thank you very much. Simon, he will return the kindness, it's the least he can do. You see a nice fellow, a bit rude perhaps, but basically nice. If there something you want, something you need, just name it, and Simon, he will give it to you."

After the player responds; the GM thinks a minute or two, sometimes rolling dice, sometimes not, depending on what the player requested. The results can be quite amusing. What usually happens is that Simon reaches into his sack and secures a present for the player. Occasionally, however, Simon instead casts a spell. Some examples of what can happen, examples taken from actual play, follow:

1. PC: "Forgive me if I *shoat*, but I would like a magic sword.
RESULT: Simon shrugged his shoulders, saying "There's no accounting for what kids want these days." He then reached into his bag and produced a vial containing a potion. When the player drank it, his nose became the size and shape of the snout of a Boar.]
2. PC: A *wish*. RESULT: Simon reached into his sack and withdrew a rainbow trout for the confused PC.
3. PC: "Lots of gold!" RESULT: Simon cast a spell: the resulting blizzard lasted eight days.
4. PC: "Wishes!" RESULT: Simon secured a simple gold ring from his burlap bag, saying, "Finally, a youth with good sense." [The GM gives such players enough experience points to 'pin' them to second level. This response, and the equivalent response of "fish's", has occurred but twice is about fifty such encounters in my world. Both times the ring had 1 + 1D2 wishes.]
5. PC: "A tragic calf." RESULT: Simon threw a spell at the PC. [His laughter became magical. I must confess: I blew it! Months afterwards I realized I should have given the PC a magic staff.]

Of course, by now, the reader knows what is going on. Simon is hard of hearing: he always mishears what is spoken. Yet he almost gets it right: his presents *rhyme* with what is asked. Thus the nickname 'Simon' Simon.

There are a few other things about Simon you should know if you are to use him in your campaign. Simon was once in a battle with "shadow type" undead who, on their "hits", consumed wisdom and intelligence points. As a result of that battle, Simon has lost almost all of his wisdom; has been drained of much of his intelligence, has an insatiable thirst for wine. His burlap sack is not magical, nor are the items Simon gives to players "created" by him or anyone else. Instead, Simon controls an Unseen Servant, a gift given to Simon by Loki. The servant secures the items Simon *thinks* the player has requested. Simon has neither the wisdom to question what players request, nor, for that matter, the sagacity to see a Healer. On occasion, he has given players such things as Trolls, boards, mold, etc. Once a player asked Simon for an orange: Simon gave him an orange.

Usually the Game Master will roll dice to see what item Simon gives players. For example, should a player respond with a long-winded sentence like:

"WELL, I don't *KNOW*, *WAY..BE* armor, no, *MAKE THAT* a STAFF",

the GM should set up a chart something like this:

1: perfume, 2: snow, 3: hay, 4: a key, 5: a wedding cake, 6: a fez, 7: a calf

and then roll an appropriate die to see what the player receives. At least two of the items on the chart (decide before rolling) should be special. Say, the perfume raises charisma by two points, the key will break (and thus jam) the first lock in which it is fitted.

I have a related encounter on my overland charts: it occurs with a frequency of about one in 500. In this related encounter, an Invisible Thief steals the party's best item. Typically, the items taken have names which rhyme with phrases and words like *tragic board*, *cold*, *laugh*, *steas*, *knolls*, and so on ... Players, this happens, think I am a really mean GM. "How can you take away our best item without justification?" I don't tell them: I've just told you.

Nextish: Comments, I promise! I will say the past few covers have been great.

FRP HERBALISM--part seven by Lee Gold (taken from Culpepper)
 concentrating on FRP Herbal Applications; herbs arranged by month of flowering

JULY: continued from lastish (and the issue before that)

<u>Plant</u>	<u>ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
OrpIne	Moon	Found In shadowy fields and woods, gardens.//The juice mixed with salad oil is used for burns. The bruised leaves or roots are applied to wounds.
Rattle Grass (Yellow)	Moon	Found In Meadows and Woods.//Billed with means and honey added, good for dimness of sight if drunk or dropped into eyes
Rhubarb (Tart or Culinary)	Mars	Grown in gardens; originally from Asia.//A weak purgative, good against venomous bites.
St. John's Wort	Sun, Leo	Found In shady woods and copses, meadows and roadsides.// Used against poisons; billed in wine or made into an ointment for wounds. A tincture of the flowers in wine is used against madness.
Southernwood aka Lad's Love	Mercury	Found In gardens; a native of southern Europe.//The ashes mingled in salad oil help grow hair on the bald.//The leaves in a fomentation ease pain and stop gangrene.
Spikenard	--	A native of India; also found In North America, Japan, and New Zealand.//The powdered root makes a good antidote to poison but should not be used by pregnant women.
Squill	Mars	Grows on dry, sandy areas; gardens.//Root is bitter and so acrid it can cause blisters if handled too much.
Tansy	Venus	Found on high ground, in dry pastures and in hedgerows.// Leaves used to bind up wounds.
Thorn-Apple	Jupiter	Found on cultivated and waste ground.//An extract of the juice in small doses is taken for convulsions and madness. (The plant is extremely poisonous.)
Thyme (Wild)	Venus	Found on sandy heaths, dry grassland and rocky ground.// Drunk as a tea good for headache, giddiness, hangover, and the nightmare.
Vine Tree	Sun	In vineyards.//Leaves billed with barley meal and made into a poultice cool inflamed wounds.
Yarrow	Venus	Found on roadsides, meadows and wasteland.//A strong tea of the leaves restrains violent bleeding.//A poultice of Yarrow and Toadflax applied outwardly induces sleep, eases pain, and reduces bleeding.

AUGUST (see previous months): Alkanet, Angelica, Archangel, Arrach, Balm, Basil, Beans (Broad, French), Bluebottle, Bryony, Burnet, Carduus Benedictus, Carrot, Celandine (Greater), Chamomile, Chives, Cinquefoil, Clary (Wild), Cleavers, Crosswort, Cucumbers, Daisy, Darnel, Dill, Dittany (Crete), Dock, Dodder of Thyme, Dog's Grass, Dove's Foot, Down, Eglantine, Elder, Eryngo, Eyebright, Fennel (Sow), Feverfew, Flaxweed, Fleabane (Canadian), Garlic, Gentian, Gladiole, Golden Rod, Groundsel, Heart's Ease, Henbane, Herb True Love, Hollyhock, Honeysuckle, Hops, Knotgrass, Lang de Boeuf, Lavender (Cotton), Lettuce, Lettuce (Great Wild), Lily (Water), Loosestrife, Mandrake, Mint (Pepper), Moneywort, Mustard (White), Nettle, Orchid, Parsley (Common), Pennyroyal, Pepper, Pepper (Guinea), Plantain, Poppy (White, Wild), Ragwort, Raspberry, Rattle Grass, Sage (Common, Wood), Sarsaparilla, Sauce Alone, Scabious (Field), Scurvy Grass, Senna, Silverweed, Spikenard, Spinach, Sun Spurge, Tansy, Thorn-Apple, Thyme (Wild), Viper's Bugloss, Wintergreen and Yarrow.

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Aconite	Saturn	Found In gardens; native of Alps. Seeds ripen towards the end of summer.//Said to be good vs vegetable poisons. The root in a decoction is used as a lotion to wash parts bitten by venomous creatures. Leaves will make skin sore.

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Amaranthus	Saturn	Found In gardens.//Flowers powdered stop bleeding from wounds.
Blackberry	Venus, Aries	Found In gardens climbing up walls and fences, In hedgerows. //Buds, leaves and green branches heal fresh wounds. Distilled water of the fruit is effectual In fevers.
Clary Devil's Bit	Moon --	Grown In gardens.//Seeds In wine are an aphrodisiac. Found In dry meadows and heaths.//The herb or root is boiled In wine and drunk vs plague, fevers and poison. The juice or distilled water of the herb is good for wounds.
Hawkweed	Saturn	Found at the sides of fields and paths In dry ground, In hilly districts.//A decoction In wine plus Wild Succory brings sleep, is an aphrodisiac, and cools heat.
Hemp	Saturn	Cultivated In India.//The fresh root mixed with a little oil and butter is good for burns.
Marjoram (Sweet)	Mercury, Aries	Found In gardens; In pastures, grainfields.//A decoction helps loss of speech.
Motherwort	Venus, Leo	Found In herb gardens; roadsides, wasteland.//Used vs fainting, helps women In childbirth.
Rue i. Tree	Sun, Leo	Found In gardens, In dry, sheltered places.//A decoction with dried Dill leaves and flowers eases Inward pains, If drunk or applied warm outwardly.
Sowthistle (Tree)	Venus	Found In grainfields, marshes, besides streams.//Milky juice useful vs deafness (with salad oil and salt).
Sowthistle Trees (Marsh)	Venus	Found In marshes, fens and beside streams.//Eases pain.// Juice boiled In oil of bitter almonds In the peel of a pomegranite and dropped In the ears helps deafness.

SEPTEMBER (see previous months): Amaranthus, Balm, Beans (French), Bluebottle, Chamomile, Dock, Dodder of Thyme, Dog's Grass, Dove's Foot, Down, Gentian, Gladiolus, Hemp, Knotgrass, Lettuce (Great Wild), Nettle, Spikenard, Spinach, Sun Spurge, Thorn Apple, Viper's Bugloss.

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Saffron	Sun, Leo	Found In gardens In Spain.//Quickens the brain; good vs pestilence, hysteria, fainting.
Saffron (Meadow)	Saturn	Found In damp meadows.//Poisonous, unless used with great caution.

OCTOBER (see previous months): Amaranthus, Bluebottle, Dock, Hemp, Thorn Apple.

NOVEMBER: none

NO FLOWERS

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Agaric	Mercury, Leo	Found at the foot of Oak Trees, Willows, or Larches.// Sometimes poisonous, sometimes edible--needing an expert to tell which type is which.
Barley	Saturn	Found In grainfields.//Ripens In summer.//Barley water aids persons troubled with fevers.
Beets (White)	Jupiter	Found In cultivation.//Juice is good vs. headache, venom, burns, baldness.
Fern	Mercury	Found on commons, moors and heaths. Green all summer.// The roots, bruised and boiled In oil, make an ointment to heal wounds.

(to be concluded next month, I think)

I might as well introduce myself. I've been playing RPGs for three years now, with the first, of course, being D&D. I don't know how many others I've played in the meantime, probably up in the hundreds. I've been designing my own RPGs for about as long as I've been playing them, starting with "The World of Coot" (which may sound a bit familiar to some of you) and climaxing with the one I presently use. I call this latest one Heroquest (because I haven't been able to think up another name), and I think it will be my last. I can still use new ideas for it, though, which is part of the reason I read A&E.

I'll spare you any more introduction and proceed to the main body of the zine. There are no comments in this one, as I haven't been able to find an issue more recent than #77. So, without further ado, let's continue on to the comedy.

THE HEROQUEST (or whatever) CHARACTER GENERATION SYSTEM--Part One

Many A&Eers might not like this system, as it is a bit abstract and the range of characteristics (i.e. from the highest to lowest values) is not very great (about 8 pts on the average). Then again, it allows for a lot of personal choice, with characteristic values, professions and even social class being chosen by the player.

There are nine Primary Characteristics: COURAGE, AGILITY, STRENGTH, WISDOM (which serves the same purpose as D&D's INT), PIETY, DEXTERITY, EMPATHY (like D&D's Charisma), PERCEPTION and STATUS. Each characteristic starts off as 1, but points may be shifted among them on a 1:1 basis (e.g. a character can raise STR to 2 if he reduces WIS to 0). Each characteristic has a maximum and minimum value.

	CRF	AGI	STR	WIS	PTY	DEX	EMP	PER	STA
Minimum	-1	0	0	-2	-3	-3	-2	-3	-4
Maximum	4	6	5	4	7	5	5	5	4

The concept of PCs having negative characteristics may seem strange to some. (It probably seems strange to 99% of you.) In this form, characteristics can be applied more directly, because they don't have to be broken down to such things as "defensive adjustment" or "hit point adjustment."

There are also Secondary Characteristics, each determined through the primary ones. They are CONSTITUTION ($STR+AGI/2$), KNOWLEDGE ($WIS+STA$), ACTION ALLOWANCE ($1/2 AGI +2$), and EXPERTISE ($STR+CRG/2$). All fractions should be rounded away from zero. Expertise represents the character's proficiency with most weapons (those he hasn't had training in). Action Allowance represents the number of actions one can execute in a single turn.

Social Class is determined through the STATUS characteristic. The Social Class Table gives the possible social classes for a quasi-European campaign.

STATUS	SOCIAL CLASS	MONEY
-4	Slave, Serf, Cotter, etc.	none
-3	Barbarian	horse, weapon
-2	Outlaw, Excommunicated, etc.	D2 bags of silver
-1	Free Farmer, Yeoman, etc.	D2 bags of silver
0	Townsman, Merchant, etc.	D3 bags of silver
1	Lesser Noble (i.e. Baron)	D6 bags of silver
2	Greater Noble (i.e. Count)	2D6 bags of silver
3	Very Great Noble (i.e. Duke)	3D6 bags of silver
4	Royal	4D6 bags of silver

I know how ridiculous this table may seem, with such high ranks being obtained so easily. I've never had any problem with it, though. If you treat a royal or noble character like all the others and don't let him get away with murder, then he will present no real problem. Even if he does want to act like the Supreme God, he can be

Golem's Corner #17

A contribution for *Alarums and Excursions*, by Wilson H. Heydt,
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While perusing the November 1983 issue of *Analog*, I came across a quote from Voltaire—*To the shame of mankind, it is well known that the laws which govern our games are the only ones which are completely just, clear, inviolable and enforced.* This leads me to suspect that if someone can find a way to connect a generator to the gentleman, considerable power could be obtained. He must be spinning in his grave at a goodly clip over FRPs.

The same issue has a favorable review of the *Ysgarth Rules System* in their gaming column.

For those devoted to the use of computers in FRP, I now have access to—and have written most of this 'zine on—a TRS-80 Model 100. This machine has tremendous potential as a GM aid. Useful tools could be programmed on it and, since it is battery powered and only weighs four pounds, be carried to game sessions. This is a machine that should be looked at very seriously.

Comments — A&E 99.

Lee Gold. (re Myself). Let me explain a bit about my remarks on Steven Hawking. He is probably the most brilliant living theoretical physicist. He suffers from ALS. It is amazing that he has been able to continue to work as long (and as well) as he has with this disease. We need his mind in as close to full working order as possible.

It is unfortunate that medical research cannot come up with sure-fire cures on demand. Such work is conducted on what amounts to a successive approximation basis. Any new technique will start with a low probability of success (although any chance might be considered better than no chance at all). If a treatment for ALS is developed there will undoubtedly be those who will volunteer the have the treatment tried on themselves for good and sufficient reasons. Many will die before all the answers are found. This is a

price that is paid for progress. It isn't pleasant but it does happen. Even when very good techniques are worked out there are accidents—do you remember the "bad" batch of polio vaccine that Cutter Labs made?

Given these various constraints, I submit that Hawking's life should only be risked when a proposed cure reaches a success rate that gives a good chance—say, 30 percent?—and if others die achieving that goal, then they have not died in vain.

Mike Lewis. (re Arlen Walker). I have no desire to start any arguments on female anatomy, but unless your aliens have other significant anatomical differences from humans—like a dislocatable pelvic girdle—then any birth involving multiple heads **MUST** be done by Caesarian section. I've seen the x-rays from when my son was about to be born and the clearance was nowhere as much as one centimeter.

Bill Karieva. Welcome to *A&E*.

Jenny Hein. (re *Tales from the Northern Woods*). Ah! The joy of typos! Surely you must be a lover not a fighter if you communicate in *sigh* language.

Phil Masters. Welcome to *A&E*. Yours is a very interesting 'zine, but I don't have any substantive remarks for now.

Pete Tamlyn. Welcome to *A&E*.

Daniel James. (re Peter da Silva on feminists). My Lady Wife points out that "Chester" is a masculine name and suggests the epicene Divinepersonpersonleslie. Of course "son" is gender specific also, leaving one with Divineperchildperchildleslie.

(re Jason Ray). In Great Britain you don't have environmentalists arguing with ranchers over whether or not the mountain lion should be protected as an endangered

species.

(re Stellar System design). Congratulations on a very nice piece of work. If memory serves, the temperature extremes for Earth are $+140^{\circ}\text{F}$ (330°K) and -100°F (200°K). The former would be from summer in Death Valley most likely and the latter during the Antarctic winter. For more data on intelligent aliens one ought to read Sagan and Schlovski's *Intelligent Life in the Universe*.

(re Arlen Walker on planet design). One can logically construct planets that are unlikely actually to exist. A low surface gravity combined with a high-normal atmospheric pressure is one such. Start with a system particularly poor in the heavier metals (say, depleted in iron and its near relatives like nickel). You could then get a fairly low-density solid planet. With a low gravitational gradient this gives a rather deep atmosphere with respectable pressure. Poul Anderson used just such a setting for *The Man Who Counts*. Another way to do this is to use Titan as a prototype. Not much size or surface gravity, but something like 3 atmospheres' pressure at the surface. It's a bit chilly, though.

an A. Engle. I remember you. Welcome back. Within the SCA (I have been rather inactive for some time) I am known as Hal Ravn.

Robert Saunders. (re Gilham). Last time I checked, the Laplace Nebular Hypothesis was still functional, although in modified form. Any body condensing from a nebula will "trap" some of the rotational energy from the overall system. If you think about how a body accretes you will see that the incoming mass will carry a differential velocity depending on whether it comes from the sunward side or the other side of the orbit of the body in question. This will tend to impart a net rotational motion. Subsequent tidal effects will modify the initial rate. It is possible the have a temporary condition in which all rotation (relative to distant stars) stops, but this is very transitory. In fact all known bodies in the solar system rotate about their axes. Most rotate in the same sense that the Earth does (direct motion), but some (usually minor satellites) rotate the other way (retrograde). If memory serves me, Venus has retrograde rotation and Uranus is considered to rotate directly with an axial tilt of 98 degrees. Note also that Luna rotates about an axis even though that rotation rate happens to match its orbital motion. The matching of these motions gives rise to the illusion that the Moon does

not rotate.

Arlen P. Walker. (re Myself). Thank you for those kind words. A goodly fraction of the credit goes to My Lady Wife, who is far more scholarly than I will ever be.

Please permit me a provisional concession on the issue of Saavik. Many of my conclusions were based on inference and your point of view is at least equally valid.

Paul Waters. Welcome back to *A&E*.

As regards the PBZ campaign, I have a couple of questions. What is the draw weight of the bow you have brought? What type of heads do the arrows have and how long are the arrows?

Daniel Nolte. Welcome back to *A&E*.

Comments— *A&E* 100.

All and Sundry. Excellent issue. Kudos to all who contributed. Few specific comments, though.

Justin Rollinson. Welcome to *A&E*.

Scot Fritz. (re PBZ). We will be in camp following "orders." Dorothy and I are presumably in camp all night and general alertness is the order of the day. If given a chance, I will practice with my bow to get used to the local gravity with it. Note also that with a 70-pound bow the arrow doesn't drop much in the first 30 yards or so.

Howard Mahler. Welcome back to *A&E*.

Rob Ellwood. (re Strand "World"). If there is a negative gravity region then it should be possible to send up a tethered balloon to that region. Once the balloon is there, one of your aerial castles can be brought up piece by piece. Notice that this method requires no magic to implement and only an 18th century technology.

Niall C. Shapero. Very interesting data. It looks like a very complete write-up of an alien sophont.

I would like to express one reservation about your 'zine title. I know that titles can't be copyrighted, but I would be delighted to be told that you had cleared the usage with Poul Anderson ahead of time.

Peter A. Clarke. Very interesting discussion of legal systems. Another good place to get ideas for this sort of thing is the Magna Carta.

Hank Griffin. Welcome to *A&E*.

Scenario Sources

Much has been written in *A&E* about various pieces of rock music as inspiration for scenarios and during play. I would now like to suggest another source for ideas derived from the performing arts.

This all came to mind while watching a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Gondoliers* by The Lamplighters, an—excellent—amateur group in San Francisco. It struck me that this operetta contained a wealth of possible NPCs, plots, and scenarios, as well as enjoyable music. I should mention here that it was also a delightful performance.

Gondoliers is set in the first half of the 1700s and was first performed in December of 1889. The background for the operetta is that twenty years earlier the 6-month-old daughter of the Duke of Plaza-Toro was secretly married (by proxy) to the year-old son of the King of Baratara. Shortly thereafter, the king converted to Wesleyan Methodism (presumably from Roman Catholicism). The Grand Inquisitor of Spain had the infant prince kidnapped and taken to Venice to be raised. The task of rearing the child was put in the hands of a respected Gondolier. Unfortunately, this gondolier had a drinking problem which (before it killed him) left him unable to tell which of the two boys in his household was his son and which the prince. The only one who now has that information is the nurse in whose care the infant was placed by the King of Baratara.

The old king has recently died in an insurrection. The nurse is now married to a brigand operating near Cordova and the Grand Inquisitor (Don Alhambra del Bolero) has been living in Venice to keep an eye on the two young gondolieri—one of whom is now the rightful King of Baratara.

Unknown to del Bolero, *both* young men select their brides and marry. As is later pointed out, one of them is an unintentional bigamist. The Duke of Plaza-Toro, a nobleman of great lineage, arrives in Venice with his Duchess, his daughter—now a great beauty—and his private drummer, Luiz—who, it happens is the son of the nurse that cared for the infant prince of Baratara. The Duke is in straitened circumstances—that is, the family is *flat broke*. Unknown to anyone else, the Duke's daughter, Casilda, is madly in love with the drummer Luiz.

Now for possible FRP applications. The Duke and his entourage would dearly love to have proper escort, but he has no money. He does have a great deal of influence among the nobility, has a gift for words, and could provide entry into society. He also has absolutely no taste for per-

sonal danger; indeed, in the last war he always led his troops from behind and was the first to retreat. It got so bad that he was asked to leave the service. Indeed, it develops that the Duchess wears the pants in the family, and it is possible that Casilda takes after her. Both of the gondoliers were raised as strict republicans, and each of them intends to reform the kingdom of Baratara in rather drastic ways, much to the distress of both the Duke and the Inquisitor.

Will the PCs be willing to act as escort for the Duke? Are they aware that they will probably not be paid if they do so? Are they able to face up to the political and social ramifications if they harm the Duke in this case? What will they do when the Duke runs from a fight?

Would a group of PCs undertake to find out who is the real king? (It is actually Luiz.) Are they willing to go and bring the old nurse back to be tortured into revealing the information? Will they simply ask her to come with them, or will they attempt to use force and be massacred by the brigands? Will they perhaps support one or the other of the gondoliers in the attempt to change the nature of Baratara? Perhaps they would like to be hired to quell the insurrection that resulted in the old king's death. If so, who will hire them to do so? The Duke (his daughter is to be queen)? The Inquisitor, who would like to purge the politics of the gondoliers, the regicidal tendencies of the populace, and the schismatic tendencies from the previous reign?

What happens if one of the gondoliers is placed on the throne? Will he *really* try to change the government? (The results in G&S are hilarious and outrageous.) Will the populace stand for the changes? What will his jilted bride do? Will she, as threatened, attack Casilda? Or will the new king attempt to get out of the original (purported) marriage and stick with the wife of his choice?

There are many possibilities here, and this is just one operetta. Gilbert and Sullivan wrote several. There are also all of the other works of the operatic stage and lighter works. The 19th century has given us a great wealth of material. Stand back a hundred years and see what classical music can do to enrich your campaigns. If this effort is well received, I will use other G&S works this way in the future.

I have no idea when this will appear in *A&E* as Lee wrote in 100 that 101 was full and 102 half full. So, until *Golem's Corner 18*, don't take any golden wood pieces.

TALES OF THE GOLDEN ARCHERS

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retyped from computer output by the gracious and patient Lee Gold

Hopefully this zine will make A&E #101; if not you have my apologies for the tardiness as I have been a bit slow at getting to it.

Comments on Issue 98

JOHN BAMBACH: Work has ceased on my index due to other commitments. I am mailing you a copy of my computer printouts so far, so you may use the data for your work. Let me know when it's completed. I'd like to get a copy.//Looking at your list, I noticed many dead, long dead or dying zines and aids (Dungeon Sharing Services, for example, no longer answers its mail and is presumed dead; the Elven Warrior died after only two issues, etc.). This will make your task much more difficult, especially for publications that only went to a handful of persons.//Are you computerized or doing it all by hand?

DAVID W. DICK: re ct to PIERRE PETTINGER: Teleportation, under my rules, results in a momentary blanking out of the senses (a safety placed within the spell to prevent madness when travelling through the realm of hyperspace), which dissipates upon arrival 1-10 minutes later (depending on the being's experience; the more times it's done, the faster you recover until you hit the one minute mark). This makes teleporters very vulnerable, prevents sending armies through for surprise attacks (Surprise! You're killed before you regain your senses!) and balances the spell.

ROBERT SAUNDERS: re PCs who are dishonest and devlous: presently in my PBM I have one player who has taken these tactics to an extreme and in two months game time has gained the following enemies: the largest local cult (which has now sent three of seven Promised Dooms upon him), the local city guard (of which he was a member until an ad lib from him resulted in the deaths of 20 of their number), a professional assassin (from whom he stole a magic sword), all the local wizard guilds, a nearby band of bandits (30 in all), a witch, several craftsmen, a tavern owner and many others --totalling about 500 persons. The solution is to let such PCs reap what they've sown. Even going out to buy groceries is now a life or death situation, and he spends most of his time repelling attacks on himself or his home (from frontal charges to letterbbmbs).

ROB ELWOOD: You shouldn't pick on Lee's occasional typo. It simply proves she's human. She is far more accurate than most of the people who submit to the magazine and far more saturated with typing to do.

DAVID W. DICK: re ct to RONALD PEHR: I fear I missed the context of the original discussion on Staffs, Wands and Rods, but I would like to add a slight tidbit: according to history, wands were made of ivory, staves of wood and rods of metal. Thus a differential of magic use could be made into a system, with Wands holding only spells and powers affecting the living or dead; Staves with powers over plants, insects, wind and precipitation, and Rods controlling stone, steel, iron, metals and forces of fire and electricity (forged by one, conductive of the other). This is, of course, merely an idea based on historical references and has not been applied or tested.

ALISON BROOKS (re Superhero Cliches): What about the following:

"If you plan to _____, you can do anything."

"No, I can't let him/her die like _____ did."

"This looks like a job for _____."

"All right, the kid gloves are off!"

"The die is cast."

"Nobody mocks _____ and lives to tell about it."

"I am _____, master of _____!"

"No more Mister/Mrs./Ms./Miss Nice Guy/Gal."

"...Of course, I have a plan!"

"Our security systems are Infallible!"

"The _____ cometh!"

"Sorry to break up your little party, _____."

And ending the comments on that, let's continue onward with the second installment of my Superhero Rule System, PROTECTORS OF POWER (the first part was in #99, and it is vital that all the parts be kept together for understanding, since the first part included the character sheet).

1.5 MORE ON SKILLS

Skills when used fall into two classes. The first is the Instant Results type, such as those used in combat or for such things as gambling, driving, lip reading. These are rolled at the start of a series of uses of the skill and not rolled for again unless conditions change (e.g. one roll for entering a card game; an additional roll if new players are added or old players drop out).

The second type are mostly craft skills dealing with the creation of items. These are rolled at the beginning of a period of time which must elapse before the product is finished. Thus a tailor making a pair of pants will make one roll and take 1-2 hours to complete the job (with tools, of course).

If a Creative Skill is used, such as Electronics, Chemistry, Writing or Use of Engineering Skills (e.g. Computers), then a device/fixture/gadget involved must be described to the GM by the player to see if it falls within that field, and the roll is made. The period of time here should be a week per roll, even if it fails.

Some Creative Skills must be combined with other skills to produce the given results. In these cases, the Skills must be averaged for a number to roll against. For example, to develop a Laser Gun, you'd need Lasers & Optics and Electronics/Creative combined. If the PC has, say, 40% in the first and 60% in the second, the average would be 50%. If you fail, you can try again the next week or so.

1.6 OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TABLE

Most characters will have a line of work, career, or some form of work-related training before becoming a hero/villain. Players or the GM may wish to design a specific background or can use this simple D100 table which gives the skills related to the field and a rough annual salary (note: add D10K to cover variance in salary rates).

Roll	Occupation	Salary	Skills automatically getting 50% Training
01-05	Office Clerk	10 K	Typing, Lying, Searching
06-08	Business Exec.	40 K	Bribery, Forgery, Lying, Blackmail
09-15	Sailor	8 K	Sailing, Swimming, Climbing
16-20	Soldier/Mercenary	8 K	Marksmanship, Climbing, Driving
21-25	Air Force	8 K	Aircraft pilot, Hanggliding, or Aircraft Repair & C. Electronics
26-30	Marines	8 K	Marksmanship, Riflemanship, Automatic Weapons
31-33	Frogman/Diver	9 K	Demolition, Swimming, Climbing
34-35	Paratrooper	9 K	Automatic Wpns, Demolition, Marksmanship, Skydiving
36-45	Boxer	20 K	Punching, Dodging, Subduing
46-55	Government Agent (CIA, FBI, IRS, etc.)	20 K	Accounting, Law, Wiretapping, Marksmanship, Driving
56-60	Police Officer	15 K	Marksmanship, Driving, Subduing, Dodging, Punching

Roll	Occupation	Salary	Skills Automatically Getting 50% Training
61-65	Reporter	15 K	Typing, C. Writing, Lying, Searching, Bribery
66-68	News Photographer	15 K	Photography, Driving, Dodging, Shadowing
69-72	Artist	10 K	Sculpting, Painting, Ceramics
73-75	Thief	20 K	Lockpicking, Driving, Shadowing, Punching, Marksmanship
76-80	Scientist	20 K	Typing, C. Writing, Lying--and a single field of study (e.g. Archeology, Chemistry)
81-85	Engineer	30 K	Typing and one of the following: Agriculture, C. Chemistry, Computer Eng, C. Electronics, Holography, Lasers & Optics, Mechanical Design, Robotics, or Steam Engineering.
86-90	Technician	25 K	One of the following: Auto Mechanics, Chemistry, Computer Programming, Cryptology, Electronics, Medicine, Physics.
91-92	Detective	20 K	Marksmanship, Bribery, Disguise, Dodging, Driving, First Aid
93-95	Lawyer	40 K	Law, Lying, Searching, Driving
96-00	Craftsman/ Tradesman	25 K	Driving and a single craft/trade: Auto Mechanics, Butchering, Carpentry, Clock Repair, Locksmithing, Plumbing, etc.

Note that this table is not meant to totally reflect the fields and their skills, only to give some rudimentary starting points and the kinds of fields superhero/villain types are more likely to spring from (according to comic literature).

1.7 POWERS - THEIR SOURCES

Now it is time to establish the character's unique abilities and powers that set him or her above the average person.

First the player rolls D10 (0 = 10). This is the PC's initial set of Power Points; the more points, the greater the potential. The player may opt for the PC not to have any true powers at all or to use only a few points; if so, each Power Point may be used for +25% more training in any skill chosen (or learning a new skill with 25% per Power Point). Remember that no one can have more than 100% training in any one skill.

Those who wish to use part or all of their Power Points must now choose or have the Source of their Powers assigned to them by the GM (see section on character sheet).

ACCIDENT-CAUSED POWERS are created by explosions, chemicals, strange radiation exposure (not the same as radiation-caused mutations), etc. These were once the most common source of powers in the comics but have fallen into disuse of late. They receive D10 K additional starting salary as a benefit but must roll on the following table of possible drawbacks caused by the accident.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Blindness | 6 | crippled - in wheel chair |
| 2 | Deafness | 7 | scarred: -10 APP pts permanently |
| 3 | Limps | 8 | Eyes are abnormal (glow, colorless, etc.) |
| 4 | Skin pale white | 9 | Whole body glows in dark |
| 5 | Whole body hairless | 0 | Weakened health (-10 Stamina points) |

MUTANTS are, of course, presently all the rage in comic books. They have physical manifestations of powers (see lists in 1.8 for the full range. For example, to possess Flight, you have to have wings!) But they are not trusted by normal (i.e. non-powered) beings as much as other hero types (-25% from Reaction Rolls; more on this later). The advantage is that they have one additional Power Point to spend.

ALIENS are usually beings stranded/abandoned/exiled from other worlds. PC Aliens are considered humanoid, but NPC aliens can come in all different shapes and sizes. They will have physical manifestations of their powers (like mutants), are not always accepted by normal beings with open arms (-10% from Reaction Rolls) and may have another anomaly as per the table below:

- 1 Pointed Ears
- 2 Additional pair of arms
- 3 Must wear air-filtering device at all times
- 4 Intense sexual attraction or repulsion by humans
- 5-0 No additional anomaly--or one created by GM

Aliens do not roll on the occupational skills table (unless they have a secret identity among humans) but get an additional 150 Training Points to invest as wished.

EXTERNAL DEVICES can be damaged if shot or blasted with energy, can only be used five times a day before they need recharging for a day, always work unless damaged or uncharged, have no permanent effect on the user, and are not available for all powers.

INTERNAL DEVICES are less fragile, aren't cumbersome and have mostly unlimited usage. They prevent the character from using heavy weapons, explosives or remote control devices--and are costly to repair/replace if damaged/disabled.

MAGIC is least painful of all ways to acquire powers. It has no physical manifestation and may be bestowed upon a being's body/soul by others or by a device such as those on the following table, that must be touched to be used.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------|---------------------|
| 1-2 Amulet | 4 Ring | 7-8 Helmet/Headgear |
| 3 Bracelet(s) | 5-6 Belt | 9-0 Wand |

Those powered by Magic are -1 Power Point if their score is above 5 at the start.

1.8 POWER CHARTS

This is the initial list of powers available under this system. The GM can add more. Some abbreviations are used:

P: Permanently Active Duration: always on and cannot fail (e.g. bulletproof skin)

W: Activated when Wanted, unlimited duration; you must be awake to use this.

#R: the number of one minute rounds of game time the power is usable

DUR: Duration; RNG: Range; ID: Internal Device; ED: External Device; MGC: Magic

Y: Yes; N: No; X is used as a multiplication symbol.

--- means this factor does not apply to this ability.

PPC: Power Point Cost. PHYSICAL is short for Physical Manifestation.

Power	PPC	DUR	RNG	Physical	ID	ED	MGC
Adhere to any Surface	1	W	---	Sticky Skin	N	Y	Y
Absorbs Powers (Non-Device)	6	30R	Touch	Dupes beings	N	N	Y
Accelerated Luck (+10% to Defenses)	3	P	---	None	N	N	Y
Accelerate Plant Growth	2	W	50'	Green Thumbs	N	Y	Y
Animate & Control Plants	3	5R	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Bulletproof Skin	1	P	---	Leathery Skin	N	Y	Y
Blinding Light Flash	1	3R	30'	None	N	Y	Y
Bio-Energy Bolt (D)	3	W	50'	None	Y	Y	N
Change Weather Conditions	8	25R	1 mile	None	N	N	Y
Cellular Regeneration (Self-Heal 1 pt/round)	3	P	---	None	N	Y	Y
Change one Element to Another	6	P	50'	None	N	Y	Y

Power	PPC	DUR	RNG	Physical	ID	ED	MGC
Create Blackout	2	5R	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Double Speed	2	5R	---	White Hair	Y	Y	Y
Enhanced Strength (+100)	1	P	---	Heavier Body	Y	Y	Y
Enhanced Agility (+100)	1	P	---	None	Y	N	Y
Enhanced Memory (+50)	1	P	---	Larger Brain	N	N	Y
Enhanced Stamina (+50)	1	W	---	Metal Skin	N	Y	Y
Enhanced Appearance (+25)	1	P	---	+ Sex Appeal	N	N	Y
Electrical Bolt (D)	4	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Flaming Body (D)	3	5R	---	None	N	N	Y
Freeze Air Around Object	5	25R	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Freezing Bolt (D)	3	W	30'	None	N	Y	Y
Flight (Self)	3	W	5 miles	Feather Wings	Y	Y	Y
Flame Bolt (D)	4	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Gliding (Self)	1	W	50'	Arm Webbing	N	Y	Y
Insensible to Pain	1	P	---	None	N	N	Y
Infravision	1	W	50'	None	Y	Y	Y
Invisibility (to sight)	2	5R	---	None	N	Y	Y
Increase Size (5xNormal)	4	5R	---	None	Y	Y	Y
Intangibility (to matter)	4	W	---	None	N	N	Y
Laser Beam (DD)	5	W	50'	None	Y	Y	N
Microscopic Vision	1	W	300xNormal	None	Y	Y	Y
Mental Illusion - Sight	1	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Mental Illusion - Sound	1	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Mental Illusion - Touch	2	W	50'	None	N	N	Y
Mental Illusion - Smell	1	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Mental Illusion - Taste	2	W	50'	None	N	N	Y
Mind Shield	1	W	---	None	N	Y	N
Mental Stunblast	2	W	20'	None	N	Y	N
Metamorph Self into Animal (Single Choice Only)	5	W	---	Slight Resemblance	N	N	Y
Mental Command of Insects	1	W	50'	Antennae	N	Y	Y
Mental Command of Animal	1	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Photographic Memory	2	P	---	None	N	N	Y
Personal Force Field Vs Energy Attacks	4	5R	---	None	N	Y	Y
Personal Force Field Vs Matter Attacks	4	5R	---	None	N	Y	Y
Precognitive Danger Sense	3	P	---	Spine Tingles (on)	N	N	N
Paralyzing Touch	5	60R	Touch	Grey Skin	N	N	Y
Projected Force Field	5	5R	50'	None	N	Y	N
Projected Invisibility	3	5R	50'	None	N	N	N
Radar Sense	1	W	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Radio Frequency Hearing	1	W	1 Mile	Enlarged Ears	N	Y	N
Reduce Self to 1/10th Size	2	5R	---	None	Y	Y	Y
Stretch Own Limbs	1	5R	---	Rubbery Body	N	Y	Y
Scent Enhancement	1	P	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Sonar	1	W	50'	Pointed Ears	N	Y	N
Sonic Scream (D)	3	W	30'	None	N	Y	Y
Stellar Energy Bolt (D)	4	W	50'	None	N	Y	N
Solar Energy Bolt (D)	4	W	50'	None	Y	Y	N
Strength Doubler	3	5R	---	None	Y	Y	Y
Teleportation of Self	3	W	50'	Blue Skin Tone	N	Y	Y
Telekinesis (30 lbs Max)	1	5R	50'	None	N	Y	Y
Time Jump (in same spot)	5	5R	---	None	N	Y	Y
Telescopic Vision	1	W	100 miles	None	Y	Y	Y

continued in six pages--at the end of MONTMORILLONITE MAN-O-WAR BIRD

...and beyond it all, my call lies buried in shards of MONTMORILLONITE, washed nightly by the spandrift from the wakening sea below the island. The solitary MAN-O-WAR BIRD rakes the skies to the souging of anguished breezes, and now and then, a plaintive mew breaks forth...

Installment the Sixth by and (c) Nick Larter, of Silwood Park, Ascot, BERKS, England.

A&E 99: MARTIN WEXTED

Your piece on roundless combat is the exception that proves my rule of shrinking away from stats-based articles. I thought it was very good and--but for the rambling complexity of my own fantasy rules--would implement it at once. I do hope I will get there eventually. Meanwhile I am intending to start running a CoC campaign after Christmas, and I now intend to use the system in said game. There are only a few more weapons to design stats for here, of course, mainly guns.

When I sit down and work them out, I will put them in A&E if you have not already done so, having thought about it before this sees print. As a sample, I reckon a six-shooter might be described thus:

Speed penalty, --; Damage: D6; Best Speed: 3 (first round, to include drawing and aiming), 1 (for subsequent rounds at same target).

Reloading might have to be treated as a rather long pause. Anyway, Martin, it's your system, what do you think? I reckon that it might prove the greatest boon of all in SFRPGs in which the variety and complexity of weapons systems available are crying out for something to render their use a little less of a mental torture session on the part of the players.

A&E 100

OLEG ZACHAROV: magnificent cover. As I said in my letter, I think you have the last word in the Giant Arthropod debate well and truly cornered.

VINCENT BURCHETT: so the Necronomicon is in paperback now? If you have the hard facts on this (publisher, cost and editor, if any), please pass them on to facilitate my hunting in the import bins.

DIANA SHORT: Congratulations! You've made me kick the habit (D'you what--?). I mean that the first thing I used to do when my A&E arrived was egoscan. Now the second thing I do is egoscan; the first is read Vizzionz.

JUSTIN ROLLINSON: Welcome to A&E; nice to see that the Berkshire contingent has risen to two once more.

LEE GOLD (re my zine heading): do Americans really spell "instalment" as "installment"? [Yes.--LG] If so, it's the only case I can think of offhand in which the nefarious doctoring of our ancient tongue has come up with something longer. [How about our connection instead of your connexion?--LG]

KARL SEVEN & JONATHAN WOOLLEY: I am impressed with the Fate-Role rules. They not only stand on their own as a rather different introduction to FRP but could also be integrated in a rather more conventional and complex FRP regime as a means of resolving particular sorts of encounters. I have in mind mainly consulting temple oracles or the local soothsayer to divine some vital piece of information. With the right conditions a considerable dialogue could be set up between those in the know and those on the outside. Perhaps your future planned supplements might delve into this (he suggested, delicately brushing the noisome insect from his cheek with the index finger of his left hand).

ROB ELLWOOD: I at least agree with your peregrinations on how an FRPer might well develop a more flexible attitude to rules as his experience and assuredness in the genre develops; it is certainly what happened to me. I can envisage another side

of the coin, however; as the player's experience grows, he is smitten more and more with the grand design of creating the perfect ordered rules system to which all others must be inferior (though the nice guys keep the secret deep desires of the ultimate OTW under admirable control, and they naturally remain unstated), much as the alchemist strives to turn lead into gold. I also believe that by creating one's own rules, no matter how ordered or free, the GM must have a greater command of the situation than even the most stringent learning of some proprietary system will afford him.

TO ALL WHO BY NOW WILL HAVE RECEIVED MY LITTLE "QUINTET" PACKAGE

I hope you've managed to integrate it into your existing FRP campaigns and are enjoying the game. If there are any more takers, I'm not proposing to start charging for it, but something along the lines of a fanzine swap for the privilege would nicely defray my small production costs and postage.

THE FIREVENDORS

The seeds for this piece have been sown in a few comments I've been making recently: e.g. to HARRY ROBERTSON in A&E 100 and to DAVID FLIN lastish. I agree with the apparent consensus that the simplest way to ensure the arsonists remain our thralls is to decree that the oils available for general use are unspectacular tallows and greases. It grates on my sensibility, though, to have to believe that in all the wealth and richness of the fantasy worlds we create, some misguided and chaotic mage or chemist has not come up with a flammable alternative.

The simplest way out, as ever, is to call our incendiary stuff "magic oil," and I see nothing wrong with this; it should after all be easy for a mage to enhance the burning qualities of a normal pot of tallow using the right enchantment. But this alone would render the commodity a little too rare and expensive. So would large fire elemental, small fire elementals, bits of fire elementals, and the like.

How about Dust of Spontaneous Combustion? Just make a small pile, put a drop or two of water on it, wait a short while and WHOOMP! A more conventional version is one I have already mentioned: filling a room with an aerial suspension of fine dust and then sparking it with a lightning bolt. All of these, though, are interesting but rare additions from the magical arm of the service, that anyone with the necessary command of magic and/or access to a suitable magical supplier could (given funds) do, but still not what I am really after.

I am left then with the necessity of producing the flammables from a conventional (i.e. non-magical) source, and I consider that chemical or biological methods might be the most readily available. I'll take the biological options first. If we use microorganisms, then the basis of the idea lies in my recent comment to DAVID FLIN (lastish): our organism is kept in a suitable vat, on a suitable substrate, and the flammable bits are tapped off and bottled up.

Organisms that could be used include bacteria, yeasts, fungi and actinomycetes. There are two obvious groups of substrates: chemical ones which will generally yield what we understand to be mineral oils, and plant/animal ones which could yield all sorts of things. Examples of the former include crude oil, oil shale, tar from the tarpits, and soft coals; and there are two ways in which the organism could produce mineral hydrocarbons from these: either as excretion products or as bits of the substrate not used as an energy source in the first place (a sort of biological fractionation). Production by the former method means that the substance, having been along one or more biological pathways of the organism, may have alien groups bound onto the molecule that could decrease its primeval flammability, so the latter method generally would give purer and more immediately useful products. In either type of culture, high concentrations of the flammable hydrocarbon (say, 5-20%) would probably kill the organism (much as a lot of alcohol would its parent yeast), so continued tapping of

the source plus periodic addition of fresh substrate to the vat is essential for maximum production.

Plant/animal substrates could be almost anything dead and rotting, and products will include aldehydes and ketones, alcohols, possibly ethers and certain specialized secondary plant chemicals like the turpentines. Products will be generally a little less explosive than the mineral group and correspondingly safer to produce. Microorganisms will once again be one of the choices for culture organism, but to present a slightly different angle, I'll consider the production of turpentine from pine trees using bark beetles.

To set up the culture vat, adult bark beetles could be added to a mass of soft pine chips. If they are too hard, it will be difficult to extract the fully-grown wood-boring larvae, so use wood that has been dead awhile or else pre-treated by soaking and heating. The larvae eat the wood by boring through it, but don't excrete the important secondary chemicals; they store these unchanged in special organs, as a defense vs would-be predators, on account of the nasty odor. Every so often, the adult larvae are harvested and mashed up, the resulting goo being distilled to obtain the chemical. Yes, I know you could do this to the wood in the first place. This method has the advantage that you need less apparatus to get a usable amount of turpentine and can carry out the operation more discretely, which may well be one of the manufacturer's prime concerns.

In any case, the fact that the beetle mush needs to be distilled brings me nicely onto the chemical--or rather physico-chemical--methods of production, and I do not want to dwell on these very long. I like the biological ones rather better, as the necessary technology is not so high, so they are likely to fit into fantasy situations more often. Nevertheless, apparatus for the processes of simple distillation or fractionation can be envisaged as part of the kit a wizard or alchemist would have in his laboratory. The material and know how to produce flammables from chemical reaction probably requires an order of magnitude greater technological input still, however, and apart from one-off cases of a lucky discovery of a reaction being handed jealously down through the generations, I would hesitate to introduce this. The catalytic properties of finely divided platinum is a good example of something that might be discovered serendipitously.

Two final points on the production theory before I move over to the people (the Firevenders of my title) involved in it. So far I have not mentioned gas at all, but in fact harnessing marsh-gas (methane) could be one of the simplest processes of all. The quiet old man who lives in the smelly lowland mangrove thickets in his rude hut is seldom troubled by his neighbors. Thus the chances of anyone noticing the voluminous balloons tied above the marshy pools to stop them drifting away is fairly small.

Secondly, the use of abnormal environments to facilitate other impossible reactions or processes might be attractive to some producers. For instance, there's the oxygen-rich atmosphere in the beetle-mazes that I mentioned all those A&Es ago, useful perhaps in peroxide or superoxide production.

Now to the people involved with the firevending: what would they be like and in what sort of places would they do it--and also who would their customers be? The simplest first: I reckon the main customers would be Secretarial guilds, always up to a bit of arson in the neighboring duchy; Magic Users, many of whom could do with a bit of instant material component for a nice big fire spell; and adventurers, out to rid the kingdom of more nasty monsters. Perhaps a few trades like alchemy or metal-working also need a quick source of a blaze from time to time. Enough examples; the more one thinks, the more there are. In the above examples, the Firevender is a respected citizen; all his dealings are honest and for worthy causes, assuming we use my concept of the Secretarial guild only doing criminal things away from its home area; he does not have to cover up his activities at all.

His more unscrupulous cousin is a different kettle of fish, however, supplying the

underworld, the goblin raiders, and indiscriminately fuelling family feuds with a goodly array of Molotov cocktails at reasonable rates. Such a character isn't open about what he is brewing in the garden shed; hence my bark beetle example a little earlier. At the same time, however, he can continue his trade in some safety, as the hazards of the job mean he will never be found in built up areas. The Firevendor's is the lonely house a mile from town, perhaps hidden in some thicket or up among the rocks of the old dwarven quarry, depending on the raw materials he uses for his culturing. Even the most desperate guild of underground crooks would not consider sitting their resident Firevendor in the basement of their seedy HQ on the wharves.

What are the hazards of the job then? Obviously fire and explosion, and this alone is enough to banish the Firevendor from the city. This is no comfort to him, though, as it is a hazard that he, all alone now, is still subject to. The simplest solution is for the vendor to live elsewhere than his workshop, even in the city while the workshop remains outside. However, the problem of security at the works then becomes insurmountable. I believe that the vendor must live within striking distance of the works and should probably use a few guard dogs as well. The other problem with fire is that, regardless of the proprietor's safety, the whole stock culture and ancillary equipment could easily go up in smoke; whether or not the culture is self-replenishing, this can still represent considerable material loss. The answer is to employ some kind of fire-prevention device, either mechanical or one of the biological ones I postulated in an earlier ish.

Fire is not the only hazard of this work, though. Another major one to the vendor is the potential damage to his health with all the nasty vapors around the place (I am reminded of the alchemist's shops in Lyndon Hardy's MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICS here); and for the most part I think this is a problem he has to live with. Lastly, Firevendors come up against a social problem: if any of his neighbors gets a whiff of what's going on, I don't think an underhand Firevendor's presence in the area would be any longer tolerated.

CAMPAIGN REPORT

SO FAR: Night, the town square at Bocon in Zamor. Gustavius is out acquiring local knowledge when the Nag & Ducat is attacked by a swarm of enormous vile insects. The rest of the party and the other inmates defend stoutly.

The battle at the pub is long and bloody, and the sounds of other skirmishes around the town square permeate the air from time to time. Alkar, Varg and his newly acquired hound Fang slip out when the fracas is in full swing and ambush a couple of shady characters who have just appeared. Managing to dispatch them unnoticed, the two men and dog then return to the pub hall and join battle once more with the insects. By now Estel has joined the fray, but is acting rather irrationally; and a few animated objects are floating around the pub including a "Drink Raven Ale" sign. Eventually the insects are killed or driven away; the pub is secure from attack but not yet safe as a fire has started and is proceeding to gut most of the upper story.

The blaze damages the structure of the building but not seriously and is eventually put out. Meanwhile, the dead are numbered, and Lyra gives succour to the wounded. Among the dead is Olga, but Varg is more bothered about misappropriating a few trinkets from the corpses of the others with the aid of Alkar. Around dawn, Gustavius slopes back, reeking of drink and with lipstick smudges on his collar but is only mildly berated by the others who are terribly unsuspecting about the whole thing.

(Yes, folks, you've guessed it. Gustavius has been bought off the quest (morally at least). A combination of wine, women and all the things no good Secretary should be without has persuaded him to petition for affiliation to the Secretaries Guild at Bocon in Zamor, the most powerful body of its kind in the known universe. No matter how much he thinks he is still in tune with the quest, when it comes to the crunch, the fact that the Guild is fundamentally opposed to the dictums of Hantivari (as the

party has much circumstantial evidence for) will dictate his ultimate actions).

The Nag & Ducat is no longer suitable habitation for a self-respecting bunch of adventurers, so the group decides to check in at the posh hotel, even though it is a lot more expensive. They then lay plans to head north to the coaching house and gather necessary equipment. Varg and Allen also reveal that the strangers they bush-whacked during the battle with the insects had been planning to rob the party, but were overheard by Varg during the course of the evening at the Nag & Ducat.

Inquiry around Bocon quickly reveals the significance of the insect attack. Collectively known as The Swarm, it is now a ubiquitous menace, though nobody knows when or where it originated. There are now vast swarming grounds in the wastes of the Western Deserts, and the militia together with the noblemen of the land have constructed all manner of small fortifications, as well as the magnificent fortresses of Alvará, Sharn and Henock, to ward the lower and upper villages of the menace. Now and then though pockets of the Swarm do break through and head east to terrorize the citizens.

That night our heroes relax at the hotel, which has a luxurious terraced garden complete with neatly clipped bushes and tasteful statues. There is a band playing soft night music (soft night music? With a dwarven bugler, wailing female vocalist, and two rather gaunt chaps on bongos; oh well...), and a party of female adventurers newly arrived at the place provides some additional diversion for the menfolk. Soon everyone is well drunk but for Gustavius, who slipped out some time ago to make his evening class at the Guild.

Estel is in a particularly sorry state and is slumped over the money box that came the party's way on the journey to Zamor, when suddenly he is jumped by an unseen presence and knocked unconscious, and the box is spirited away. Only Varg and Alkar realize the import of what is happening and set off in unsteady pursuit. Fang has already bounded off on the trail of some strong scent but is sent badly reeling by the unseen blows of the invisible foe.

Varg and Alkar decide to continue pursuit and head round the back of the hotel to the stable, intending to borrow a couple of horses. But they surprise a loyal ostler and have to kill him to fulfill their immediate goal. They set off, with Varg's tracking skill now coming into play. After a couple of hours ride, which takes them well into the Home Wood, they come to a clearing. There is a large encampment in it of vile ape-like creatures with large staring eyes and green flecks in their dirty white fur. They number around fifty.

Varg elects to make himself invisible and strolls into the middle of the camp. He has made a miscalculation, however, as at once a whole group of the creatures jumps up and down and points to where Varg thinks they shouldn't be able to see him. Four of them disappear to Alkar's sight. The invisible Varg sees them coming straight for him, attempts an offensive spell to effect escape, fumbles, and is swiftly grappled by his assailants. They gag him, tie him up and drag him off to a tent. Alkar decides to remain hidden so he can ponder the situation.

Meanwhile, back at the hotel, Lyra is comforting a very disgruntled Estel, and Fang is licking his wounds, when Gustavius arrives back in his usual good spirits. When told what has happened, he starts making plans to meet up with the other two and recover the box.

First thing in the morning, the three hire horses and set off, using Fang to track his master. Gustavius manages to get in mind contact with Alkar; brief messages are exchanged as to the situation at either end of the trail. On the way, the three and the dog get caught in a barrage of darts and other small missiles coming out of the thickets of the Home Wood. They manage to ride through this at speed, though, and

THE FNORD 6

by Mark Galeotti, 5 St. John's Rd, Hampton Wick, Kingston, Surrey KT1 4AN, England

I haven't a clue which Issue this Fnord will get into, but here goes, once more unto the breach....

COMMENTS ON A&E 100

LEE GOLD (Tantivy): Nice Idea about a firearms matrix, but to be valid it would have to embody a vast range of factors. Range and damage also involves rifling, basic shell shape, and such special elements as nonstandard loads (hollow points, frax). Rifling is significant in terms of spin-stabilizing and bullet stability (which can result in the bullet tumbling end over end on hitting a target, punching a more vicious wound). Similarly accuracy can involve recoil reduction and the rate at which a burst of fire can be loosed off. (The new German G11 can fire a 3 round burst so rapidly that all three are out and on target before recoil and muzzle climb can push the gun far off target.)

Obviously such a formula is possible, but given its size and complexity it would be best as an optional adjunct to a conventional gun list. That way those wanting more realism or variety in firearms are free to dabble, but a short and basic list can cater to those who don't want to bother with the minutiae of their Ironmongery and just want to get on with playing the game. Of course, another good side to the Universal Gun Matrix is that--at the cost of forcing GMs to spend time drawing up firearms lists--it gives the designer more time and space on what should be (in my opinion) the more interesting and valuable aspects of a role game, such as alien mind-sets and relations.

I was very interested in the reprint of GARY GYGAX's letter, presumably Lee's, not his doing? Jolly Good Show. The views he expressed are quite eye openingly different from his more recent pronouncements. Compare "...Change the bloody rules to suit yourself and your players" and "...as long as I am editor...as little trend towards standardization as possible" with the DMG's "...If D&D is to survive,...it must have some degree of uniformity." Power Corrupts.

STEVE GILHAM (Agents of Fortune): You do have a knack, don't you? The piece on Sauron was, as usual, inspired, but it was your essay on the technomagic revolution that really struck sparks. Below is a series of comments and thoughts the article triggered, not in any real order.

Mass magic mean mean the end of a medieval society, but a feudal element could prove far more closely nested into the culture. What if all magic flowed from one source, controlled by the King, and cascaded down a pyramidal/feudal social structure? Say a King controls a magic gem which is a focus and source of all magic. It has 10,000 facets and therefore 10,000 units of magical energy, half of which he uses for his own purposes; half of which he channels to his five Dukes who each have a 1,000 facet crystal. They each channel half their energy to the five Counts under them who give power to their respective Barons, and so on down the chain. This could be applied to a whole society with magic passed down the line--depending on continued allegiance to one's immediate superior who, in turn, has his own boss.

Even with a technomagic revolution, the magical energy a scientist uses to power his electron microscope would spring from his superior, the department head. Thus gaining any magic power could depend on accepting a feudal position. The King would *become* the country and the vessel of all the mana of the nation (from patriotism, nationalism, etc.--all religious worship of a sort). Members of the feudal hierarchy would themselves be tied somehow to the land in a fashion reminiscent of Patricia McKillip's other unmemorable "Hed" trilogy. Their gaining and sharing of power would depend on their submerging themselves in the feudal system and never seeming to threaten the nation and system of government. Even if technomagic resulted in mass technological and economic changes, so long as it all depended on a status

quo-linked magic, the feudal society would be insulated from the destabilizing effects of those changes until the magic could be bypassed or substituted.

A technomagic revolution would not necessarily lead to an increase in population. The new techniques or crop yields might not reach the masses to any great degree. Magic herbs usable to produce an antibiotic elixir could be bought up in bulk by entrepreneurs for other, more lucrative purposes, such as producing expensive aphrodisiacs for the nobility. Look at the experience in Ireland: new methods resulted in a marked increase in crop yields, but the chronically underfed peasants received none of the benefits, since milking landlords had the crops shipped abroad where they sold at higher prices.

It is, however, still likely that a technomagic revolution would change the old patterns of society and government, with the rise of a working class (though this could just as well be of "extras" who participate in rituals simply to put more magical energy into the process as a conventional industrial proletariat). Realizing the danger, the existing elites could try and prevent these changes in a number of ways. Perhaps a Poirot-style nihilist reaction from above or a Japanese type of imposed stasis. After all, the first benefits of the technomagic revolution would go to the elite (just as one of the early uses of railways in Britain was to ferry troops around in times of trouble), thus giving them more resources. They could attempt to limit the spread of technomagic by their own technomagic (along the lines of the Priest-Kings of Gor; you know them?) or perhaps attempting to create a segregated society.

This is what Adolf Hitler attempted to create in Nazi Germany. It was his fervent belief that Germany "can only be a peasant state," but he also wanted high technology. He planned to shift the bulk of the populace to the countryside--and keep it there--while creating a series of cities almost wholly devoted to industry and technology in a "tandem economy." All such methods are, in the long run, bound to fail, since it is impossible to prevent the spread of innovation (just look at atomic technology), but it could be interesting to set up a campaign in such conditions (smuggling transistors and spellbooks?). A rather hasty idea that only just occurs to me is that if magic-wielding elites see a population rise as a threat, they could covertly come up with a number of methods to prevent this--like Mass Sterilization or Summon Malthusian Check spells.

At a tangent, the presence of many mages and much technomagic does not automatically mean that it is common. I mean that the technomagic revolution could be strictly in the hands of--and for the benefit of--a minority. There's the Spartan-style state with all technomagic in the hands of a select ubermensch ruling an impoverished helot majority. For a slightly different, literary example, Harry Harrison's DEATHWORLD 2 has a series of clans each clinging to one aspect of the Old Technology. Here any technomagic revolution would be fragmented and uneven.

The idea of playing in a period when magic and technology are suffering from a violent popular reaction is interesting. (More than that if one is a mage!)

If magic and technology do become entwined, what would be the results if magic were geographically limited a la Niven? I can envisage great migrating factories; huge, baroque constructions puffing steam and sparks as they roll across the continent; guards on the foredeck fighting off ecologists from Greenpeace protesting at this squandering of natural resources. Well, that's my last comment--and about time too! The size of this comment is a tribute to you as much as to my long-windedness. Keep it up.

WILLIAM PESCHEL (Free-Lance Press): You say "TSR will maintain its position... by expanding D&D fever into France, Japan and other countries." I don't know if you were aware of it, but BD&D is already available in French, while certain shops in Rome have supplies of D&D in French and British) as well. Hurry, someone translate RQ into German before D&D gets there first!

MATTHEW PORTER (Quartz, Ink & Onyz): I agree about the value of rendering games down to some universal matrix; RQ pointed the way (then ruined it with separate rules for magic and damage) and Victory Games' new JAMES BOND 007 has carried it off very successfully.

I'm interested in those different "schools" of rolegaming. At first I discounted them as merely a long-winded way of saying "GMs' individual style." The more I think about it, though, various aspects of my character, interests and philosophy build up to mould my approach to gaming, especially as a GM. I hold, for example, definite political views and as a result my games often contain implicit assumptions and convey specific messages. I tend to favor a free, dynamic style of play which shifts the emphasis to the broad sweep and the wheels within wheels, presumably because I want to make a point as well as to play a game. It's an intriguing way of looking at styles of play even if it doesn't directly lead anywhere. Neat.

DAVID NALLE (Ebon Unicorn): It's up to you, of course, but I like both title and ordered structure.//I doubt we Brits are that much faster; in my case I try and get zines off ASAP being that much more conscious of the potential time gaps and time-lapse.

I don't think my rebuttals were as negative as you suggest; it's just that several of your points (over RQ's "unimaginativeness" or names) are highly subjective. I can hardly present you with a closely argued treatise as to why I like the names in Glorantha, just as you didn't go into any particular detail on this point in your critique: I just *do*.

As for your assessment of Gloranthan society, we actually have very little to go on: one simplistic little table and a brief comment that "most cultures restrict social mobility and general chances of self-progress or improvement. Such restrictions vary widely...." Let's face the fact that not only is this fairly accurate as far as Glorantha-type cultures go, it's also hardly much to go on. As far as I can tell, RQ has no information about social mobility, acquiring temporal power or renown. This seems to be more a sin of omission than anything else.

With all due respect, even YSGARTH seems to have little on temporal advancement (outside of cults, thieves bands, etc.) beyond an initial Social Standing score and a brief note in Book 5 about PCs conquering areas and taking them over (a rather extreme tactic!). I would say that only games linked with one very specific society can include any decent and relevant section on social advancement; C&S is the obvious example. Just like YSGARTH, RQ deals with a whole range of cultures (from Lunar to Prax tribesmen, Sartarite to Dwarven) and Chaosium presumably decided to avoid this issue altogether. You can attack them for this omission, but I don't see that they have made their position clear enough to attack them as roundly as you do.

As for characteristics, this is another subjective issue. I prefer to leave the delineation of a character's philosophy and social position to description and the player's visualization rather than to numerical attributes. After all, how can one quantify all the facets of an individual's philosophy and commitments by a single Zeal stat? And one can endlessly subdivide stats if one puts one's mind to it. Dexterity can be split into Agility and Dexterity easily enough, but just as logically Agility can be subdivided further into Speed, Liteness, Balance, etc. Really, we are just knocking ourselves into a short-circuit argument of subjective viewpoints; it's just that I wanted to make what you might consider a more effective rebuttal.

NIALL/NICOLAI (which do you prefer?) SHAPERO: (Operation: Chaos): I found the various alien races very interesting; the way they were detailed bodes well for Other Suns; I'll have to try and get a look at it.

PETER CLARKE (Angio-Scottish Chronicle): you really are a cornucopia of goodies! Keep it up, you hear!

continued in one page--at the end of LONG FURRY COMMENTS

VÄRDHUSET 'SPÅKVINNANS DRÖM' Or the second in the zine series from
John G. Robillard, Flogstav. 41C
S-75263 Uppsala, Sweden

COMMENT TO ELLIS SIMPSON: re your interest in historical roleplaying.
While at GOTHECON last spring I caught parts of a game called 'Kelly's Hjältar' (Kelly's Heroes). It was played blind, using a large-scale mock-up of the village, and each important character was played by a different person. I did not participate as the game was only open to those who had not seen the movie. I don't know if the Germans were controlled by the GM, but I don't believe they were. I can try to get more information if you like. I saw very little of the action because the game started late at night, but I am certain that the Americans lost.

ON CHRISTIAN NAMES: Christian names are just that, names that christians have. As soon as the former pagan joined the church a new name, taken from the Bible, was provided. First, or given, name is a more neutral way of saying the same thing.

SYSTEM IDEAS: Torbjörn came over Friday night and we played out two combats using my new system. Well, one of the things I won't be changing (much) is the weapons chart. I began rollplaying with TFT, and one of the first things that bothered me about the game was the weapons chart. I had trouble reconciling myself to the idea that the names of the weapons were connected to the damage done, ST 10 Romans carrying hammers or cutlasses was ridiculous. When I began to play RQ I saw the same problem, although not to the same degree. Anyway, here is my idea: I made a matrix which effectively divides all handheld, non-missile weapons into classes defined by weapon length and weight (there is a subclass of jointed weapons). Each class has a skill base modifier, a fatigue rate adjustment, wound roll adjustments differentiated for stab versus swing attacks (the wound roll is a 1D6 which determines the type of wound caused), and a rate of ~~attack~~ attack also differentiated for stab-swing. Below is a section of the matrix.

weapon heft	middle	
WEAPON LENGTH		
	0	skill base adjustment
	+leach ST under 10	fatigue rate
MEDIUM	+1	wound roll adj. swing
	+1	" " " stab
	1/second-1/two seconds rate	stab-swing

The player can now design a weapon. The weapon must be named with two names: Booblian Bastard-Sword. The attack options are picked: stab and hack (swing is separated, for the purposes of armor resistance, into hack, slash, crush, punch and crush-punch). The player's figure is then Ranked in the skill of Booblian Bastard-Sword (Medium length, middle weight, stab and hack). As there are differences in the damage which can be done (or the fatigue which is used) depending on whether one or two hands is used, the player points out that the weapon can be used in either mode. And that's that. A peasant figure is usually armed with a club, a Loaded Shillelagh (medium length, middle weight, crush, 1 hand) and a Sheaf Hook (short, light, slash, 1 hand). The sides of the matrix are divided as follows: Weapon Length-Short, Medium, Long, X-long, Jointed Medium and Jointed Long, Weapon Heft as Light, Middle, and Heavy. At last, Goblins can have battle-axes.

SLUT SLUT SLUTET NALKAS SLUT SLUT

"OH GOD; I'M SO DEPRESSED." No. 2

Neil A. Fraser of F/104 Sixth Ave, St Peters, South Australia, 5009. (OS) 12 4/69. This zine is a Wombat Tree Press Production, sponsored by United Diprotodon Productions Pty Ltd. It is typed (with my luck, and kindness to her characters) by Miss J. Hein. (See, I've got her under my thumb.) (I refused, but you should have heard what he threatened to do to my characters! I'll have the last laugh though, after March I won't have access to a typewriter, heh, heh, heh. J.H.)

It's me again. Note that I make no attempt to keep track of when this errant child will appear in AFS. Still, I've actually done two of the buggers appearing under my (very own) byline.

I'll break my resolve and comment briefly on things anyway.

COMMENTS 93. If any.

Lee: Do IFD stories, set in my own world count as fiction or write-up. Therefore which page count am I restricted to?

Further notes on Montè Cristo: It is regarded in the Kobazran areas as the centre of culture, learning and art; a sort of Renaissance Florence of the world. The rulership is vested in the La Ruillaume family of half-elves, well-loved, popular and competent rulers, though the government is more a liberal parliamentary assisted monarchy than the absolute monarchies common in Italy at the time (monarchy not of course in the literal sense). It has a very large population percentage of elves much higher than in any other country besides an elven realm, which is usually forest anyway. High elves are still seen and are the source of much awe by the other populace. Apart from the arts, Montè Cristo is noted for some of the most superb vineyards in the (known) world. Its national religion is the worship of Galaff the Maiar (once Vanyar elf) of the small amber moon, and therefore ultimately of the Valar and of Ilru. (The names are Tolkien; the creation mythos rather different)

The name is a fluke (Ha! Ha!); the original is a Khuzdul word Munda-Khizdan (and a circumflex over the last a, my typewriter can't cope with them. Cheap US junk. JH) ("the old walls of the spectre-dwarves") though softened in elven usage, one largely now forgotten. Popular legend has it that it is a "Cristanization" of the Kobazran Mount Krytyne/Cristyne, who was a saint connected with the god Mitra. (I have not thought of an origin for the name Krystyne that doesn't rely of "Christ" for a basis yet, but there is one - somewhere!) At present Montè Cristo is in some turmoil: war has broken out in a friendly realm on its southern borders, and the country is being used as a staging post to get to the front, and as a military camp for many soldiers. (In the future of the story. JH.)

Anyhow, the story as it goes on (and which I now proceed to sit down and write!)

Gazikh, the Gazikh ti Raggeldh (Part II)

Daya woke slowly. Her head rested on a broad, well-muscled hairy chest. Stiff beard hair poked into her ear. She shivered in wonder at what had happened to her. Her stump rubbed gently at Wodè's navel. The dwarf grunted, then stretched. Daya was acutely aware of the shifting muscles beneath her, and shivered again in delight. She rolled her head over, Wodè's green eyes stared into hers.

"Oh, my dear god" he said softly. "How beautiful you are. How strange; how strong I feel." He shifted. Daya moved to one elbow. The waterfall of her hair tumbled over his face, and she laughed, joyously, and at nothing.

"You realize we have challenged or even overturned an entire way of thought, of life?" he asked, his tone serious.

But Daya was all little girl. She poked her tongue at him, and pulled a comical face. He laughed in spite of himself and pulled her face to his.

Later Wodè reluctantly rose and stretched. His thick arms spread-eagled, and his legs slipped apart. He did a few deep squats, then carefully bent forwards to rest his hands flat on the floor. His weight shifted and his body twisted. He stood on his hands, his beard tumbling forward over his face. He blew it away. Daya burst into laughter. Wodè coloured, then wobbled, then fell with a body-hurting thud. He lay on the carpet, glaring at her. "Dasted woman" he growled.

"Are all dwarves as hairy as you?" she asked innocently. He blushed again.

"Are all elves as nosy as you?" He stalked to the window, looking out over the snow-covered city roofs. She came up silently behind him. Her right arm snaked about his neck and draped over his chest. He was acutely aware of her breasts against his back. She whispered into his hair "I love you, my darling. All I say to you is meant seriously, or in jest. All that could be thought insulting is surely in jest, for I would never insult you. You are the best friend I have ever had."

He turned to hold her. "You are my best friend. Even Glodë meant no more to me than dost thou."

He watched fascinated as she brushed her long hair, slightly awkwardly even yet, as she had used to be right-handed. He commenced dressing.

"No," he said. "Not all are as hairy as I. On the other hand many are more hursute. How for hair, see a gnome. Only my scalp, face, limbs and cheeks are hairy. A gnome is so furred he seems a strange sort of animal! Like Blugrab" he added as an afterthought. "And I know how nosy elves are. Don't try telling me."

He moved behind her and gently stroked her hair, tracing round her ear. She sighed in pleasure, leaning into his hand like a cat. Then she shook herself abruptly. "Blugrab. Yes," she said. "Whom shall we tell?"

Wodë gave a gnomic curse. "Blugrab" he said "and Argil, of course. I wish Goldë could know but..."

"Giles?" said Daya doubtfully. "Yes, Giles", she said more decisively.

"I cannot think of another dwarf I could tell, who would not wish to slay you or I for our - "trechery"" Wodë stated, bitterness in his voice. "Precious few elves eother" said Daya. "There are many overly proud ones alive. Luckily some are more open. I'd like to tell Pat and Jacquie some time, but..." her voice trailed off.

"Well then." said Wodë. "Blugrab and Argil it is now. Perhaps the other three later. Giles by letter maybe."

"Isn't the whole thing stupid" burst out the elf. "Something as wonderful; as beautiful as this, and we can barely tell anyone, for fear they may attack us for the crime of loving one another."

He offered Daya her porcelain hand. With a tight frown she waved it away, and strapped on her usual dark-steel hook-blade. She began polishing it with the emery board, the frown still in place. She was disturbed by the horny thumb touching her mouth gently, pushing the frown into a smile.

"Look beloved" he said gently. "We're telling the ones who really matter. Let the rest of the world go hang." He took the emery board from her unresisting fingers, and slipped the chamois cover over the wicked weapon. She smiled reluctantly, and touched his square fingers with her tongue.

"Sensible dwarf" she said. "Right again." She stood, brushing down the suede waistcoat over the green linen blouse she wore.

Wodë strode to the door, tripping slightly over the edge of the carpet. ("Bloody clumsy feet" he mumbled softly.) He opened the door carefully; Blugrab often slept across the portal of Daya's rooms, and could easily roll into it. The dwarf was safe this time however. The man-beast was standing, his back to the door, humming deeply in his throat. He turned ponderously at the noise from behind. At the same time Argil spoke from behind the sasquatch, his tones agrieved.

"Wodë! Do you know how long I've been waiting?" He answered his own question. "Eleven hours! It's almost midday! What's going on...gghhrrgh!" This last happened as he tried to charge (limping) into the room, and Blugrab casually thrust out a tree-trunk arm to stop him.

"Come in, both of you" trilled Daya gaily. Blugrab rumbled happily, grabbed a flagon of cider aquired from somewhere. Argil wheezed in, rather less jolly. He recovered shortly, glaring at the big forest-man all the while.

"Well, at any rate Wodë" he said at last. "You look better."

"I have quaffed at the fountain of joy; supped from the feasting-table of sleep; rested my ears with the song-birds of elven voices; joyed my eyes with the sparkling snows of the city's top. Why then should I not be better?"

Argil tapped his head sadly with a forefinger, and smiled sadly at his sister.

"He's gone" the elf said. "Gone totally now."

Then his face paled, and a lump gripped at his throat. Daya could no longer restrain herself and had waved her be-ri-inged hand before her brother's nose. His eyes almost crossed trying to see it, then his hands shot out, trapping hers.

"Mithril" he breathed. His finger reached out to touch the metal reverently. The band felt cool and alive under his gentle touch. He turned wondering eyes to Daya. She answered his unspoken question. "A gift from Wodë!" As Argil turned to face the dwarf, he missed the questioning look his sister flashed to his friend, and he attached no significance - then - to the dwarf squaring his shoulders, as under a burden.

"A princely gift, my friend" the elf stated. "Is it your work? If so, your skill is greater than ever I suspected!"

"My work" Wodë acknowledged. "The metal was dragon-vintage. But it is not just a gift." The dwarf settled, sinking into a posture reminiscent of the stone the dwarves originally clambered from. "I seek permission, my Lord Argil" he began, ignoring Argil's startled look, and drawing strength from Daya's steady gaze from behind her brother "To pay court to your sister, and eventually to ask her to become my wife. The ring is an engagement ring."

Daya was scowling rather inside. Her personal feeling was that Argil didn't need to give his permission, but she also realized that, peculiar as Wodë was, he was indeed still a dwarf. And the Khuzdul were notoriously chauvanistic about marriage, courting and wives-to-be.

Blugrab gave an interrogatory grunt. Daya, who understood the sasquatch well, nodded. The massive man roared happily and lumbered over to Daya, to hug her carefully against his wilderness smelling fur.

Argil took a minute or so to digest the implications of what his friend had said. He was by no means stupid, but of the many things he may have expected the dwarf to say, it was likely this was not one of them. But he loved both Daya and Wodë sincerely and well.

His face cleared and a marvellous smile broke across his features. He stood and moved swiftly to Wodë and gathered him in a great hug. "Oh Wodë, you bloody idiot! Of course you may marry her. I am delighted, stunned and incredibly happy for you both." Despite his bad leg he twirled Wodë in a half circle of a dance.

Blugrab and Argil swapped partners. Though Wodë said something, exactly what it was went unheard, muffled in a hairy chest, though it would have been drowned out by the Bigfoot's happy growling rumbles anyway.

Argil was more audible. He kissed his sister, embracing her closely. He noted how her eyes shone, and how her voice glowed with joy. He loved her more than anyone else in the world, and what overjoyed her made him more than happy. Wodë was a trifle eccentric, but was his very good and trusted friend; one of his very best. Then...

"Oh Sweet Lady" he swore. "Blugrab and me, yes! But who else can you tell? No dwarves, I'd imagine. Very few elves either. Damned hot-heads everywhere. Anyone who says all elves are wise and understanding are thick headed dolts." he ended passionately.

"Humm." said Wodë apropos of nothing. "Robin Hood is a good friend of mine. I think we should tell him. Besides, with his influence, he might be able to help us."

"Oh. let's just let the whole thing ride - for now." said Daya.

Argil gathered his sister and his friend to him. "I will do anything in my power to help you both. In the meantime Wodë, may I call down the blessing of the Amber Queen upon thee, as She at least approves of this union."

Wodë nodded assentingly.

"By the power vested in me as a Priest of our Lady of the Amber Moon, Queen Galafëa, I Bless thee both with long life; true love, wisdom and merry friendship forever. May she watch over thee both, and keep thy path from harm. May her Love succor thee and aid thee in thy trouble, few may they be. Her Love be with thee forever."

Daya kissed the chip of amber on her ring, and Wodë murmured "Amen."

"Da-da-da-Dats all, folks!"

If it didn't come out in the story, Wade is snarl with ... as also in Galaftha. The Khuzdul story title has a circumflex over the "i" of "Gaz-kh", the "a" of "tha" and the "e" of "Ragzekh". Her typewriter is a Pommy Bastard (actually Yank. J.H.), so it don't got no fancy keys. Sorry! (I have tried to persuade him to but me one with all the right keys, but strangely enough he refuses. J.H.)

Next part of the story will appear Ghod knows when. I think I might do a "shorty" about Serenting before then. (Serenting is my type of Sauron.)

There is a moment of panic-stricken shuffling from the typist as she realizes that the pages Neil gave her are in the wrong order and that in fact there were more comments on A&E 93. She hurriedly types them in, hoping noone will notice, knowing what Serenting could do to her character if Neil had a desire to be nasty....

David Joiner: Cover: Magificent! Can you tell us who he is? And how do those eyes work?

Lee Gold: Things are getting so I hate reading convention details anymore. Keeping on giving details of things that are damn near totally non-existent gets to you after a bit. Still reading about them is about second best to being there (I suppose).

Joseph Dien: Perhaps this comment is non-productive, but I'd like to say how much I enjoy descriptions/details of other worlds. I know I like getting positive comments (hint - to anyone!) so I imagine you do too. I'm continually amazed at how different worlds can be: maybe because Tharamalor is cobbled together from so many different fictional/historical bits and pieces, original creations seem so exciting to me.

John Bambach: At last! A fellow appreciator of Steeleye! Is it the fact that we are colonials that cause us to have good taste?

Chris Murray: For private reasons, I promised Chris a nasty comment. He hasn't ment oned my character yet, who hasn't arrived. Damn! Reading his write-up again, I've got some nasty hints of what's to come; noone told me when I started play, and now I've read it I think I'll get out. Incidentally Chris, Insmouth Reef wasn't torpedoed until 1927-28, well after "our" adventure is set. Nasty comment. Next in Chris's episode: watch an ex-trap and a Palestine-veteran get drunk together! See Pommy nanny drop a primed Mills bomb down a stairwell (without letting aforementioned veteran get a good chance to get out first)! See ghouls get obliterated by .303 Lee-Enfield! Watch intrepid copper (trap) and veteran become raving druggies!

Steve Gilham: Re comment to Stukey re Gold (This is getting convoluted!) About Bombadil. In the Aipulindal there is a period between when Eru made Middle-earth and when the Ainur decended into it: the period isn't long, but it definately seems to be there.

Rob Ellwood: I helped you demolish Jenny (Hein's) world: what with your awkward questions and my helpful (and totally destructive) comments, she's going to have to sit down and rehabilitate her Wales (or whatever it's called). So welcome, Soul-brother! (It's Kymra, and don't you pity me, folks? J.H.)

David W. Dick: As a disguised marsupial (wombat) (I always thought he was a were-bear! J.H.) and a pro-Khazad dwarven cheerleader (there's a sight) I deeply resent and am disgusted by your dwarven-marsupial nasty petty fallacy. Yuck!! One point. Far as I know, all marsupials have an even no. of teats. Why do these pseudo-ones have only one? Point two: If dwarves have pouches, baby dwarves could not be seen "dangling from pouch", unless, like a joey it was sitting, showing head and perhaps hands/arms. Interesting theory, even if I hate it!

Jenny Hein's plastic surgery bit: TBT can do it. In fact something sort of relevant happened to me. Someone did a "Slush-yuck" on the floor. I sank. Then they did a "Hard stuff". Not so much surgery as Mafia concrete boots, though this was a full diving suit!

John Burt to Jenny Hein: WA never tried/wanted to secede. Queensland wanted to. Still does. Q. is affectionately (? J.H.) called the "Deep North" in Aus. That's

where we get our Rednecks from, and dear old Joh: fascist, jerrymandering Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who's just been reelected (again!). 33% of the vote and 2 seats short of an outright majority in State Parliament!! Tasmania? Where's that? ... Seriously (or nearly so) hardly anyone in Aus has heard of Tasmania: Tasmanian Wilderness Society is the one who woke us really up.

Jenny Hein: Hussings is right! Should see her flat! (Speak for yourself! J.H.) And the girl went mad long, long ago!! I think Gwynne and Emith (now I've met the former, who "charmed" me) are fruitcakes!

Jonathan Woolley: Very pleasing story. The span narrative attracted me greatly. More please! Oh. And what is "PateRole" that it is a write-up of?

Harry Robertson: To me and Dansie. Melbourne? Beats me. She told me to put it in. Far as I know, nothing ever happens in Melbourne!

Jeff Hudelson: I might take you up on your offer. I guess you'll know relatively soon.

End: I seem only to comment on other people's comments, not on articles. Guess I'm just shallow (or lazy! (or both!!)).

Surprising Wombat Facts No. 2: My Wombat-sage is in a huff and isn't talking to me, so the fact is, I got none this time. And it's Goodbye from me, and it's Goodbye from him (points towards Nullabor Plains and a wombat (undoubtedly!)). Goodbye!

TALES FROM THE NORTHERN WOODS

Jenny Hein's reward for typing the above is the rest of the page. When not residing in a typewriter she is to be found at 10/72 George St, Norwood, 5067, South Australia. (This will be changing in March, more later).

COMMENTS ARE 100 (Neil has only just got this forwarded on by me, which is why his comments are slightly behind mine.) A good issue folks. Mostly RAEBBICs to everyone.

Lee:(re D. JAMES) But I was never baptised...//I like the Jewels of Kali. (Maybe like isn't quite the right word though.)

S. EBELTZ::(PBZ) You say that "assuming your weapons and jewellery have no antiquity they are not magical". Does this mean that there is a connection between the antiquity of an item and the magic? If so, I have possibly the oldest piece in the party - a string of glass and pottery beads that are a prox 4,000 years old. (To be kind to the GM and to provide an out - they could be fakes.) Even so I have some other pieces....) Am I mistaken, or does it seem that males are unable to do any magic and in fact can prevent the females from performing 'magic' by their interest or presence (e.g. After I contact Dennis, the brooch stops working for a while although all the people I contacted are male - Deanna's thought are muddled when Jason is looking at her) Inn, maybe not, fuzzy is a male. Any comments?

Can we get any more information from the guards (without appearing too ignorant) about the city? I advocate staying right with the second guard unless it looks like being dangerous to (I have no desire to have an unfamiliar polearm inserted in my person)..

Thanks to Hudelson for the knife.

I don't like the idea of P. Water's rosary burning. Was my silver cross suffered the same fate? I suggest a prayer session for the more religious (Christians - I'm one of those insufferable types who don't like to mix religions) of us. I also decline R. Stucky's offer of a magic circle.

That's all from me for now. Coming soon, a new campaign write-up (I'm bored with Gwynne again) - the real version of the "Sharecnar Saga" or "How I met Serenting and luckily didn't know it (the first and third times)".

Last minute nit-pick to A. BROOKS: (re Tasmanian Aboriginals) I got a little lost in the argument about Neanderthales here. The Tasmanian Aboriginal is extinct because the white man slaughtered them in droves when they first arrived (and afterwards). Then again, is that what natural selection means? Wes thu hal!

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It was early morning when earl Geoffery of Moffat arrived at the royal docks. In lord Geoffery's opinion this was the best time to wander around London, if only it happened around noon, so he wouldn't have to get up early to enjoy it. Oh well, he'd just stand a moment and watch everybody be busy at work...

"Sir geoffery?"

Sir geoffery turned around to see a somewhat short sailor-type behind him. "My lord, I'm master Cole, captain of the Albatross. I've been informed by the Lord Admiral that my ship will be put at your command."

"Ah, wes, captain. The rest of my companions will be here any moment. I have letters of safe passage from Richard and Saladin which should handle any problems we ought to meet." He didn't say anything about the other letter he was carrying. That one was signed by the pope, and instructed and christians to aid the bearer in his mission on penalty of the Churches displeasure. With the discovery of kzin, more then just nations had a interest in the possible discovery of any other races of intelligent beings. The Church may have never made any progress in converting the elvish or dwarvish races; but if lord Geoffery's expedition turned any races with potential souls, they would have to be investigated. The kzin had already accepted a small number of monks to travel to thier captial (so as to translate thier written documents, but that was a start.) Besides, if any were found in Africa, the Moslems might well get to them first.

"Captain, I should warn you though that some of the members of my group will need some special accomidations, so..." From the hanging jaw and large eyes of captain Cole, the companions must have arrived. Yes, there they were.

"Captain, may I introduce you to my companions. The rather large person in furs is Drager, royal forester and a mighty fighter. The woman next to him is Fenora, a warrioreess from Germany. Stronger and faster then almost any man. The elf..."

"The one by the unicorn?"

"That's the one; she is Charlette. Frankly, the unicorn is the smarter of the pair. The elf behind her is Quark. The two behind him are Jeff, a elvin mage, and Gomer the Tall. The other 7 foot warrior behind him is Claude, from a French noble family. It would be well if you remember that he is noble, even if he is not too bright all the time."

"Finally there are Gliss the saurian, and Klith-Sargent and Warrior, two of the kzin granted to the King in return for the services of a royal mage."

"I thought we were at war with Kzin. Sire."

"We signed a treaty. The mage Merlin should be along any time now."

"Sir, Merlin the Alchemist sailed with his hired warriors over a hour ago. Indeed, he caused considerable disruption when he sailed."

Now, this was news. Earl Geoffery never trusted Merlin; and it was Merfins actions that got Geoffery's diplomatic mission thrown out of Constantinople. The king might him, but Geoffery had strong doubts about Merlin's loyalty to anyone

but ~~Merlin~~.

"Captain, I suggest that we sail as soon as possible."

With the considerable muscle of the party, the final loading was rapidly completed. Quarters were assigned (the kzin and saurian were to sleep in the hold) and ropes set off. With a favorable wind, the ship was soon down the Thames and into the English channel. No sooner than they were out of sight of land thought, then the lookout called a warning. "Waterspout, dead ahead!"

"Waterspout, in this weather? Swing to starboard." The ship was a good one, and made a hard tack without losing too much wind. The waterspout would have missed them, except for turning to keep with them. As it was, by turning the ship was hit broadsides; snapping the mainmast and nearly swamping the ship. The crew was lucky though, and there were no (serious) injuries. By night fall, they were limping back into London harbor.

Three days later, the Albatross sailed again. All the companions (with the exception of the kzin, who didn't like all that water so close) were sunning themselves on deck. Claude and the saurian Gliss were at the bow, looking at the southern Irish coast.

"Gliss, with the size and strength of the few saurians I've seen, I'm surprised that your colony is restricted to such a small area. Surely the Irish could not hold your people to such a small peninsula."

"Your right, the Irish, even with their druids, could not hold us long. The dragon is another matter."

"Dragon?"

"Yes, the large one that lives between their lands and ours. When we stop to pick up our ambassador to this mission, we can take a fast trip to the desolation, if you wish."

"I'll pass. By the way, is that one of your boats there?"

"Boat? That's druid land. Captain, Lord Geoffery; boat to port. And another to starboard. Everybody to arms!"

To be continued.

COMMENTS ON A&E 100:

GEOFFERY HALSEY: Magic has a great feature, in that it makes a player play a mu, but doesn't it let characters get out of hand quickly. Is there any way to gain more concentration points?

STEVE GILHAM: Rome with magic. Well, one of the things that brought down the Roman empire was that the landlords and merchants moved out of the cities and onto estates. With the decay of the cities came decay in the economy and the central control needed to hold the empire together. If you add magic users to this setup you get a number of self centered mages along with a large number of self centered landowners/merchants, and still have a weak central government. Also, the Germanic invaders would also have mages, and they would be more organized, I expect that it would take the goths and vandals longer to eventually conquer Rome, but they would just the same. Comments, anyone?

SCOTT FRITZ & MARTIN WIXTED: Re ERIN. Are the speed factors (and damage) for thrusts, snap chops, or full chops. What kind of blow (and with what kind of weapon) can make a difference.

PETER A. CLARK: Another interesting story for nordic/Germanic laws is "Eric Brighteyes" by H. Rider Haggard.

JENNY HEIN, WILLIAM PESCHEL STEVE GILHAM, MATHEW PORTER : RAEBNC

BOB ELLWOOD: Strand worlds? Do you have a Niven Complex?

Fire In the Morning--Part V

"She's been electrostunned." Cameron spoke again. "She'll pull out in two hours. When she does, sedate her--Quilnosom will do. She's too valuable to risk taking through the subspace barrier while she's in stasis. She can stay out until we reach Choculac."

"Yes, sir! Should I initiate recovery before landing?"

"Ideally she wakes up inside an Androw Cell, just as we hit her with deep rehabilitation. She's stood up against our conventional equipment, but we'll hit her with things even her shields can't stop. Meanwhile, once she wakes up she'll be extremely dangerous. Put her into isolation, and when you go in to sedate her, use triple Isolate procedures. And leave someone outside the door, even now while she's unconscious, just as a safety precaution."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, get her into Isolation."

Pam felt her litter drift ahead. The conversation had clarified matters. Cameron had kidnaped her onto a TPC starship and arranged for people to believe that she was dead, so no one would complain or look for her. He wouldn't be the first to discover that she was tougher than expected. He still sounded unpleasantly confident about what an Androw Cell--whatever that was--could do. A planet full of TPC agents was probably enough to dispose of her.

This was not the first time that death had stalked her. She was scared stiff. The heroines of historical romance novels claimed that facing death became easier with practice. She suspected that their authors lacked personal experience on the question. Rehabilitation--brain bending--was more terrifying than dying. After rehabilitation, you were alive with your own body as the most subtle of prisons. You felt what your jailors wanted you to feel, desired what your jailors wanted you to desire, and after a short while thought only what they wanted you to think.

On Choculac, she thought, there would be batteries of psi machines, hordes of trained telepaths, and an arsenal full of robotic weapons. If she waited until she got there, she would be shot down and drugged, or her screens would be swamped by sheer weight of numbers. She had to get out now, which probably meant doing something unpleasant.

A door slammed shut. The litter settled to the floor. Its psi screens flickered out. Delicately, she scanned the space around her. The walls and floor held mechanical psi barriers. A careful search found no flaw, no gap she could get through quickly. The barriers turned the sharpest probes she could muster. That was hardly surprising. Her radical, unreliable and personally dangerous alternatives to a probe would be her last resort.

For a moment she panicked. In the end, ...in the end, if she couldn't escape, she would have to choose between being brainwashed and killing herself. If she stopped her heart, they could restart it. She couldn't imagine, though, how they could keep her from projecting herself out-of-body, meanwhile doing enough damage that Pam-body would never support Pam-mind or much of anything else again.

She shrank from that line of thought... It was too dark and twisted for her. She had a few other choices. She could try to overpower whoever came to sedate her. That didn't sound promising. A mental attack against someone with good screens, in the few moments she'd have, was risky at best. She could sometimes get around mechanical screens, but internal biological protections were often more effective. Given surprise, she had a nominal chance of jumping whoever came in. That would leave armed guards outside waiting for her. Breaking out of a prison cell before they came for her sounded preferable.

Well before Cameron's two hours were up, the numbness faded from her arms and legs. He had assumed that his weapon had reached her brain; the motor nerves recovered rather more quickly. Cautiously, she opened her eyes. The ceiling was a pale shade of apricot; various pieces of scientific equipment lined the walls. She shifted from side to side, ever so slowly, identifying bits and pieces of machinery. This wasn't a jail cell. It was just a private room in the ship's infirmary. There seemed to be no special precautions. After all, they knew that she was unconscious. She slipped off her sandals, stood and silently searched the room.

She found nothing especially useful. Tools were in very short supply. The ventilator ducts were too narrow for her shoulders. A closet yielded a leaded canister: not quite a club but it was heavy enough to surprise someone. She could wire the doorknob to the ship power mains, but the knob was almost certainly a non-conducting composite, not real brass. The hinges were on the wrong side of the door; she couldn't even pry them out. What was her next step.

Pam finally remembered the obvious. In a prison ward, all the equipment wouldn't have been left lying around where someone could reach it. One can almost never lock a patient into a conventional hospital room. She leaned on the lockless door, pushed it ajar by a hair's breadth, listened, and opened it far enough for her to get out.

A guard sat at a night table, eyes glued to a television screen. The audio suggested a lurid entertainment tape. He was facing away from her and didn't look up while she elbowed the door shut. The guard was wearing a mechanical static generator, strong enough to protect him from rapid telehypnosis. If she tried to break the barrier, she would set up enough of a commotion to alert every telepath on the ship. She edged across the room, bare feet padding noiselessly over cold tile floor. Two final swift steps brought her to his back.

Unconscious, without the static generator, the guard's mind was an open book. In a few moments she had acquired a complete description of the ship and its crew. To her surprise, Cameron was the only telepath on board. Quickly she learned from the guard the trained reflexive use of his hand weapon and--to her surprise--the location of the other prisoner. They had taken Mumford too. Psi-learned skills tended to fade quickly, but they would last long enough to dispose of her present enemies.

She adjusted her psi-bubble around her, making it look as much as possible like a stray bit of static. Releasing Mumford took a few moments. For a pair of armed telepaths to hunt down an unwarned, nontelepathic crew took little longer. The crew members they left in the ship's stasis shells, shut off from the flow of time until someone released them.

(Cameron), she told Mumford, (Is on the bridge. I think he's noticed us by now, but he can't strike back unless he comes after us.)

They stopped a few compartments away from the bridge. (Cameron?) she called. (We have something to settle, you and I.)

(Miss Morgan? I see you've escaped), answered Cameron. (I suppose I should wonder how. And my crew seems to be missing--put them into stasis, did you? It doesn't matter. I can fly my yacht solo.) "I suppose," Cameron's voice continued from the intercom, 'you'll be stubborn about going to your cell. Stubborn, but not stubborn enough. Go quietly, or I'll be obliged to use force."

(You? Force me?) she sneered. (You and which army?) She projected a protective bubble around Mumford, her own psi screens blending smoothly into his. (Just keep quiet), she told Mumford. (He can't reach you unless he beats me.)

Well number 100 is here at last, Pity it seemed rather flat...

LEE the cover to 99 showed a Full Priest riding its Hharssar (RQ reference).

Martin WIXLEAD: Glad to have served as an inspiration.

Scott Fritz: So it takes 10 days to prepare enough to be able to subdue an indefinitely large beast for a minute. Why does it take 11 to subdue a kobold? This system is both too weak (on the spotcasting can't produce effects worth a damn) and too powerful (anything goes if you have a year to prepare).// To true I hate the Wish spell (never let the things into my games).

Michael JOHNSON: Caste - read 'Illuminatus!' on the motto 'Non serviam.' Cannot is not the same thing as will not, despite the social shamanism that pretends otherwise.

This is allied to my feeling that it is self-defeating to attempt to legislate role-playing. Those who can will, those who can't will play whatever they usually do. Certainly a game should contain specific cultural details if the designer wants, but they shouldn't intrude on the mechanics (physics by hand), which oughtn't know about such things. Role models that are unfamiliar to the players can be explained in the cultural context. This applies as much to C&S as to non-European contexts.

Alison BROOKS: That wasn't you, it was one of a pair of mad yanks who phoned me early one morning, and seemed to suggest, during the rather vague conversation, that they'd a zine on the way for A&E.

Hank GRIFFIN: I would actually extend that thought - book-keeping = mental arithmetic = complexity. This is my personal beef about 'no-round' systems (more bookkeeping) and 'no-hitpoint' systems (which encode the numbers).// Glad you like the stories. I just hope I can write some more.

Doc DEL GRANDE: See comment to GRIFFIN above for reasoning that skill levels are integral. Say skill $n = D&D$ level $n = RQ$ skill $30+5n$ % to interpret. Or 0-3 = beginner, 6-8 = competent and 12-15 = mastery. The range 1-20ish is designed to be familiar to players of most rolegames.// Of 20 people, the dozen or so with similar levels are probably all 0-3 level anyway: besides this effect has never worried people using published systems.

Mean Temperature - I recall getting 300K when I did it for an exam once, but I get 295 K now, too ($T^4 = 6000^4 / (1.49 \times 10^8 / \text{solar radius})^2 \cdot 4$ - the 1 being the ratio of input and output areas. $1.49 \times 10^8 = 210$ solar radii (radius subtends 1 deg at the earth) so $T^4 = 6000^4 / (2.121)^2 \cdot 4$ as 120 is close to 121 and so $T = 6000 / (22) =$ just shy of 300 - say 273K or 0C

If you forget that it's the solar radius you want, that puts a factor of 2^{22} in which gives the 400-odd K you report.

Bob ELLWOOD: Once you've redefined gravity, you've unravelled modern physics, so if anything else feels good, do it.// I hope that 0.1s quanta can be speeded up// Re your Question - my symptom habit is just that, a reliance on something to un'erpin my Gling, even if I don't need it. The problem with deciding a background that amuses and running on that is simple - first find the background that will interest you and enough players to make the effort worthwhile.

Dave NALLE: Another comment on the RQ shindig (I'm a masochist). 2 your comment to Mark GALILEOTTI suggests that style is after all at the heart of the problem.

Yes, if the GM uses Glorantha, there is a problem - innovation may contradict later gospel, which would straightjacket GM and player alike. However, even so, if one uses the starting background table, there is no rule preventing a barbarian from eventually seizing a kingdom and becoming nobility, or against nobles being dispossessed by invasion.

Re the 'mass' of tables, all 8pp of them, most of which (skill costs, armour, weapons, spells) are only used during character set-up and 'down-time' bookkeeping; How does this slow down play - the only tables used in combat are the fumble tables - all the rest is on the character sheet and should be.

Re stats, and the capability of the character : On the one hand, if the players design their characters from scratch anyway, why not just let them write down their stats without any of this points pool effort - if the players aren't jerks they'll not just write down 18(00) in each slot. You could even just say the stats are low, high, average, very low or high and dispense with numbers.

Since no game is ency clopedic enough to have rules for every contingency, there will always need to be some adjudication as to the precise worth of a skill/stat in fuzzy situations. And I recall it was Dave Hargrave, no friend of RQ, who was the foremost exponent of adjudication.

And if the mechanics are only rarely invoked (little combat) then rules aren't really necessary, anyway. All you have to do is keep people from just rolling skills when you want them to role play first (eg Spot Hidden, but just as much Bargainin g)

Re ct to Wayne SHAW: how about really doing dirt on RQ effectively (primate anality rules OK) why not quote one of these nebulous and never seen 'limits on the system' that prevent/roleplaying. Questions of taste in mechanism - RQ's multiplicative parry as opposed to D&D's subtractive one-need not apply.

The most frustrating thing about this inherently selfdestructive series of comments on my part is that I'm sure that if we were discussing this face to face over a few beers, we'd find that we agreed about more things than the trivia we're debating now that we disagree on.

For something completely different: Magical power - see AoF XXX for another way of looking at what's wrong with too much magic.

Fritz & Wixtead: Your system(s) is(are) incapable of simulating reality - an 8th Dan Tai-jutsi is capable of drawing his sword, cutting through three bundles of straw designed to represent as much resistance to the sword as a human neck, and then sheath the sword, all in 0.9 seconds. Then with indefinitely large stats and levels, your system can't admit this, //No value judgement, just a fact.

David FLIN: re John BURT: 78% N₂, 21% O₂, 1% Ar is the best integer% model of the sea level atmosphere. CO₂ is at 0.03%, below a couple of other minor gases, as I recall.

Laurence GILLESPIE: re ct Nicholas CLIFTON: But rolegaming is meant to be played, not just retold. The game should entertain while it's happening, or whatever the retale value (bad pun), it will not be worth doing in the first place.

I'm not saying that low power is good or bad, merely that I feel that how the game sounds later is not terribly relevant to campaign quality.

Actually, my current stance, for FRP, on power levels is to declare it irrelevant too! No combat means no chance of using high power, or missing power in a low power situation, if you take things to their logical conclusion. Rare combat is nearly as good. (Judo in the art of FRPing!) Even when as a player, I had an immortal PC, I avoided combat like the plague, and went around feeling acutely vulnerable, despite dozens of spells and a machinegun. I guess it's a matter of player and GM style whether a few deaths are required 'pour encourager les autres'. I've always played in low death rate games (one permanent death per month being unusually high), but never feel immortal in PC persona (usually extremely the opposite) - probably because I know if I do something stupid the uncaring mechanisms used in the games would grind me up and spit me out. I don't go around charging spike-tail manticores run like RQ Xbows, I hug the ground and let the teleports take it from behind, 'cos if I did charge, I'd be perforated. No messy deaths required, just a certain imagination, and remembering live cowards are better than dead heroes.

But then, thinking about it, of all the characters I've played in continued campaigns - neglecting one-offs, where it takes no skill - I can only recall one occasion where one of my PCs was ever mortally wounded, let alone permanently killed. It may be a measure of how much empathy for the PC the player has, how the threat of harm is taken - the abortive RQ Borderlands based campaign I talked about a year ago failed because I didn't want to go into combat with my PCs.

Essay Time . . .

Leading on from that is another attraction of superhero gaming: bodies may fly around the scene, no one actually gets maimed. The rather stereotypical violence can be purely cathartic, rather than inducing anxiety.

Although we normally play our games without rules, I've been a bit involved in Phil Masters' Champions campaign, and have the new Superworld, and recently I've actually been tinkering a bit with the mechanics of these games (mainly since Phil wants to submit some Champions stuff to WD and found that the reaction wasn't that enthusiastic until he mentioned multiple keying for Superworld as well - should it eventually appear it should also have Golden Heroes stats supplied by the folks at Games Workshop as well).

This involved taking stats for some operatives Phil had worked up and converting to Superworld; and it showed up some striking differences between the two systems - not only in the lower starting points and inability to use power disadvantages for the Superworld types, but also in the balance of the characters. It was flatly impossible to buy the heaviest of the weapons assigned to the agents, but for the more skill-based agent types, I was generally faced with an embarrassment of surplus points left over. Champions seems to be based - and the villains supplements give weight to the idea - that the main aim of the game is to tote around 10+ dice attacks, and that skills should be discouraged by their expense, just the converse of Superworld. Compare for example the parallel stats for Koriand'r in DW 30 - 16D6 energy blast in champs, in Superworld, 10D6 'rarely used fully'.

One point at which I bent the rules doing the stats was in designing a jet-bike for one of the agent types. I could have given them flight, reduced cost, focus limited, but that's not how they were given in Champs terms; the bike had been built as a vehicle using the vehicle rules, so I used the Sidekick power for the Superworld characters. While this is technically a rules abuse, I think that it should be used for anything which has stats that are important (SIZ, STR, CON, POW, what have you) and the name ignored.

There is also a problem with the way Superworld handles disadvantages - consider the example of my character, Salamander, who I started out as a first test: His powers have the following disadvantages i) Will not work in environments where flame cannot subsist; ii) side effect 6D6 heat radiation attack to anything in contact - (triggers a purchased power), and some have iii) no range. His energy attack is one of these.

If I had assessed $\frac{1}{3}$ cost for each of these disadvantages (which is being mildly stingy compared with the precedents in the rule books which suggest $\frac{1}{2}$ for a (ii) type disadvantage) his energy blast would end up costing 0 per D6, and thus being only limited by his POW. Since I had too many points to play with anyway, given those limitations, I assessed the limitations as $\frac{1}{3}$ cost, not $\frac{1}{2}$, and even so ended up with a 275pt character based on stats of 100 points and no experience. I even sank about 80 points into DEX and HP, after buying a restrained energy attack and one level of no energy cost insubstantiality and 20 levels of SIZ. Only the skills I bought actually cost full price (everything else comes from his flameform), and he has other disadvantages - extra damage from cold and water, non super secret ID, that sort of stuff.

Of course, Superworld does have the advantage over Champions that in using the RQ3 system as a base, that it is familiar to RQ/BRP gamers; the other side of the coin is the advantage that Randall STUKKY pointed out for Champions over Superworld.

THE OTYUGH SPEAKS #2

a commentzine by Vince Foster; retyped by Lee Gold (thank you, Lee)

Well, as this is the second occurrence of this zine (and probably the third or fourth total zine by me), I ought to have something to write. A&E 100 has not yet arrived (though by the time you get this I will have gotten 101 and 102). I'll start with some comments I missed in 98 and 99. (I missed some from before that also, but I figure that much over a four month lapse for comments should be avoided if possible; unfortunately it may not be possible this time.)

Something you may wish to note: I like many others comment on things in the order they appear in A&E. Therefore if you have more than one zine in a particular issue, look further; I may have another comment to you (as if you really wanted to read it).

GENERAL COMMENTS

PETER DA SILVA: I don't think (a ~~psychopathic YTHIAN~~ gentleman has better things to do....).

CHRIS MURRAY: You fail to mention that FOSTER can summon DIO Otyughs at will and can transform into one if under stress.

A&E 99

JENNY HEIN: The time limit for berserks gang should be until exhaustion, for anger is not something that can be turned off like a faucet. If the person is in good shape, this will increase the years in his prime, but when he starts going downhill, he is in for some problems if he keeps it up (assuming he survives that long).

MIKE DAWSON: Okay, how's this for a quote: "Belief beyond realism"?//Some of the verbs in the dictionary you cite have a problem, mainly because of the English language. No verbs have one word infinitive forms in English. (An infinitive form would be "to go" or "to do"). Therefore "gleek" should be "to gleek" and so on. Now if you are speaking some other language, it may be correct. English is one of the few Indo-European languages with a two word infinitive form, instead of one. For example, "finir" in French is to finish, "beginnen" in German is to begin, and "trabajar" in Spanish is to work. The root is all but the last two letters in this case.

PETER DA SILVA: Re yr Yiam area: first you say the wolves tax the tails off the humans and then you say the humans don't have tails. Have you ever thought that the taxation may be why they don't? I'd outlaw economic Taoists if I were you. (I did in my Yiam area, which I sent to Ellwood through the mail, because of its length.) By the way, do you need any allies? (I am trying to get Washington and Idaho....)

To All Who Think Americans are Gun Freaks And Violence Mongers (mostly directed towards British A&Eers but to others who think the same): the reason Americans have guns is: |

- 1) Tradition (yes, it is a tradition)
- 2) Hunting (that's a tradition too)
- 3) SEcurity (some feel more secure with them around)
- 4) Self defense (could go under security)

In some places in the US (hell, anywhere for that matter, like Piccadilly ~~Circle~~ Square in Britain), it is very hazardous to your health and pocketbook to leave home without something to defend yourself. If guns were illegal, you would have little protection as criminals (or anyone else) could still get guns. Just because something is illegal does not make it unavailable. (Just look at the underworld drug traffic.) Therefore I would rather have a legal mode of defense available

than revert to illegal methods (but I WOULD if I had to). I guess this makes me a violencefreak and a gun-toting psychopath (not very surprising you recognized this fact), but my opinions are unchanged by people who preach on subjects of which they know little.

I would like to know where some of you got your information (this is mainly directed towards Americans) on the Constitution right to bear arms not existing. If not, what does the Second Amendment mean? I guess this sort of argument is inconclusive for one of the reasons the US rebelled against Great Britain was the right to bear arms....

Now that that's out of my system, I will try to keep my comments closer to role-playing. This whole argument seemed to have arisen from the equipment the US players have in the PBZ. (No, I am not against the PBZ by any means.) Do I detect a note of jealousy perhaps? On to other comments....

A&E 100

LEE GOLD: My condolences about your mother. Hope she gets better.//Grr, I didn't make it for 100 or 101; well, at least 102....//Otyugh Obituary didn't make it on Bacover? I would think an Otyugh would look nice there....//Luttes et Sorties looks remarkably like English, especially sorties. Could luttes (which I presume means Alarums) be related to the musical instrument called the lute?//By the way is Alarums pronounced "A-jar-ums" or "A-lar-ums"?//A very good issue indeed.

GARY GYGAX (what a comment to EG in A&E? Blasphemy!) You seem to have changed your views somewhat from when you wrote that letter for A&E #2.

GEOFFREY HALSEY: What? More TFT modifications? Bravo!//I'd call Imagination something else, like Insight or Magical Intuition or Force of Will or something, just to avoid problems. Now there's a characteristic. Something. Just what is it now that I've come up with 100?

STEVE GILHAM: But of course the Sauron Won scenario is popular for a Middle Earth setting. After all, when I read he was defeated, I was depressed for months. Sauron was the good guy, Gandalf was about as vile as you can get. (I feel the same way about Santa Claus; this is being written 12-22-83, Merry Christmas.. I mean, anyone who associates with elves....)

STEVE JONES: It would appear your zine is backwards, at least in my copy.//Good stuff on RQ, even though I have no real use for the Glorantia-type cult writeups. Keep it up.

JAMES ROBERT: Ooops, sorry. I found the answer about ig. Otherwise, RAEBNC.

HOWARD MAHLER: Your system on death by old age is interesting but does not take into account the physical degradation itself, only its results.

DAVE NALLIE: Here "a lone voice": it sounds as if you just saw Creepshow before starting your zine.

MICHAEL A. JOHNSON: "The effect of the gravity of the Moon on a bullet fired on Earth"? Are you sure? Whee!

ROBERT LOUTZENHISER: How do you spell your name. (When you visited you said that Lee got it right in #98 but the top of your zine and the ToC have different spellings.) Better send a letter (less chance of a mistake).//Monster Squash and Mac Squash seem similar to Ogre Squash (presented in an issue of The Space Gamer awhile back).

NTALLI C. SHAPERO: Gosh, and I had heard Chaosium was the good guys in gaming. //Did you offset your zine? The paper is different, the print is different, it's easier to read and I didn't see any typos!//Good stuff on OS. I might get it yet.

SCOT FRITZ and MARTIN WIXTED: Interesting concept for roundless combat, but a few of your weapon speeds are out of synch. A fist does not take 2 seconds to hit someone. (Ask anyone who has ever been in a fight.) More like 1 second at most, and 3+ PER second is feasible (though two a second is more common for a fight). You attack someone, only punching once every two seconds, and they'll walk all over you, unless you are also kicking or something else as well. Kicking takes maybe 1.5 sec at most, and 1 per second is more realistic. Maybe you two should spar to find out how it REALLY is. (Perhaps with improvised football gear to protect from injuries and without intent to do more than strike; no intent of maiming the other person). Also Agility and Dexterity DO modify the speed of an action.//The other weapon speeds look okay; it's just the unarmed combat speeds I object to.//I do like the basic system though. (I'll convert it to C&S one of these days.) Good job.

KARL SEVEN & JONATHAN WOOLLEY: Fate-Role looks unusual but the concept is not new. In fact, it is so old it is new (not so many remember that long). It looks like an adaptation of the combination Children's Story and Role Playing Game which I believe was popular in years past. It looks good and could be used as a learning tool or a psychotherapeutic tool. It would make a hit as a family game, simple, thought-provoking, no thick rulebook to read, no real mechanics, can teach children that life is not without failure, etc.).

MATTHEW F. PORTER: Damn it, you're trying to take my fire from me before I send it in to A&E! For the past few months, I have been trying to formulate a rationale for character classes and advancement in more than one skill at a time. First ELLWOOD with his Skills of a Higher Order bit and now you. I can see how the mind-link was developed between me and Ellwood (he lives in Vancouver, BC and I live not far away in Seattle. No, I have never met him but I was in Vancouver for V-Con 9 a few years back; perhaps it was formulated then), but I don't know how we shanghaied you into the network! Oh well, I can use someone back east....When I do my version, I'll have to be more vehement and more detailed than either of you!

Re character X: that was a rather gross example (and not very accurate at that) but you hit the nail on the head in the concept. (I still think a mind link is involved.)//Don't you like complex rules? Gee and me who actually enjoy reading fine print and complex rules...Of course I'm a (egad!) rules tinkerer (heretic!) among other things.//There is some fictional literature that has to do with dehumanization of people who own powerful devices. Look at Elric, particularly in STORM-BRINGER, when he kills his wife (a mercy killing supposedly), his best friend Moon-glum (well, not really; things sort of got out of hand in more ways than one...) and gets dusted by his own sword at the end of Time....

DAVID FLIN: When's your next mastodon hunt?//Mammoths and Mastodons (the new RFG by TSR: the Lame Lizards with players playing perplexed prehistoric pachyderms pondering the precarious survival probabilities after the passing away of the plush plants) are two different prehistoric ancestors of the modern elephant. My own bloodshot instincts tell me that out of each type came the two modern types (the African and the Indian Elephant; the African one has bigger ears and a flatter head) but I have no proof to support this, so take it or leave it.

HANK GRIFFIN: I am now convinced I'm the center of a mind link (re ct to PORTER) because you too plan on doing an article on lock-picking. Well, that's four in the link (me as central control of course). Let's see if we can expand more in the mid-west and the west coast. I'll try to get Ellwood to push into Alberta and the North-west Territories sometime...//I've never even heard of Janet Morris, (I'm into Black Sabbath and other religious music myself...)//The Danaan are interesting. A very good job. I'll do something similar for Elves in my C&S campaign soon.//You're not the only one who doesn't care for the Species/Races mixup, but it sure is sad almost all have followed this trend. PE! Bonewitz criticized TSR and others for this (in AUTHENTIC THAUMATURGY by Chaosium, now out of print unfortunately) a long time ago,

but it seems to have had few results.//Welcome to A&E (my first welcome), even though I'm a rookie myself.//Keep it up.

MARTIN WIXTED (re ct to you and FRITZ): Aha, your table is more plausible. (Still a bit slow for punching.)//Huh, interesting to note that several people are saying that their magic system is not an embellishment of Scot Fritz's. I guess the basic tenets of these systems are catching on lately. (I'll stick to C&S magick.)

PETER CLARKE: Interesting section on the German law system.

ALASDAIR MCINTOSH: My sources were Dragon #29 for some supplementary material but primarily Omni magazine (I believe July, 1981).

A&E 100 (it arrived today! 12-22-83)

PETER DA SILVA (cover): When I first saw the cover, I thought it had looked like something you had drawn. (You sent me two drawings with wolfings with the results of my first PBM turn.) You're a good artist. Keep it up.

LEE GOLD: Re Pain system: what do you think Loutzenhiser's system in #98 and #100 was?//Firefly Appreciation?! Weird! Is that a part of Japanese culture? Sounds like they look for art in everything (something we may well learn from).//Re ct to SHAPERO: nope, differing languages can work if the upper castes know the dialects of their "inferiors" and--with their (implied) superior education, learning them might not be difficult (taught in school at an early age when learning is by far easier).//By the time you get to the end of the year in your Herbalism article, you will have to devote the entire two pages to "See previous months" so it would appear.

NICK LARTER: Tales from the Leather Nun?! Sounds like something out of a song by Judas Priest. (Yes, friends, more religious music.)

JOHN L. T. PATTERSON: re ct to LEE: I've heard of Altered Images but aren't they New Wave and not pop? I ask because I've heard them once and it sounded like New Wave. (Hint: I do NOT like new wave in any way. I might be, as you Brits say, a "metalhead.")

JOHN SAPIENZA: Thank.//If the former expert you're talking about is Gillespie, he's back. His article in #59 about berserks inspired me to write my own. (That was the first issue of A&E I read. There is a story that goes with that, and I suspect the odds were long against me buying that copy of A&E. I'm glad I bought it, though.)//You're mostly right about taking them out of the gold mine but you gotta get 'em out of the platinum shaft first.

PETER DA SILVA: Ehes, aye underschtant CP20 (opps, xats ruslon, mak xat SR20).//Is SR20 a joke on Ragnar Fyri who used to write for A&E in SR1 and 2? Others have joked about it.

CHRIS HEIN & JENNY MURRAY: Looks like name swapping to me.//Far out! Someone finally remembered basket weaving! But alas, you forgot Dilettante. (In Peter da Silva's PBM (which uses "real" stats and skills), I have received the skill "Dilettante." This seems to mean someone who dabbles in the subject--shown by my several languages, very sketchy in a few, almost bare minimal expertise in one.)//Also in the skill, "Cardplaying," well, at least someone is trying to show a difference between dice and card games, but Poker and Blackjack are very different games. (I cannot play Poker well at all but Blackjack is easy; you just remember what cards have been played and weigh the odds--easy for me, not so for others.)//Lockpicking is also an area in which not enough has been done (?) for game mechanics; see Otyugh Obituary #3.//Good zine!

CHRIS MURRAY: Back to normal names I suppose.//I too disagree about the Drugs and Berserkers bit, but it could work. (Fly Agaric, according to LICIT AND ILLICIT DRUGS is not typical as far as hallucinogens go.)//You don't have a HitPoint-less system. Calling HP "Wounds" doesn't change what they are: a measure of damage

CAPTAIN PATIO BLOCKS VS THE PLEXUS RANGERS

(c) 1984 by William Pixley, Eigenmass Hall #390, Bloomington, IND.

For a number of reasons, primarily the economy, I've gone back to school at Indiana Unveristy to get my Masters of Library Science degree. The first semester has been so busy that I haven't been able to write my zine until now. Hopefully next semester won't be as bad, and I can contribute on a more regular basis.

COMMENTS #98.

BAMBACH: SMIEs (specifically a Lee Enfield no 4, Mark 1) use .303 ammo, which the British army used as its primary round as late as the 50s. Large amounts were made for the British army and some of this ammo is bound to still be on the market today.

GALEOTTI: My information on zip guns was partially taken from some books I've read on the subject and partially made up for convenience, because zip-guns can vary so much, depending on who makes them and the equipment and materials used. Some of the best are as good as factory-made guns, while others are so bad you couldn't pay me to fire one. I really liked your AFX-92 and am adopting it in my campaign to arm the Spiders.

COMMENTS #99

ROBERTSON: Tri Tac Inc's address is PO Box 61, Madison Hts, MI 48071.

MORE AFTERMATH STUFF

One of my favorite specials for Aftermath is the Giant Amazons. They are large, exceptionally tough ladies; so far no character has been foolish enough to attack them.

Right before the war, the major powers were experimenting with a variety of ways of replacing ordinary soldiers with some sort of better than normal Animatrons were developed but at \$500,000 (1983 dollars) a piece, they were too expensive to become common replacements for ordinary human soldiers. One alternative open to the pre-ruin government, especially after the development of Memory RNA drugs, was creating genetically-altered human or humanoid clone soldiers. The Giant Amazon s were one of the types being worked on at the time of the ruin.

Because of the adverse publicity that might arise if the public became aware of such experiments, all such experiments were highly secret, so secret that a surprising number of secret labs escaped destruction during the ruin. In the case of the Giant Amazons, an improved human clone was force-grown to maturity (about 20 years of age) within a year, exposed to a constant influx of Memory RNA drugs. This --combined with a year of intensive training--resulted in the Giant Amazons. It is unknown why the female form was selected for this experiment but the results were so promising that a few were used before the ruin as special agents.

The Giant Amazons currently found in the world are either some of these surviving agents or were relatively recently created in one of the surviving genetic research labs. They may have taken over their birth-labs and may be out in the world looking for supplies to grow even more Amazons - or looking for scientists to shanghai into working for them in the lab(s).

Description: Giant Amazons are 7'2" tall, weigh about 320 lbs, have red hair, green eyes, and are pretty in a rugged, handsome way. Despite being clones, their personality varies, especially among the older, more worldly ones. To stereotype them, they are either loud, boisterous individuals who like to call normal sized men "little man" or they are quiet, retiring individuals, heavily into Zen and meditation. This, of course, is very general and never completely applicable to any one individual, but it does give you a starting place for their personality.

Physical Characteristics: WT 50, WL 50, STR 55, DFT 40, SPD 40, HLH 60
Other physical characteristics are figured from these in the usual manner, except Shock factor should be 20 + Healing Rate instead of what it is normally.

Charismatic 1-6, Combative 14+ 1-6, Communicative 1-8, Aesthetic 1-8,
Mechanical 9 + 1-6, Natural 4 + 1-6, Scientific 9 + 1-6.

SKILLS

All Combat Skills, HTH, all Muscle-Powered Missile Weapons skills, all Small Arms skills, and all Support Weapons Skills at BCS of 15 + 1-8, with additional +3 to her BCS with three of these weapons (the ones she primarily uses). Other skills each Amazon has are Survival (both urban and rural), Tracking (both urban and rural), Search (urban and rural), Stealth (urban and rural), Interrogation, Tactics, Automobile Driving, Heavy Equipment Driving, Motorcycle Driving, Powerboat Pilot, Technology Use, Aerial Recon Interpretation, Defusing Explosives, Demolitions, Machining, Firearms Repair, (Modern and Primitive), Automobile Mechanic, Operational Command, Radio Communications, Chemistry, Lab Technique, Simple Explosives, Weaponsmithing, ECM Operation, High Technology Use, and Pilot either Rotary Wing or Fixed Wing at BCS 9 + 1-6. A few of the older Amazons have picked up some other skills, but Amazons mostly lack many skills basic to normal humans. This tends to force them into trading, usually offering their services as warriors with outside communities to obtain things they can't make themselves.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

1. Due to their large size and fast metabolism, they require twice the food rations of a normal human: per day.
2. Gases, poisons and diseases are only half as normally effective against them. Unfortunately, medicines are only half as effective on the Amazons as on normal humans.
3. Giant Amazons favor powerful weaponry; the higher the BDG of the round the gun fires, the better they like it. While they'll use almost any hand-to-hand weapon, they favor sledgehammers, which they wield one-handed. A few carry a rifle that was specially built to arm Amazons: Rifle Action AL, Mag 10rd Box, Dur 4, Encl. 8, Caliber .50 machinegun. Such a rifle has a recoil that only the strongest normal humans can manage to withstand so they can use it.
4. As for armor, while a few special suits of Heavy Infantry Mark IIIs were built for the Amazons, most wear specially made Mesh Steel Jackets (LOC 4-12 and 21-28), Light Leather or Plasticloth coveralls (LOC 4-18 and 21-28), and a pair of light-leather moccasins (LOC 19-20), and some kind of helmet and gorget, usually Steel or Light Ferrous Metal (LOC 1 and 3). Due to their large size, it takes three normal locations worth of armor to cover two locations on their bodies, and very few pieces of armor made for normal-sized people can fit them.
5. Due to the ad hoc nature of their genetic structure, the Amazons are all sterile.

ODD THOUGHTS

Though I like a good sword and sorcery roleplaying game as much as anyone, non-sword and sorcery games (NSS games) tend to be easier to run and play in, especially for beginners. Sword and sorcery fiction is still not widely read. NSS games are easier to play in because more people understand more of their background than of S&S games. The average person is more likely to have read superhero comics or to have seen several westerns or some Star Trek episodes than to have read Tolkien. Even though much of what they have seen or read is probably junk, so is much of S&S fiction. With more background, people can better understand what is going on and need less explanation. It's hard to visualize an orc or troll, but almost everyone can handle the concept of a gunslinger or starship.

Quark's Communiqué

Number 29 (c) 1983 by the Ministry of Alternate Viewpoints 19 December 1983
David R Dunham / 6218 S New Braunfels #6d / San Antonio, TX 78223 / 512-534-0338

I've finally written the software to take advantage of my computer's printer. I've wanted to do A&Es like this for over a year now.

COMMENTS ON A&E 99

PETER DA SILVA: I like the idea of matrixed characteristics. I presume MIN, BOD, POW, CTL, etc. aren't actual characteristics, but labels?

DANIEL JAMES: I didn't know frozen gases were heavier... perhaps you meant denser. Some other small errors, but otherwise a good article.

DANIEL NOLTE: Good analogy between minimaxers (system exploiters) and destructo hackers. // APL is not a low level language.

STEVE JONES: I like the undead Triceratank! // I too would like to see more Nysalor riddles. There are several in Big Rubble.

VETCH THE HERETIC

I originally heard of this deity from CARL ADAMEC. Apparently Vetch was pretty standard at Cornell D&D games several years ago. This is my RQ adaptation of the concept.

The original Vetch was out after magic in all its forms. He would grant no miracles to his clerics (that would, after all, be a form of magic), but did allow use of one magic item, the Rod of Cancellation. This highly prized item, when used by a Vetch cleric, had charges instead of one use. Vetch worshippers would go around destroying other magic items, much to the annoyance of party members.

RQ, at least as played in Glorontha, is full of magic. In fact, everyone is capable of it. How could Vetch possibly be against the heritage of all man? He couldn't*. In fact, he is strongly in favor of it. But to fulfill his heritage, man must be free of outside interference. Vetch is against deities. In RQ3 terms, he would be in favor of primitive magic and sorcerors, but against divine magic.

What advantage is there in worshipping a deity who claims that deities shouldn't be worshipped? Normally, none, other than the resulting freedom. But, if someone is given a hard time by another deity (or his representatives), Vetch will lend a hand.

Naturally, none of the other gods understand Vetch. He is considered a traitor and a heretic. His actual motivation is unclear. He may be vengeful, and be trying to take away the gods' worshippers. He may be after power, even though he doesn't ask it from his worshippers; he at least gets the prestige of being worshipped by them.

* Actually, he could. But RQ combat would be excessively bloody without the Healing spell, so I can't see anyone with humanity's interests at heart banning it. Since D&D characters have a pool of HP, they wouldn't die as quickly without healing.

COMMENTS ON A&E 100

GEOFFREY HALSEY: An elegant magic system. I wouldn't mind an Imagination (or Creativity?) characteristic as long as it didn't impede my role playing. // The last time we drove back from a con, RON BOERGER and I thought up the Cult of Food. When you became Rune Lord you get to add the prefix "Mac" to your name.

STEVE GILHAM: I agree 100% about technomagic, and hope my article is printed before yours. // Have I said that I like the idea of a story in the SPI Sorcerer world?

FRITZ / WIXTED: Your bow data are wrong. The crossbow was popular because it was simple to operate and required less training to become proficient than the English

longbow, tho the latter may have been a better weapon.

WOOLEY / SEVEN: Interesting

DAVID NALLE: I agree that magic use in FRP is too high for realism, but you don't really offer any solution. After all, it's the easiest way to provide a fantasy environment.

ROBERT LAUTZENHISER: Is pain really a function of shock? I had one wound I never felt.

NIALL SHAPERO: Interesting. And I envy your typesetting facilities.

ALASDAIR McINTOSH: Like your plants. Some of mine are in A&E101.

A HIT-POINTLESS COMBAT SYSTEM

Each character has a set number of dice to roll. This has to be tuned for species, but let's try humans at 3d4. Attack damage is rolled as it now is, then the defender rolls his dice. If the attacker's damage total is greater, the defender is Wounded. He rolls one less die the next time. A Critical hit by the attacker forces him to roll one less die.

The number of dice determine the number of wound levels. This set of numbers produces Light, Moderate, and Severe wounds, before the final level. Depending on your taste, this can be Death, or Incapacitation. If the later, a CON save can determine if it's truly Death.

An slightly more complicated option provides for Flesh Wounds. If the attacker's total exactly equals the defender's, the defender loses one size of die. Thus, if the attacker's Bladesharp sword does 9, and the defender rolls 9 on 3d4, he will have to roll 2d4+d3 the next time. He does not yet suffer any ill effects of a Light Wound.

The best number of dice probably depend on the game being played. The numbers above actually sound best for something like D&D, where armour reduces hit probability. In a game like RQ, where armour reduces damage, you might have to use 3d3.

This system would allow wounds to be located. If a Wound occurs, roll on the hit location chart. I'd say that Flesh Wounds don't all have to be to the same place to have an effect.

The actual ill effects of the Wound levels is left up to the GM. A progressive loss of abilities (-10%/-25%/-50%) seems the best approach, though you need to decide whether this is an additive or multiplicative loss. (In the former, a 50% skill goes to 40%/25%/0%, in the latter, to 45%/37%/25%.)

Another hit location option would be to match the damage done vs the hit points of an area. An unwounded area would have the 3d3 of wound resistance. This actually wouldn't have any more bookkeeping, since all you'd need to know would be which areas were wounded. With this option, however, you'd need to have several Light Wounds equalling a Moderate, and several Moderate Wounds equalling a Serious Wound, for the purpose of seeing if the character could keep fighting at all. You'd probably want to add a method for doing more than a Light Wound at a time. Perhaps Special hits would have to exceed wound resistance normally, but if they do, deal two wound levels. Criticals could do 3 wound levels (i.e. a Serious Wound) if they overcome resistance, or they might get to roll twice normal damage to do 2 wound levels.

RQ healing still works with this system. Each 2 points of heal will cure a wound (recovering a dice), while each single point recovers Flesh Wounds. Thus, if somebody has been hit for a Light Wound and a Flesh Wound, he would be at d3+d2. A Heal 2 would bring him back to 2d3+d2, while a Heal 3 back to the normal 3d3. This maintains the notion that a Heal 6 is needed for a maximally damaged limb, and suggests that a Serious Wound be treated like severing/maiming.

A STORY

I decided that an encounter with a story-teller would be interesting. But to role

play this properly, I had to have a story that fit into my campaign. So I wrote the following, stealing as many ideas as I could think of.

"How Enchanted River became magical," as told by Achan of the Rising Moon clan.

As are all stories, this is a love story. A young magician named Aered was in love with Chedisha of the amber hair. As she was the most beautiful girl in what today is called Enchanted River, but in those days was Sharpwold, he was not alone. Aered used all the magical arts he knew to try to win her, but with all the men of Sharpwold available to her, she needed choose none.

As was common in those days, creatures of chaos stalked the land. Aered and the others went out to protect their home. They had no trouble following the trail of withered vegetation. Many died in their haste to strike a heroic blow that would kill the beast and become a story to impress Chedisha. But Aered distracted the creature with his spells, allowing it to be killed. Triumphant, they returned to Sharpwold.

But while they were gone, tragedy had struck. Chedisha had drowned. When the period of mourning was over, the men found other girls to woo. But Aered was in love.

For thirteen days he ran without ceasing, until he came to where the Crone of Death lived. He dove through the earth, and reached her abode. Blindfolding himself lest he be driven mad by what he saw there, he snuck inside. Detecting Chedisha by the brightness of her spirit, he took hold of her and started to flee. But Siaga was angered, and gave chase. Finally, after exhausting all his magic, Aered escaped the land of the dead. But Siaga had told him that once he had restored the spirit to its body, he would never again see the moon rise. Aered realized this meant he would die, but he was still in love.

He sped back to the river, and, by questioning the fish, found Chedisha's body. He tried to swim with her to the surface, but could not. Finally he saw that the river had hold of her. He struggled with the river, but all his spells were dampened. He tried to bargain, but the river was adamant. Chedisha had given herself to the river, and the river would not allow her to leave its waters.

Aered could hardly restore Chedisha's life under these conditions; she would only drown again. Aered took one last breath of air, gathered his magical powers like a cloak, and swam back down. He spread his cloak of magic over Chedisha, and taking her shining spirit, reunited it with her lovely body.

Then, still cloaking her from the river, he attacked it again. Realizing he could never break its grip on his love, he instead went after its essence. His magic permeated the river, and changed its nature. The two could now breathe it.

Having done all he could for Chedisha, Aered turned to leave. All his magic was now woven into the river, and he would undoubtedly drown as he left, just as Siaga had said. But a touch stopped him. He looked back to face Chedisha, who smiled at him for the first time. "Of all the men of Sharpwold, only you cared enough to save me. Do not leave."

They lived together until they died of old age. But, looking up through the rushing waters of Enchanted River, Aered never did see the moon rise again.

DEATH IN RUNEQUEST

I hate to kill characters, so I came up with a way to determine if somebody with negative hit points can be saved. The individual rolls his CON against the number of hit points exceeded plus the number of melee rounds it took for someone to come by and heal him. This means someone who's at -1 has a good chance of surviving if someone heals him within a few rounds.

Generally I say that the first heal of such a character merely keeps him from dying, and additional healing is needed to make him conscious.

DESIGNING SCENARIOS

OK, just how does one? I doubt I do it the same each time, but I think I do follow some sort of pattern. A scenario begins either with a reason or with an image.

One important part of an adventure is the reason for going on it. You have to

motivate the PCs to follow the path you have planned. I've been having problems with this recently, since good deeds apparently aren't enough. It usually takes a promise of cash. But this doesn't give a reason for adventure, because now you need a reason why somebody is willing to pay the adventurers, or else a reason a treasure hasn't been claimed already. Once I think of something somebody wants done, I usually have enough for an evening's play. Everything else is just details.

Another way I design adventures is by image. For some reason, the picture of a dragon waking up and shaking a hillside off his back appealed to me. I had to put this in a scenario. Now I worked backwards to find a reason the PCs would go to that hill, and forwards to see what it was the dragon wanted from the characters.

I guess the third tool for scenario design is logic, or perhaps I should call it common sense. If there's a hill with a dragon under it, it's quite likely dragonewts would consider it holy. Underground places are inhabited by trolls.

The main thing is to come up with as interesting a scenario as possible while using a minimum of imagination. This may sound heretical, but unfortunately imagination is a scarce good. The more the better, but if people are expecting you to run a campaign every weekend, you may need something when imagination fails. I find that a good campaign background can help, since the more detailed the background the more likely it is that situations suggest themselves (for example, different groups in conflict), and there tend to be fewer holes in the logic. So much of my design time is spent on background. (Maybe, since many of my ideas come in the shower, I should instead take more showers.)

Since imagination is so rare, I hate to waste it when I do have it, so I write down any idea I have that relates to role playing. Every now and then I review these pages, especially when I need to design a scenario.

Another technique, one I haven't used in a while, is to have a goal for the scenario. This has nothing to do with what goes on in the adventure, except that it will attain this goal. Some goals have been to introduce players to a geographical area, to tell a pun, or even to keep one of my players happy by having more hack and slash. I hope to use more philosophical or ethical goals in the future.

Something I mentioned earlier, designing backwards, I've never used in its entirety. It would be interesting to design a scenario from the end goal back to the beginning.

FAMOUS WORDS DEPT

Grateful NPC: "You just saved my life! Here, have my life savings!"

RANDOM THOUGHTS

Would immortals be immoral? After all, they'd have no threats of afterlife to keep them in line.

What would their creation myth be like? Without the obvious beginning and end of mortals, would they necessarily design their universe to begin and end?

While some people think there should be a rule for everything (AD&D), others think there should be a limited set of rules of general application (RQ). In any given situation, the GM would apply the appropriate rule, perhaps adjudicating, or expanding on it to a small degree. It struck me that our hobby literature is quite different from that of the computer hobby. While there are articles which present new programming languages (often for a specialized use), most people use general-purpose languages. Many of the articles tell how to apply a general-purpose language to a specific problem. How come there are so few articles telling how general-purpose rules can be applied to different gaming situations?

NOLDOPARMA #1

by Lewis Stead, 42 1/2 East St., Whitinsville, MA 01588; (617) 234-7194
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Introduction: I am an 18-year-old high school senior. I've been wargaming for seven years, D&Ding for four, roleplaying for about two years. I run episodic CoC, RQ, and James Bond. I'm starting a YRS campaign. I prefer a storytelling/roleplaying style, although my players seem to tend towards the opposite.

COMMENTS A&E #98

ELLIS SIMPSON: I am involved with WWII miniatures on a man-to-man scale. The rules used, FOLLOW ME!, while originally developed for wargaming, are used for pseudo-FRP. Most games I've seen at conventions give each player one figure, and the players naturally assume a rolegaming style.

There are limitations. There is no method for character advancement, and characters are rarely continued. This is partially due to the low survival rate.

I think the largest barriers to recent historical roleplaying are the lethal power of guns and the distaste for Nazis, criminals and terrorists. We have enough problems roleplaying knights and wizards, never mind Nazis and terrorists.

ALISON BROOKS: The Superhero Cliches are great!//The Middle Earth writeup is one of the most interesting in A&E.

DAVID JOINER: Created vs Rolled characters: I dislike assigning points. Some of the most interesting characters come from unusual combinations of rolls.

MARK GALEOTTI: Please outline Nazi-dominated world. My players love to be revolutionaries, and I can't think of a better government to overthrow.

COMMENTS A&E #99

BILL KARIEVA: Social Activity: While excessive talking, etc. can impair the atmosphere of a game, there is no reason to forbid socializing during breaks and before and after the game.//Re ct DAVE NALLE: I don't find RQ has excessive paperwork or dice rolling. Most paperwork is done between game sessions, and the dice rolling can be kept to a minimum. Rolling to hit, damage and location at one time speeds combat greatly.

COMMENT& A&E #100

LEE GOLD: Congratulations and thanks for this and every issue.

RANDALL STUKEY: I agree completely with your observation on guns, etc. in CHAMPIONS. This was one point in CH that really annoyed me. Then again, superheroes aren't supposed to kill villains. They're supposed to bring them to justice.

GARY GYGAX: It's amazing the difference between what was in this letter and other early TSR stuff, and the way TSR conducts business.

PETER CLARKE: Thank you for the excellent essay. I agree completely with this type of information on society.

ONION SKIN SCENARIOS

One of the major innovations brought about in the CoC game is the Onion Skin scenario. This type of scenario stresses investigative rather than martial action. I have found roleplaying in my campaign vastly improved when using this type of scenario. After being forced into interacting with NPCs to solve the scenario, my players began to use such action in other games. Before playing CoC, they did not consider this option.

(continued in seven pages--at the end of LEAGUES UNLIT & FOUNDERED SHORES)

LEAGUES UNLIT AND FOUNDERED SHORES 8 *(I think)*
copyright (c) 1984 by ALLISON BROOKS, 52 Brent, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3DL,
UK, with optional extras by DAVID FLIN, 69 Frobisher Rd., Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7HS,
UK; detypeed by Lee Gold.

GAMESDAY 1983

I expect everyone, particularly the colonials, will be bored stiff by now by accounts of Gamesday (the A&E contingent occupied a sizable proportion of the bar), so I'll keep this short. Virtually every UK contributor was there, most of whom I hadn't met before. I won't give a list for fear of omissions, but HI! everyone.

I don't consider Gamesday a suitable place to try to play games. The noise prevents me concentrating, and anyway I have better things to do (propping the bar up, chatting, offering to return the lager and black currant to the buyer without its glass), but the Charlot Racing and Victorian Adventure were said to be first rate. And the Golden Heroes competition run by Dave Smith, Pete Haines and Simon Burley must have been good; they were using the names of no less than two of my characters (Liberator and Nemesis). They kept claiming it was a compliment.

Dave Flin and I also managed to acquire a number of old A&Es at a bargain rate. I got the ones I didn't have, and Dave--stingy bastard that doesn't have a sub--got the rest. We now have about nine duplicate copies from the 60s. Any offers?

COMMENTS - DF

MARK GALEOTTI (98): Argh. Beaten to print. You, sir, are a rotter. The dwarves designed by Alison and myself for a society we are creating are creatures of stone with a heart of bloodstone. Otherwise they are just like yours. "It happens time and time again. I come up with a wonderful, original idea, and people beat me into print.

IAN STRAUSS (98): Re yr cts on roleplaying: "For roles to be played, roles must exist. RQ's cults provide roles....Superheroes games characters are the shallowest of all; they have only one role between them." RQ cults provide stereotypes to which all members should adhere. Is a stereotype roleplaying? Are the cult limitations not inhibiting at times? As for superheroes, would you say that such comics characters as Wolverine, Hulk, Iron Man, Storm (new), Storm (old), Spiderman, Paladin, Deathlok, Scarlet Witch, Shang Chi have but one role? In superhero games, generally the fear of death by losing a fight is greatly reduced so players fear less the consequences of roleplaying, which is a great help towards roleplaying.

JOHN BAMBACH (98): I have a number of old fanzines available for sale (mainly Trollcrusher). Interested?//You worked on a bibliography at the time of the Domesday Book? I thought I was the oldest contributor, having been at Agincourt, but it seems you predate me.

HARRY ROBERTSON (98): Beware the Rugby takeover of #250. Complete with up-to-date news on the relief of Mafeking. (He's just jealous because Rugby doesn't have a cinema while Milton-Keynes-centre-of-civilization has several.--AB)

JOSEPH TELLER (99): On postal games: It is best to have the world fully created? Not to fudge city design? Avoid PCs meeting other PCs? Limit turn lengths to five pages? Umm, urr, it ain't necessarily so. I started the LotR campaign with the amount of detail JERT gave in the original. City design is done as and when necessary. The plot, the atmosphere, the feel is important. Not fripperies like street plans. (The PCs can't tell what was planned beforehand and what was made up on the spur of the moment.) Turn lengths should be as long as they need to be: artificial limits don't help. Take the character as far as you can till more orders are needed. There is no difficulty with PCs meeting if a) you can expect prompt replies from all concerned (this is VITAL) and b) the PCs are well enough defined you have a fair idea what they will do anyway.

PAUL WATERS (99): You have 10 weapons, 15 if you count the handaxes and knives! Um, how many arms did you say you have?

PETER CLARKE (99): On prophecy: Oh come on, prophecies are weasel-worded and can mean many things. "If Croesus attacks the Persians, he will destroy a great empire." He did. His own.

IAN ENGLE (99): RAEBNC on aliens.

COMMENTS - by AB

ROBERT LOUTZENHEISER (98): RAEBNC on shock

HARRY ROBERTSON (98): Do I count for the Scottish takeover in 130? I was at university in Edinburgh, born in Scotland, and my grandmother was allegedly born in Edinburgh Castle!

BILL KARIEVA (99): If you FRP only for roleplay and not for socializing, why not cut out the distractions and play one-to-one with the GM or postally? In any case, it does not have to be an either/or choice. As Lee and I and doubtless others have pointed out, any constraints come at the character design stage, since the other PCs --just as in the real world--will be selective about their companions and not take along anyone they feel is likely to betray them or whatever antisocial behavior you feel is essential to your roleplaying experience. Are you to deny their roleplay? What is wrong with roleplaying a cooperative person? Incidentally, I feel your opening quotation was likely to be unnecessarily offensive or irrelevant, I'm not sure which.//Please, please tell us more about your campaign!

JENNY HEIN (99): I've sat here for some time trying to think of some suitable compliment for your Colgar Chronicles and am at a loss. Till recently they hadn't particularly grabbed me but the last couple were pretty good. I'm not sure why: the human interest (excuse the speciesism!) or something. I'm not sure I actually like Gwynne (didn't she have any reservations about having broken Linden's engagement/heart?) But I eagerly await further installments of her story.

JOSEPH TELLER (99): It came as a shock to see your list of place names suitable for a fantasy game. I see nothing unusual about most of them. Damn it, I've been to Berwick, Derby, Cirencester, Stamford and Whitby; there's nothing odd about any of them. This must be culture shock!

PAUL WATERS (99): Your spelling leaves a little to be desired, and I suspect you came close to having your zine retyped. Please could you do something about it, as I found it difficult to read.

THUMP*! What's that? Oh look, it's an A&E 100. Looks like this won't get in till issue 103, judging by the number of pages already received and the fact that DF has barely started on the LotR writeup. (I can't do it; I wasn't involved in any of it. That's my excuse.)

LEE GOLD: Sonless sea? *Groan*//Keep up the good work on herbs. I've got Culpepper but your version is much easier to use. Thanks.

BACOVER: I'm going to count a half mention for this zine. The flying ship reminds me of Earendil and almost everything else doubles (or more) up meaningwise.

LAWRENCE GILLESPIE: Welcome back. I always used to enjoy your zines. Way back when you asked if people would prefer Hervor's Saga in modern English or archaic I hereby cast my vote for modern; I hate false archaisms, they are hard to read, jar and I don't believe the sagas were intended to sound archaic. But please, MORE!

GEOFFREY HALSEY: Your magic system is interesting. Ideally it would include factors for mage specialization/experience/amount of matter manipulated without getting more complex. (Impossible? Probably. Specialization could give a simple plus on the area specialized in--either spell type or stuff manipulated. Experience could add to the mage's imagination or concentration. Amount: GM fiat?) One nitpick: why is summoning easier than moving?

JONATHAN WOOLLEY: Thanks for the extra clichés. How about "Poor thing! You have life so tough! Having to wear glasses!" (Repeat at intervals to keep Mr. Misery, Scott Summers, happy.)

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Not wanting to go to the bother of sending you a glass of iced water through the post for you to pour over yourself, I will content myself with pouring it over Dave Flin who says similar things when I'm beating him in an argument. Then again, who needs logic; all you have to have is the glass of water! (*chuckle*)

ELLIS SIMPSON: I've heard a slightly different version of the measuring-height-of-tower-with-barometer story which included: tie barometer to string, lower over edge of tower, measure string length; compare shadows cast by tower and barometer standing on its edge; and walk up the stairs in the tower measuring off barometer heights.

And finally Dave's comments on A&E #100.

BACOVER: The flying ship reminds Alison of Earendil? Reminds me of Vingilot! (funny--AB)

STEVE GILHAM: Your discussion of JRRT's vision of evil was interesting. Much of the "mechanical evil" in LotR was caused by Saruman rather than Sauron. But since Saruman was influenced by Sauron, it could be argued he was merely following in Sauron's footsteps. On the other hand, to further validate your views, JRRT presents Aulë as having a tendency to this mechanistic nature with its inherent problems: "Eru is beautiful," she [Yavanna] said; "Now let thy children beware! For there shall walk a power in the forests whose wrath they will arouse at their peril." "Nevertheless, they will have need of wood," said Aulë, and he went on with his smithwork. Silmarillion, p 46.//Also from Unfinished Tales, we learn that Saruman was the Maia chosen by Aulë.

As for the applicability to Sauron Won campaigns, a lot would depend on the time elapsed since the victory of Sauron as to how widespread the mechanistic evil would be. Sauron was not renowned for acting hastily. But from his power base in Mordor and spreading outwards like an ever-growing cancer upon Middle Earth would be the Dark Satanic Mills. It's fortunate I have not detailed Mordor yet!

JAMES ROBERTS: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned"? Umm, didn't FFF betray Delila to the priests of the Evil Temple? You know, for sacrifice? I don't think many men would appreciate being "scorned" in this manner.

HANK GRIFFIN: Knights of Ascension. They do have a certain bizarre logic. Appealing? Well, it depends whether you are player, character, GM or Morgoth. The perpetrator was Pete Haines, who is not an A&Eer, but is the cocreator of Golden Heroes. Known to his friends as big and ticklish.

The thumbscrews worked! Thus Brooks and Flin Enterprises are able to present the next installment of the Middle Earth campaign writeup. The only problem with torture as an incentive is that I, Allison, have to do the typing till Dave's hands heal.

Beneath the eaves of Mirkwood....

ALFIRIN

Orc activity had been increasing in the southern part of the forest, and a number of groups were sent out to try to determine the reason and seek a solution. I was asked to be in charge of one of these groups. The other members of my group were:

ELEMENTIRMO: a competent warrior, skilled with spear and bow. Though not a born warrior, he has taught himself to be one by necessity. He tends to be somewhat pessimistic.

MELONIL: Not really old enough for this sort of venture in my opinion, she is a little rash. Naive is perhaps the best description of her. She has spells of far-seeing, being able to project a mental message over many leagues to a specific individual. None knows if this spell has any restriction on range, but it is of such obvious use that she was included. She also has some forestry skills.

PALLANDO: Like Meionil, Pallando has a tendency to rashness. A skilled swordsman and mage of no little worth, specializing in Storm magics, Pallando is the oldest of us all but has little in the way of sense regarding danger.

From the start, although we were travelling in relatively safe country, I insisted on proper discipline, with Melondil taking point to get her accustomed to her role. On the second day, we came across the carrion bodies of nine orcs and a single elf. Tracks of another dozen orcs led south. It was clear that the orcs must have taken at least one prisoner, since a single elf could not have slain so many orcs, and victorious elves would have tended his body.

Pallando was all for chasing after them, for all the orcs' two days lead and in complete defiance of our mission. I would have forbidden this until Melondil pointed out that the tracks led south which was the direction we were going, and Pallando suggested that our vengeance need not take a great deal of time from our mission. I allowed myself to be swayed. We might learn something.

From the evidence before us and our inferences as to events, Melondil was able to cast a spell to locate the orcs. They had indeed taken two captives and were hastening towards Dol Guldur with them. We followed.

MELONDIL

Well, we pressed on and we ambushed two orcs and a troll; we killed the orcs and the troll couldn't follow us through the trees because Alfirin said we couldn't take on a troll, but I'd have liked to try. Then I met Brom, he's a bear, very determined and friendly, and he came with us, though Elentirno was scared of him and Pallando made fun of him. I was able to talk to Brom, and we caught up with the orcs that we had been chasing, and with Brom we killed them all and managed to release the two elves the orcs had prisoner. But I was horrified to discover that the orcs had cut off their thumbs and first fingers. I told the people at home about these elves, and they said someone would be along to escort them home and that we were to carry on. So we did.

Then we came to a strange area of the forest, a circle into which no animals went, and things inside were, well, stopped growing almost but were still alive, and it was an effort to move closer. Brom left because he didn't like the area. I tried to find out more by a spell but I didn't learn much, just that there was a lot of strong magic there. I wanted to stay and find out more, but Alfirin insisted that I simply tell them at home about it and let them decide what to do about it while we carried on with our task. So I did that instead.

We came to a clearing over looking a valley, and there were lots of orcs, and it would take ages to get round. We got past them but they were chasing us. We quickly lost them, and then later we met this man. I didn't know whether to trust him or not because he was wearing a helmet that covered his face, and it was shaped like a wolf. But he had killed some orcs and Pallando knew him, so it was all right.

ELENTIRMO

The man, Siné, had skill in metal work. The helm that he wore was his own work. He made it so that he could get close to the orcs as a friend before slaying them. He had also created an armband, beautiful. Snakes writhing sinuously, their hooked fangs lengthening, gliding; becoming the stems of languid plants, whose flat leaves are drawn out in turn to become smooth fluid curves. The eye could follow but never discover where snake ends and leaf begins. And it shimmers, gently, as though with a life of its own. I asked him what inspired him to create such a melancholy thing, but he could only shrug and say that all he could do was reflect the mood of the metal he works. But it is beautiful.

ALFIRIN

On we journeyed and eventually we could see dimly in the distance a tall blasted hill, on which stood a black, mighty fortress, its walls reaching upwards and reeking of evil. About and inside it were a host of orcs and evil men and wargs and other fell creatures. This was the tower of Dol Guldur. Melondil cast a spell, to gain

from the mind of one of the minions of evil what was planned. When finished, she was hopping and fidgeting with excitement. "Is this part of the spell or are you dancing," Pallando asked.

She calmed down and told us they would soon be marching on home to stamp us out once and for all. Just as she was about to pass on the information on to home, the sky grew black, full of thick dark clouds, and thunder rolled around the woods, and lightning flashed across the heavens, and driving rain fell as the wind rose to a shriek. The evil about the place seemed to redouble in intensity, as the heavens cracked and roared. And in the distance near the fortress, we could see a numberless host of orcs approaching. At their head was a tall figure, cloaked and black, the source of the lightning, unspeakably foul, and at his side a sword that seemed to drink in what light there was. We stayed, unable to move, whilst it was in sight. But at last it entered the fortress, the storm abated. When we had recovered somewhat, Melonil sent the news back home. We were ordered to harry the orcs as well as we could.

The next day, the orc vanguard set out, and no sooner had it entered the forest proper than we began to harry. A few arrows from ambush to slay an orc or two, then a retreat before we could be caught. We could not get through the vanguard, for there were too many of them. Melonil and Pallando goaded an orc patrol into chasing them and led them into another patrol, and in the confusion, there was a brief fight between the patrols whilst Pallando and Melonil escaped unscathed. But for all our efforts, it was clear that we were doing little to slow down the advance. There were too many for us five. This continued for three days.

Then Siné informed us that it was his intention to retreat no farther but to attempt to get past the orcs and to achieve something at the tower. Since I had no authority to command him, I could not prevent his departure, though his actions seemed extremely dangerous. Before he departed, he gave his armband to Melonil, admitting he would likely die, and he did not want his work to fall into the hands of the orcs. And so we parted.

MELONIL

Before Siné departed, I taught him to call for help with his mind and asked him to call if he needed help. I thought he would because I had had a dream where he was fighting a Nazgûl. After he left we kept on fighting orcs and running away, and fighting orcs and running away. We met two more elves, and they helped us.

In a quiet period, I cast a spell to see how Siné was getting on. He was in a building that had lots of orcs but none of them saw him, and he was slipping past them. The building was the Tower; and at the top, in a room with interesting magical things, was a palantir. We carried on fighting orcs and men and wolves and things for several more days.

Then one morning Pallando had a dream that I thought meant Siné would soon be fighting with the Nazgûl and needing the help of Pallando and me. As we were telling Alfirin that we would be going west because I knew Siné was heading that way, I felt a feeling of anger and rage about us, and Siné's armband grew hot on my arm, and evil visions flashed before me. They faded, and the armband cooled.

So we went west. We travelled for a couple of days with Siné travelling west as well with the palantir somewhere, and the Nazgûl chasing him, trying to catch up. We met a man with a sword and a halfling. The man was Garth, and the halfling was Nob. They wanted to help us so they joined us. They told us they were on their way from Bree to Rivendell but Nob led the way for a time and they got lost. Nob was very good at finding things to eat--eggs, mushrooms.

Later on I tried to find out more about the armband, because it had seemed magical. I cast an interpreting spell upon it and found out it was very powerful and made my spells better and made spells cast at me weaker. I could feel it as a spear and a shield, and it would become them.

NOB

I had been in the Prancing Pony in Bree when a group of strangers came in and for various reasons I had to go after them as they went to Rivendell. I met Garth, and we met them, and then we left them because they thought it would be safer if we split up. So Garth and I went towards Rivendell. He got hurt and so I led. We found ourselves in a wood fairly soon and met some--some--some elves. Two of them. Married. To each other. Only Melonil said she was too young. I wonder when they'll get married? I told them of all the adventurous things we had seen while we were adventurers. We had seen two men on horses with fair hair; well, the men had fair hair, not the horses; one of the men was a woman. We also had seen a black man on a black horse in a black cloak, who was a Black Rider. Anyway we carried on adventuring, and we came out of the wood and across a river and into some mountains. They were steep and it snowed; and we nearly got lost, but Melonil knew which way we had to go.

MELONIL

I knew that Siné was just ahead of us, and the Nazgul was not far from him. We climbed a ridge and looked down. Siné was by a small mountain lake, beside a fire, and he wore his wolf mask which glowed redly in the firelight. We hurried down a winding track that led to the lake, and then we saw, on the skyline, the Nazgul, black cloak billowing behind it as it strode down towards Siné.

A MINSTREL IN RIVENDELL

A cloud of darkness is about the Nazgul. It halts and looks about, but Melonil is able to use the armband to hide their thoughts from it. Carried on the breeze, the laugh of the Nazgul can be clearly heard, the laugh of one confident, wishing to savor every bit of pleasure to the full, pleasure in inflicting torment. The laugh cuts like a thousand knives. Leisurely it continues down, slowly, that Siné could see the doom approaching. Carrion birds gather expectantly in the distance.

Siné draws his sword and waits as the Nazgul approaches. It halts a score of paces from him. "You have been deserted. You shall die here alone, friendless, in great pain." It laughs, and the rocks echo its evil. "As a fool you have lived, and as a fool you shall die."

With something akin to a snarl, Siné rushes forward, covering the distance in but a heartbeat. Yet the Nazgul moves faster, drawing black blade and parrying Siné's desperate blow with ease. "So the wolf still has a fang?" With a blow faster than the eye can follow, the black blade flashes towards Siné, its edge barely missing his face.

With a clap of thunder, the heavens roll, and a bolt of lightning springs forth, straight at the Nazgul. Effortlessly, the Nazgul raises its sword and catches the bolt on its blade. Garth draws his sword, flames flickering upon its edge, and he rushes to Siné's side, with Pallando close behind him. Yet even as they close, Pallando staggers and clutches at his eyes as a bolt of lightning flashes from the Nazgul's blade to strike him full in the face.

With the aid of the armband, Melonil casts a spell and the armband flows into a spear and a shield, and she is in the wraith world. She sees the Nazgul beneath its black wrappings. Its white face has keen merciless eyes burning in it, and in its haggard hand it holds a sword of darkened steel. Its hair is long and grey, and upon its head it wears a helm of silver, and its armor is dull grey. On its finger a single ring glows with an eerie unlight, seeming to slowly swallow light. The spear of Melonil glitters like a star, and the shield shines like the sun. With the spear she thrusts, not for the Nazgul but for the ring upon its hand, and the Nazgul feels the first seed of doubt. The light blazing from spear and shield, fired by Melonil's resolve and aided by the light of the palantir, strives with the unlight.

As this takes place, Siné and Garth fight the Nazgul, and the Nazgul laughs no more. The three weave a deadly dance of death. The black sword of the Nazgul flashes

YLAMZINE #1

(c) 1984 Rob Ellwood, 1065 Marigold Pl., No. Vancouver, BC, Canada V7R 2E5

I'm trying to arrange a deal with Lee. I start acting in a lawful manner, in exchange for getting zines through unaltered. My two zines in #100 were both missing their titles, which is surely some sort of Ultimate Weapon. I'm just hoping she does not insist on an unconditional surrender. As a token of good faith, I'm having Lee type this up so it's legible. I'm also putting in a self-intro, as I've consistently forgotten to do for the last half dozen issues.

Chemical engineer, currently going for Master's degree in Mining; owns two computers (heavily upgraded TI-99/4A for games, MD2 [CP/M computer with bundled software] for serious work); living refutation of the view that "chaotic" is a technical term and nothing more. Gaming background: played D&D starting about seven years ago. Stopped within a year: the rules were just too far removed from reality. Started up again when Melee of TFT came out; I made up my own rules for everything but the combat system. Since then I've been going more and more over to improvising instead of rules. I have recently experimented with throwing out the rules for combat and just winging it.

ZINE TOPIC: YLAM

Back in issue 97, I applauded Martin Ellison on his idea of using the game CIVILIZATION to develop world histories. I also said that "we can do something of the sort right here," and introduced the world of Ylam. Ylam is a physical copy of North America and a "truly hideous series of wars and calamities have destroyed cities, ruined nations, and depopulated most of the continent." I then went on to say that "everyone interested can give a rough description of their nation/tribe/race ...and a short term statement on policy." A paragraph on one Bert the Brutal, once the "leader of a gang of city toughs" and now a local strongman, was given as an example.

I had about given up on replies to Ylam, since only Peter da Silva had given me a reply, when two letters arrived on consecutive days. Since I gave little thought to what organizing Ylam would require, I am putting out this zine to make clear what I am doing and to find more interested people. So far, several problems have shown up. To deal with them one by one:

1. At the moment, it is not so much the World of Ylam as the west coast of Ylam. The only three replies to date have been within striking distance of Bert the Brutal. On the next page I outline several societies and where they will be starting. If none of them are near where you would like to start (so far, players have preferred starting where they live), don't let it worry you: there will be an initial relocation period for players who do not have lots of other countries to interact with. This will already be required, as the Seattle area has already been claimed twice.
2. The initial relocation period will also be used to adjust such things as size (figure on controlling roughly one state and 500,000 people), toughness and the like. I as DM will try to keep things roughly equivalent.
3. What sort of place is Ylam? I think I can reasonably let players include pretty well anything from a fantasy background. Phasers, robots and light sabers, no. All three of those can be renamed (Wand of Disintegration, Iron Golem, the Mystic Sword of Antioch), but I want a fantasy flavor throughout.
4. The degree of DMing is a question. I am presently running a local strategic campaign in which everyone controls a world and there is one turn a week. In that, the emphasis is on personal cleverness, the rules are fixed, and I do not feel free to

introduce arbitrary events. However, a good part of history is arbitrary events, and I want things to be open enough so players can do anything which occurs to them. Open colleges, try to improve Greek fire, sink merchant vessels in the enemy harbor, migrate, anything. Thus there will be no rules whatsoever, and I am also going to throw out a good number of special events, both good and bad, just so this campaign is not just a series of wars to the bitter end. The campaign will be very heavily DMed. This also works out as being highly arbitrary.

5. There will have to be victories, both for realism and so players can feel pleased with themselves. (I regard it as the DM's duty to make sure the game is fun.) However, this also means there will be defeats. Even if I knew it was totally arbitrary and that my country would have gone belly up no matter what I had sent off to the DM, I would still be distressed at being taken out. I can't reasonably have 500 years pass with the same countries surviving unchanged with no loss of continuity in government (just look at Europe over even the last hundred years). All I can do is spread things around so no one feels left out.

Statement of intent: everyone's country will at some point be conquered OR suffer a coup OR collapse completely OR be hit by an utterly devastating natural catastrophe OR something equally as bad. However, I will work things around so you continue with the same country. The winners put in a viceroy who successfully revolts next turn (and whom you control) or you control the new government from day one or you have to set up a new government different from the first or etc.

Along the same lines, I will put in a bunch of DM-controlled nations as free victims for the players. I would appreciate players running a secondary country as extra fodder for others, but make very sure I know which one I can wipe out completely in the course of things.

ADDITIONAL DM-CONTROLLED COUNTRIES

MYER: a nation of cannibals controlling the area near our own Boston. They have developed a ritual whereby anthropophagy not only gives the consumer some of the consumee's courage and strength but part of his skills as well. For the most part, this is not done in an antisocial way (although skilled slaves bring high prices). They have evolved into a guild-based society. When a craftsman of note dies, his body is auctioned off by the guild to a journeyman, who thus generally becomes a craftsman himself. A dead journeyman will do for admittance into a guild. The discoverers of the ritual, an evil church, released it after the collapse in an effort to mold the society to their own tastes. They now complain that Myer "isn't evil enough." Part of their ire is attributed to the low prices priests bring at the morticians.

The only times when Myer's odd habits prove actively distressing to its neighbors is in times of war. Myer goes to war without supply trains; they try to live off the enemy instead of the land. This has its problems. When they win a battle, they do get to feed their recruits on the enemy champions, which generally gives Myer a very good army. Unfortunately, most battles are decided by who routs first, and the final emotions of the victims follow through. Thus the Myer forces have the very bad tendency of routing on the first setback despite their overall superior quality.

THE ORCISH TRIBES. We shall say that the Great Plains area is still in its original state, with not only herds of buffalo but the giant ground sloths and the like. The steel plow capable of breaking prairie sod does not exist, so the land can only be used by hunters. Orc hunters. Lots of orc hunters. It's always nice to have a barbarian invasion waiting in the wings.

That reminds me. About 1 AD, when a Eurasian tribe was defeated, it wasn't wiped out; it just migrated. We can use this so that defeat will still allow a player to continue on without much change.

IDEASMITH'S MUSING #8

by Jonathan D. Woolley, 405 Serrano Dr. #6D, San Francisco, CA 94132; (415) 585-9123
 retyped by Lee Gold

Before presenting Children in FRP, I would like to invite A&Eers to an afternoon of FateRole, starting at 2:00, the first Saturday of each month. Give me a call for directions and to be sure there has been no change in plans.

CHILDREN IN FRP: this article provides stats for children in FRP. It is an expansion of my lineage system (A&E #96). It is written in terms of AD&D. It has no basis in realism.

1. Race: see table below

<u>Parents</u>	<u>Child's Race</u>
same race	same as parents
Elf and Human	Half-Elf
Half-Elf and Human	50% Half-Elf; 50% Human
Half-Elf and Elf	50% Half-Elf, 50% Elf
Orc and (Elf or Half-Elf)	no children
Orc and Other	90% Orc; 10% Half-Orc
Orc and Half-Orc	95% Orc; 5% Half-Orc
Half-Orc and Elf	no children
Half-Orc and Half-Elf	5% Human; 95% no children
Half-Orc and Other	25% Orc; 50% Half-Orc; 25% other
Both Half-Elves	25% Elf, 50% Half-Elf, 25% Human
Both Half-Orcs	50% Orc; 25% Half-Orc; 25% Other
Other combinations	combine disadvantages if GM allows

2. Stats as adults: figure separately for each stat.

A = 3D6 and racial modifiers from AD&D. (Don't figure for ORCS)
 M = mother's stat; F = father's stat.

If M is less than A, then B = A - (D10-1); minimum of M

If M is more than A, then B = A + (D10-1), maximum of M

If F is less than A, then C = A - (D10-1), minimum of F

If F is more than A, then C = A + (D10-1), maximum of F

Stat of child as adult = (B+C)/2 = S

3. Stats as child (varies by race) %ages are %ages of S, which are maximum stat.

<u>Race</u>	<u>Stat at Birth</u>	<u>Stat Gain</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Stat at Birth</u>	<u>Stat Gain</u>
Dwarf	0%	5% per 2 years	Halfling	12%	4% per year
Elf	0%	1% per 2 years	Half-Orc	16%	6% per year
Gnome	10%	1% per 2 years	Human	10%	6% per year
Half-Elf	4%	4% per year	Orc		don't roll stats

4. TRAINING FOR HUMANS.. Children of adventurers will often be trained in a PC class. The table below gives useful specifics.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Trainer</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Length of Training</u>	<u>Best Age Range</u>
Cleric	High Priest	place of worship	16 + D4	10 - 18
Druid	Druid	Druid complex	16 + D4	10 - 18
Fighter	Lord	castle	6 + 2D4	12 - 18
Paladin	Paladin	place of worship	10 + D4 + Quest	10 - 18
Ranger	Ranger Lord	place of worship	20 + D4	10 - 18
Magic User	Wizard	Wizard's tower	18 + 2D8	12 - 18
Illusionist	Illusionist	Tower	24 + D6	12 - 18

Once more I take my typewriter in hand as I sit in the squalour that is Robertson Towers....

YES ITS...I CHING YOU CLAUDIUS 5 by the three-dot king... Harry Robertson of 193, Bruntsfield Place. Edinburgh EH10 4DQ. SCOTLAND. Phone: 031 229 4682. From the USA: 011 44 31 229 4682. If someone tells me what the international code for Britain is from Australia (I suspect 012 44) this could become the first zine to replace the International Directory. (gin optional). Anyway to business...

Onwards and Upwards... or some comments and sidetracks on 100 (gosh, golly) GILHAM: Your Tolkien expansion sounds intriguing. However: in Traveller, the only game I know of which covers such things, in situations of swordsman versus rifleman/laser carbine habitue (Hmm i could do with an acute key on this machine) /poison gas merchant etc the sword-wielder has an annoying (for them) habit of winding up. DEAD pdq. See "Raiders of the Lost Ark" for just such a situation.

JONES: Ta for the Mangara write-up. Mickey Drivel seems to be about the only thing worth reading in National Student just now, crammed as it is with tales of Exec. sell-outs. However if M's holydays are anything like my "urgent" essay deadlines were the relevant day would likely be the Monday before last. (9 am) Now, how about a cult of the whale-meat pie...?

MAHLER: Appreciate the old-age stuff. But none of my PC's have ever lived long enough to die of old-age. Tarquin seems that way inclined. (All praise the mighty gerbil)

PORTER: Agree re skill-groups. Surely this could easiest be done by setting up background tables; see "Call of Cthulhu" for logical examples. //GENERAL CT inspired by your mention of "Dehumanised by Science". Everyone rush out and buy Thomas Dolby's "Europa & the Pirate Twins". NOW...go on, go...//Back again? Good. A "Rocky & Bulwinkle" fan? Good grief, there's precious few of us about. I think there was a boardgame out of Yellow Submarine in the early '70s by the same people as had Charthbuster. Anyone got any "Dangermouse" rules?

GILLESPIE: ct to MCGREGOR: Methinks Gamma World predated Traveller as well. SIMPSON: yr 4(1): -Also you can tie a bit of string to the barometer and, using the wrethed thing as a plumb, drop it off the top of the building. Haul back it, and measure how much string followed the barometer earthwards. Voila! //re JUDGE DREDD: afraid so and we've even found some scope for role-playing in the game.

BROOKS: You've tried teaching a parrot to water-ski!!!?? Don Martin's tap-dancing goldfish was bad enough, but this???

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "How far is it to the money-lenders?" "About a hundred and fifty yards" PAUSE "Oh, how far is it back, then?"

Enough. Let's start in on 101 then, shall we? Why not...

LEE: ct to GILLESPIE: Then there's the fear of bungling a job too. A good craftsman takes pride in their work, and a job well done will likely lead to repeat offers of work.

VARIOUS HEINS, MURRAYS etc: The skill system and background chart definately look interesting (read awe-inspiring). I just noticed: glass-cutters make better lovers. Actually its not a glitch in the system, its just the way my mind works. Also, strangely the use of one's and legs are not a prerequisite for swimming. There are many para-, and quadra-plegic and amputee swimmers, I believe they use a dolphin-like motion in the main. (NOTE: Insert "arms" between "one's" and "and")

HEYDT: On the other hand, however, humans can also be surprisingly frail against animals. I know someone who had to have stitches put in a cat-scratch and children get killed periodically by not particularly large dogs. It is definately not as easy as it would at first appear to work out animals combat factors, and I suspect more difficult than you thought as well.

GALLOTTI: yr ct to ELLWOOD: on SCU. A while back someone in WD worked out an "ale standard" for AD&D(tm) based on 1 pint of AD&D(tm) ale = 5cp = 1 pint of British beer = 50p (I did say it was a while back). This worked similarly to your idea. His was used in order to work out more realistic wage levels for NPCs

however. As a sidetrack friends of mine in Hull were working to deliberately beer-b'ised economy which was eventually abandoned in favour of the bicycle-wheel based economy. // Yr ct to ME: on third thoughts you're getting them anyway. I have all β in paperback: Cavendish is published by Sphere, Summers by Arrow and Maxine by Star Books. // I spit on your "Oward & Uward"-Thats my comments introyou rotten swine. Its mine I tell you, mine all mine... (fade into maniacal laughter)

PATTERSON: I believe RQ was originally based in Glorantha rather because it was seen more as an extension of White Bear & Red Moon than for the somewhat more sinister reason that you suggest. // Yr diatribe to the Americans: very good, now you just have to explain to them who Enoch Powell is.

DAWSON: Murder, no. But one of the characters Robert Saunders runs in my Trav. campaign regularly gets beaten up by the others, including another Saunders-run one.

da SILVA: yr ct to me; (In appallingly bad mock-cockney accent)-"Ching-chingeny ching-chingeny, ching-ching-chingee (all together now...) // On SR20 (asuming it is not an extremely delayed urine (!)-take of Ragnar Fyri): Yeh but I dont speak with the same accent as you and I object to RP on principle. As Mr. Saunders will testify, it kind of resembles my normal-type spelling anyhow. // yr ct to PEHR: I used to have a tribe of blood-crazed were-gerbils roaming about an old dungeon of mine. They eventually took over by the simple expedient of out-breeding everything else in the place.

END COMMENTS (amid resounding cheers) Where to now? Ah, I know...

VICTORIAN ADVENTURE

or: "A saunder among the serpent-people"

Mr. Saunders and I finally managed to get a game of VA running and this will, I hope, take the form of a description of the run-thru with relevant notes from me as GM interspersed as necessary. The scenario is the last one in the rules, "Find Lord Farrington's Son". Now read on...

SCENE: A well-stocked biology laboratory in a large house in South London.

TIME: 4th of July 1860. Somewhere across the ocean colonials are celebrating revolting against the British Empire 75 years ago but here Good Queen Victoria is on her throne, Britain owns $\frac{1}{2}$ of the globes surface and all's right with the world...

THE PARTICIPANTS: 1) CHARLES WALKER: 30 year old gentleman biologist, single, and attractive but obnoxious, short person.

2) PAUL FERRINGTON: Walkers clerk, 36 years old, even more obnoxious than his employer and failed house-breaker. The only reason Walker took him back on his release from prison is because each strongly suspects (though not to each other) that Walkers dear Papa is also Ferringtons, though his mother was but a humble scullery-maid (she was pretty though).

3) FREDERICK JONES: Immense 40 year old man, his face looks like a coach and four ran repeatedly over it in his youth sometime, but hes a pleasant man if a bit slow at times. He is Walkers lab assistant and is marrie with 8 children. He is reasonably well-educated at charity schools, unlike Ferrington who had a mysterious benefactor who payed for him to attend Grammer School...

THE SITUATION: Rumours have been sweeping London (or at any rate "The Strangled Pigeon" (where Fred does his drinking)) that a mysterious Chinaman has been arrested for transporting young men and women to the east as white slaves. Simultaneously Walker has read in his "Times" that Lord Farringtons son Rupert, has gone missing and that a large sum has been offered by his distraught parent for the lads safe return. (Could the two possibly be connected? I wonder*-GM...)

Walker decided he needed the money to buy some equipment for the lab so, having jumped to the unsurprising conclusion thta the Chinaman may well have had something to do with the Hon F's vanishing he scurried off to the local police station to have a word with the unfortunate Oriental.

He managed to persuade the desk sergeant thta he was the Chinamans lawyer despite knowing nothing about ^{low} not knowing his supposed clients name (Len and

Chi)(GM). By a mixture of threats and bribery(Which he couldnt afford to pay) he managed to discover that Len Chi was not a white slaver but actually provided victims for something called the Sssnuk about which he knew nothing except that he left their victims trussed up in a sack at midnight on Clapham Common where they wre picked up by members of the cult, but he didnt stay around to watch. Armed with this information, and a hunting rifle, Walker duly "persuaded" Fred to lie in a sack on Clapham Common that very evening while he and Ferrington kept watch from nearby bushes.

Prior to that, however, (and this Fred was not told) Walker had discovered in the British Museum that the Sssnuk were (are? Who knows?) a cult devoted to Set who gradually become more and more serpent-like in appearance and powers as the spirit of Set gradually enters them. In order for them to breed they need the blood of, preferably, young adult men. (GM- Dont blame me if the mythologys a bit faulty; its Steve Smiths invention)

Midnight came and, sure enough, three dark shapes appeared on Common beside the sack (GM: The Sssnuk neither read papers nor frequent the "Strangled Pigeon") Walker promptly stood up and shouted a warning. Before the three hoodlums had a chance to respond he fired. (GM- To my horror he rolled a 01/D100 to hit) One of the three fell dead, a bullet thru his heart! The other two promptly surrendered, and, under duress, gave their address as 10, York Square, SW1. Leaving Fred to guard the newly-trussed prisoners, Walker led Ferrington off to the hideout of the evil serpent-people. They arrived at about 2am. Claiming to be drainage inspectors (Anyone remember that one?) or some such gibberish, they were allowed entrance into the hall of the house, an ornate, fountained hallway; smelling strongly unpleasant, by a zombie-like youth. (GM- One George Drake, one of the few voluntary members of the cult, kept as a front man, to keep people complaining too much about the somewhat disturbing goings-on in the place. The fountain incidentally, is connected up to the sewage system, for reasons unexplained in the scenario.) Pushing past him, the dynamic duo rushed upstairs and, by amazing good fortune (?) found themselves in the bedroom of the leader of the cult (GM-!) where the Hon. F. was being held prisoner. (GM- They had realised that he seemed a bit better dressed than most of their prisoners and were trying to figure out what to do with him) Here, however, things started to go seriously wrong. The leaders personal bodyguard was woken by their whoops of glee and, having woken his chief, attacked. The two were easily able to overpower the pair of humans (GM- I had to fudge a couple of rolls here, or the our heros would have been torn limb from limb) and Walker and Ferrington awoke, aching all over, in a large cage in a dim and dismal cellar with two cheerful cockney youths and an apparent corpse as cellmates. With cheerful cries of "Oh, I wouldnt worry about it mae, youll be dead in a fortnight", and suchlike, the youths were able to restore our heros spirit.

A plan of action was formulated; and put into practise, next feeding time. When their jailor appeared with dinner (tea, bread and dripping) he was hit over the head with a convenient (full) bedpan and thus rendered unconscious. Going thru his pockets revealed, besides the inevitable dirty hankie, the keys to the 4 cells similar to their own in which a total of eleven reasonably able-bodied youths were imprisoned, as well as five who seemed beyond redemption. With those who could run leading them, Walker and Ferrington led a charge to freedom (from behind as usual- GM) trampling George Drake underfoot in the process, since it turned out that they had been imprisoned in the cellar of the Sssnuks headquarters. Once outside, everyone split up and headed back to their respective homes, minus the Hon F. (who was released a week later, amid much public acclaim, and with only a minimum of unnecessary bloodshed, by a private detective called Barnaby Jackson- GM) but glad to be alive, until next time, anyway (heh, heh, heh... -GM) (Fred, incidentally, guarded the captives for about an hour then got bored and went home). The system ran very smoothly, with only a minimum of winging need -ed and I can reccomend it wholeheartedly.

All the above done in S&Punctuation R 418, my own invention. Bye, love Harry...

CUT-OUT SHAPES IN SECOND-HAND DAYLIGHT

Being the second coming of an occasional 'zine from the typewriter of Phil Masters, 90, Walkern Rd., Stevenage, Herts., SG1 3RB, England.

I think we've been forced to our knees (but I can't tell)

Hello Again. (This fanzine bit is obviously addictive.)
(Your remarks have dragged me, infuriated, back into print.)
Hello especially to (everyone I met at Games Day.) As you can see, this
(my many adulatory fans.) issue sees, for the first time in (this particular A&E), the appearance
of the multi-choice intro, (a great leap for mankind.) It's
(a particularly silly typographical idea.) quite simple — just strike out the bits you (like)
(dislike) fervently!

Enough I say!

First, the important bit. Me. Since COSISHD 1 appeared, I've managed to land a new job with British Aerospace (still business programming, but a heck of a lot closer to home). This puts me on the same site as both Steve Gilham and Angela. Can't be bad...

The first consequence of this is that I've got an excuse for a few days at home, having left BIS 24/11, and only starting at BAe 5/12. This in turn means that I can get to type this — between cooking dinner, changing plugs, etc. — so you must all be as glad as I am.

You Scratch My Back and I Grow Claws

Comments on A&E 99 — in slightly irregular form. Some remarks arising from 99 seem to me to deserve sections to themselves — hence all the "see belows" in this section — but first some brief thoughts.

Mike Lewis: re ct. to Ronald Pehr; I love the idea of planet-wide starship farms — perhaps you could say more on this? I quite see that sentient ships (organic or computerised) could make piloting a far less complex task, but what about maintenance? (I've heard of ship's doctors, but.... you probably get that joke five times a week.) // re ct. to Wilson Heydt; have you really seen SF campaigns where everyone strolls around with FGMP-15s? Nasty, noisy, smelly things. Shouldn't be allowed. AREN'T allowed on most planets in Traveller. I've only ever seen one or two; even rich psychopaths tend to prefer grenade launchers. // Imagine vs. White Dwarf; see my comments below.

Bill Karieva: re ct. to Mike Dawson; use of experience to add variety to a game. Hmmm. Up to a point, I think. It only works in fantasy universes, as RuneLordishness is less detectable in SF or super-hero situations, making NPC reactions less varied, and the opposition in such campaigns tends to vary less in form with PC power. My other worry is about upper limits; the twentieth-level-where-do-I-go-from-here syndrome. I find I can enjoy playing straight Traveller with no experience whatsoever.

Steve Gilham: Your taste in sources is immaculate, but honesty obliges me to note that my information is rather old and very second-hand. Much of the present discussion of weapon effectiveness in RPGs repeats what I recall from my tabletopping days — was anyone else in the Society of Ancients about 5-7 years back? That argument was fairly inconclusive, but a few things did emerge. First, there is some reason to believe that sling effectiveness varies widely with ammunition — lead bullets or cooked clay projectiles being better than found stones. Second, there are at least two possible styles of sling use; "sidearm", swung in a vertical arc, and "overhead", swung horizontally. The latter is probably more effective,

but trickier and more dangerous to teach (360° possible error). Third, be extremely careful of your sources; some ancient writers don't seem to bother to distinguish between the sling and the staff-sling — the latter being a weapon of immense range and minimal accuracy, issued to camp servants in the hopes they would get a few of the enemy before running away (there was also a plausible suggestion that bas-reliefs showing Assyrian armoured slingers — firing sidearm — actually represent armoured spearmen who have been issued cheap missile weapons and told to make themselves useful during sieges. Sidearm fire does tend to go high, which is fine against raised fortifications.). Fourth, impaling; apart from the Greek medical implement, I read a claim by a modern writer to have put slung stones through the wall of a well-built wooden shed. My personal conclusion from all this was that slings were harder weapons than short bows to use at reasonable effectiveness, and probably never quite matched good archery for sheer range and power, but they were a hell of a lot nastier than just throwing a stone by hand. Finally, it may be worth noting that most "barbaric" European/Mediterranean cultures seem to have used the sling or the bow, but not both, and the slingers don't seem to have done worse in warfare. // The artillery manual quote — also third-hand — came via a book called (I think) "Firepower", by someone called Hughes.

Joseph Teller: Place names indeed. Colonial. I've spent holidays in most of the locales you think sound exotic. (Sorry, no offence intended, but exotica is in the eye of the beholder; UK citizenship and basic knowledge of Latin and Roman history ensure that nothing on your list really catches my breath. Anyway, you missed out Leyton Buzzard.) // Protectors of Power; Deriving some "intellectual" skill bases from STA (to allow for ability to withstand job pressures) looks good, but I hope you weren't 100% serious in all cases (or when you treated Lawyer skill as Soul-based). I personally have STA around 15-30, but I'm not too fundamentally inept as a computer programmer (I hope).

David Flin: re ct. to Peter Clarke; High-lethality combat neither encourages nor discourages role-playing, I think. It DOES discourage players from role-playing berserkers (in preference to sneak assassins), and the reduction in time spent in combat determination may be a good thing (says he, the Champions GM). Combat as an option, fine; combat as the dominant option, no thank you.

Alison Brooks: re ct. to Quentin Long; I suspect the extent to which one views modern society as non-compassionate is partly personal; try comparing us with earlier periods. The truism underneath all this is that a society's production surplus sets an upper limit to its capacity for compassion expressed materially. // re ct. to Jason Zalk; yes, real people do get better at things — but usually very, very slowly. What's wrong with social progression? // re ct. to Robert Saunders; What about one-shot magic items (scrolls, potions, etc.)?

Pete Tamlyn: RAEBNC.

Daniel James: Good stuff on planetary systems. There was a comparable thing in White Dwarf 15 (by Andy Slack). I'm afraid I won't actually use your system much because (a) I'm a lazy slob, (b) I suffer from acute chronic deficiency (or chronic temporistical absences), (c) I already have a standard Traveller subsector or two mapped out, and (d) All I ask of a system is that it give me some amusing settings in which the players can get on with being harried by NPCs. Would 'twere otherwise.

Quentin Long: I hope you received my pseudo-SASE; I repeat and expand on my enclosed Champions comments below. // re ct. to Galeotti; see my

remarks below on social restrictions vs. game rules. // Aaaghung. The curse of Murphy strikes. In the time between finishing the last page and starting this, my SASE has returned full of goodies. See below still.

Paul Mason: Remind me to expand on the intricacies of economic theory some time. Meanwhile, careful what you say about Adam Smith being right wing. // For comments on both the clannishness of The Hobby and WD vs. Imagine, see my rant below. // Magic as a morally neutral human resource -- fine, if that's your personal approach; it's valid in terms of many mythologies. If your basis happens to be mainstream medieval European, however, then much magic has a very large moral element; it's all based on invoking spirits, most spirits are morally "aligned", therefore magic involves working with one side or the other.

Simon J. Cornelius: RALEBNC.

Ian Engle: On Aliens; I'm surprised that you didn't mention Poul Anderson as a useful source; he certainly turns out a number of well-constructed creatures, although I can certainly also see some potential objections, like (a) his creatures are subtly but persistently anthropomorphic, or (b) no-one should be encouraged to read anything written in such a persistently overblown style. Anyway, I enjoyed your article; it's a subject that has been preoccupying me somewhat of late. Without boasting, I hope you've seen some of my attempts in WD and the Traveller Journal, as well as some of the other "Contact!" features in the latter. The big difference between your approach and mine seems to be that you generate worlds, then populate them; I dream up races, then place them (astrographically and sociologically) within the standard Traveller Imperium.

Harry Robertson: re ct. to Foster; a historian friend of mine once made a plausible attempt to establish that berserking had nothing to do with mushrooms, but lots to do with a congenital physiological condition; it certainly seems to have run in families. Much as I enjoy the idea of Viking drug-crazed fiends, I find this view slightly more intrinsically plausible. Any historians/archaeologists out there with concrete knowledge? // On Traveller; RALEBNC.

This and That. They Must Be The Same

Or, OK-I'm-Biased-But-So-Are-They Time; Imagine vs. White Dwarf.

A&M 99 contained comments from a couple of UK contributors on Imagine magazine, with some comparisons drawn with White Dwarf. The odd thing was that both seemed to think that Imagine was preferable in at least some areas, despite the acknowledged fact that its content and presentation was and is consistently dreadful. As the sort of naive, foolish individual who buys magazines primarily for their content, with some weight given to the quality of presentation, I found this a little bit odd. However, these enigmatic texts seemed susceptible to structural analysis (I re-read the comments), and I eventually came to the conclusion that it's all down to a little matter of cliques. But first: (bother, I hate beginning sentences with "But"), a look at content.

I must admit that I regularly buy WD, whereas I have not bothered with Imagine since issue 1. However, I do carefully peruse each issue in the shops as soon as it comes out....so the fact of my never buying it shows what I think of what I see. The amateurish layouts and abysmal cartoons might not put me off in themselves, and the standard of writing is probably no worse than WD overall (in purely literary terms), but when

the overall impression of tattiness is linked to a quite appalling tendency to ignore any game system but you-know-what, I just give up. This is a personal thing, of course — I long since lost interest in fantasy gaming (as opposed to SF and Superhero) in general~~x~~ and TSR's baby in particular — but I retain enough theoretical concern to read articles on the subject, provided that they don't assume that I'm starting from a position of commitment to one game. I am open to correction here, but I don't believe that Imagine has yet carried one ~~xxx~~ non-review article on Runequest, Traveller, or Champions, and in the absence of such, I have no interest in buying the rag. (There may be one good word to be said here for the review page, which is reasonably catholic, but that's not enough for me.) The one thing that has yet caught my eye was some European groups for Illuminati — 1½ pages of interesting material in eight months.

All this is irrelevant, really, however. Imagine has not been praised in A&E for its game articles to my knowledge, but for the exposure it gives to The Hobby, or, as some might put it, Fandom. And the trouble with that, I'm afraid, is that I personally have a dark and shameful secret; I don't like fandom as such.

Please don't get me wrong here. I like most of the fans I know, I have attended and enjoyed fanish meetings and cons, and I have even been known to contribute to fanzines. The problem is that an awful lot of fans share one bad habit; when enough of them get together, they become a self-indulgent, self-absorbed clique — Fandom.

What this brings me back to is the thought that Paul Mason was 75% right. Imagine is caught between pandering to the worst of the hobby (no caps), also known as Irvings, Munchkins, Bug Rats or Bobolds, and being nice to The Hobby. What he ignores is that the latter option is also pandering to a rather unlovely group of people who irritate the rest of us.....

One final thought. I personally don't like Munchkins, and I don't get on that well ~~x~~ with pre-adolescents generally. However, I don't therefore regard the two groups as equivalent, and I regard it as a minor social necessity to be reasonably pleasant to non-Munchkinoid juveniles. White Dwarf is, heaven knows, wildly imperfect, but it treats the audience it shares with Imagine with about the right mixture of respect and didacticism. It certainly refrains from chatty, provincial, shallow self-indulgence.

((Rant over — you can get the holy water out now, truefen!))

~~xxx~~

It's Good To Agree With the Good Guys Again

Quentin Long's remarks on new Champions powers in A&E 99 caught my interest and sent me off to borrow a copy of 92 from Steve, since when I've exchanged letters with Quentin, studied the experimental new powers he sent me, and generally mulled over various topics. I have now come to the conclusion that I generally agree with Quentin, but with a few reservations; anyway, this is one of my pet subjects of the moment.....

First off, Astral Projection, where I seem to disagree with everybody, except possibly the Superworld designers. The point is that I don't believe that Champions Flight plus Desolid can adequately reflect Doc Strange style AP without an over-complex crock — leaves-behind-vulnerable-body-with-range-and-distance-problems — that I happen to believe justifies a new power; Quentin, I know, disagrees, but I think we can agree to differ. The problem is with attempts to design that new power without any regard for limitations, which both Quentin and I will take against.

Second, what I have come to think of as the Iceman problem; Energy creation to some. Sue Storm is straight Force Wall, Green Lantern is probably

a case for a Multipower or Gadget Points (not a title I know much of), but how do you deal with someone who can sculpt ice into shapes more complex than simple planes and curves, but less spectacular than giant augers, jet packs, et cetera? Iceman has, to my limited knowledge, produced passable images of himself, 100' poles for sliding down after aircraft accidents, and ladders to climb up. I would not allow that to FW in my campaign, but I don't think a modifier to EB is quite right. My best suggestion would be a $+\frac{1}{4}$ or $+\frac{1}{2}$ advantage to FW, with no extra END cost.

Weaker Form and Shapeshifting seem to be under scrutiny by Hero Games at present (as one), so comments seem redundant. I do like "leaves clues to ID" as a crock, however. Pet/Companion can be handled as an agent under the base rules, but I could wish for a fair way of making it a little cheaper -- or is that a contradiction in terms? Finally, one clear but trivial point of disagreement between me and QL; I would rule that Gadgeteering cannot under any circumstances be applied to powers not run through gadgets, even if they are in a gadget pool, and I am willing to put up with extra rules to cover versatile magic if that opinion forces me to accept them.

Footnote: A query. Has anyone yet found a cost effective use for C-2 Energy Absorption? Quentin has recently pointed out to me that it can give you power without upper limit, but first you have to put up with 4-5 phases of being blatted to cover the cost of the power (1D6 points gained per blat, at best, per 15 spent, with losses between phases), and that's assuming that an opponent is dumb enough to keep trying for that long (or that your own side has that many blats to spare). I think it's overpriced, but I'd love to be disillusioned.

Whatever We Do, It Seems Things Are Arranged

It has been argued that, when a society being modelled by a game has some absolute restriction or limitation, that restriction can and should be modelled by a game-rule. I disagree, and I hope that readers will forgive me if I say why at length.

Consider a fantasy campaign with some character creation rule along the lines of D&D "classes". This can have two justifications; (i) It's the nature of the universe. People are naturally limited in their areas of ability. (Disputable, irritatingly simplistic, but defensible.). (ii) It's the caste system. You gotta stick to one profession, else you get to be a social outcast/zapped by the gods/a head case. (I'll risk it). No-one will teach you, anyway. (No-one?). They don't want trouble, even if you do. By the way, this rule holds good in every known country.

So far, so good. The social restriction and the game-rule are equivalent for all practical purposes. UNTIL.....

One day, a boat sails into harbour from an unknown land. On board are a bunch of people with skills cutting right across the class boundaries.

The question is; do the players have grounds for complaint, either that (a) they should have been allowed to multi-class it, or (b) they should have been warned that this was theoretically feasible before they attacked the visitors? Does the justification given for the game rule make any difference? If not, why not?

Comments please.

Back to Nature

Well, that's another Cut-Out Shapes nearly done, I'm back at work, and my latest batch of stencils is nearly finished. There were one or two million other things I thought to say, but they'll have to wait until I have time, space, and a style appropriate for writing up a Champions campaign. Meanwhile, be good, and don't do anything I wouldn't do.

DRAGONEWTS' DREAM 4

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This issue I think I'll present a review, some fiction, and maybe a few odds and ends. First, the review:

A Review of JAMES BOND, 007

(I thought of titling this "From Victory Games with Love," but decided that would be just too corny)

I picked up JAMES BOND, 007 (let's just call it 007, okay?) a few days ago for three reasons. First, it looked like a good game. Second, I was happy to support Victory Games, which publishes it, a "new" company set up with AH money by the SPI staff who fled the conquering hordes of the TSR Take-Over. Third, having just completed a very long, high mortality RQ campaign, this game looked like light relief. Well, I certainly wasn't disappointed on any of the counts. 007 sets out to allow roleplaying in the Bond mythos, with the emphasis on the more flamboyant films rather than on the rather brutal books. I don't know how much VG paid for the rights to Bond (though for some reason they can't even mention SPECTRE or Blofeld), but they've certainly done them proud.

First, the physical angle. For £7.95 (a reasonable price for a game nowadays), you get a 160 page softback rulebook in a zip-loc pack. The 20cmx27cm rulebook is well bound and produced, with striking color artwork on front and back covers. It's just as smart inside, with a neat layout and excellent illustrations of the major characters of the Bond mythos as well as assorted cars, guns, boats, etc.

Of course, you buy a game for the system, not the packaging, and this is more than worthy of the slick presentation. I won't bother detailing the system, but it's a very neat and esthetic design. Each task has an Ease Rating and a single roll on a universal Quality Results Table determines not only success or failure but--refreshingly novel--the degree of success. This system is used for all aspects of play, something that has been talked about in A&E and that I see as a very positive design feature. RQ showed the way with its skill system but then shifted to using separate rolls for damage and magic; 007 has finally brought it off in a very effective system which also permits a number of interesting and attractive features. In chases, for example, one can "bid" Ease Factors, with the person who is prepared to bid a lower EF (lower = harder) choosing whether to act first or second at the cost of less chance of successfully carrying out his maneuver. He is the one who pushes his car closer to the red line, cuts the corners especially fine, and pushes his revs that bit higher; he gets an advantage but with attendant risks.

Characters start out at basic levels in skills and the five characteristics (STR, DEX, WILLpower, PERception, and INT) and acquired EPs can earn skill levels or increase characteristic scores. Another feature I like: combat results cause accumulative wound results rather than the rather abstract and sterile (to me) hit points. In addition, characters acquire Hero Points and Fame Points as they develop. HePs allow the sort of outrageous strokes of fortune so common in Bond adventures (stealing others' parachutes, stumbling over clues, etc.) and can be traded away to fend off damage so that heroes are (justly) hard to kill. FaPs, on the other hand, measure one's fame (or notoriety) and are therefore a nice way of discriminating mass, indiscriminate slaughter or the like, because to increase one's Fame can be very embarrassing (how many times did Bond have face to face meetings with the Major Villains before the confrontation? How difficult would it be if every single foreign customs officer recognized you as the Famed Angliski Shpion?).

How does it play? Very smoothly and, well, Bondian (Bondesque? Bonditic?). Perhaps one of the best aspects of the game is that the Bond element is integral to it rather than being tacked onto the system. (I always felt TRAVELLER suffered from this; its atmosphere could just as well have been medieval as futuristic.) EF

bidding, for example, is an easy and convenient method for handling the protracted chases which seem so integral to Bond movies (in cars, on foot, by boat and on every other conceivable method of transport), a system firmly rooted in the game, not just slotted in as an extra for "chrome." The importance of hand-to-hand combat and the narrowing of the gap between the effectiveness of large guns against small ones, and guns in general against more personal methods conditions players towards using hands and pistols in the 007 style, rather than loading up with M16s and Uzis.

It's worth mentioning the layout, something on which SPI never scored very high. Everything is laid out very neatly, with profuse explanations and examples, often drawn from the films. Best of all is one section where the same adventure sequence (the capture and laser torture of Bond from GOLDFINGER) is set down as fiction and in game turns (as a dialogue between player and GM) side by side. Further aids allow buyers to quickly get down to playing the game, including a pseudo-SPECTRE called TAROT; maps and info about certain Thrilling Cities; and a solitaire adventure bound into the book. This last is particularly welcome, especially since it is structured so as to put the player through all the basic elements of the game (fire and personal combat, chases, skill use, persuasion, etc.).

As you no doubt realize, I rate this game very highly indeed. £7.95 is a very fair price for a game which not only plays very excitingly and well but can give anyone lessons as to how to design and present a game. Gerry Klug is to be congratulated for designing a game which should firmly establish VG in the rolegame field.

One final note: VG has also brought out a supplement called the Q-MANUAL, again for £7.95. This details a vast range of cars, guns, doodada, and gizmos from the Bond movies. Though not necessary for play, it does provide a useful aid and helps build up a good Bond atmosphere.

Next I thought I would outline a possible adventure/scenario, something I haven't done before. Originally this was played as SPACE OPERA, but it could be used for almost any SF RPG.

SLAVE STAR

CORAIDON (fourth planet of the TEBLOR system) is a small Type 2 (non-seasonal, Terran-type) planet near several major shipping lanes. Although there is a small, low-tech native race (TL 2), the planet is effectively owned by Cosmic Trade, Inc., one of the largest megacorps in the UFP periphery. Officially, of course, this is illegal, but a lot of money has gone to ensure that the records state that CTI is there "at the request of a number of planetary governments." The truth is far more sinister.

CTI really runs a very profitable slave concern on one large island, which has become its private domain. Armed company troops (from Enforced Security, a CTI subsidiary) round up Coraidi natives and set them to work mining the planet's very valuable mineral resources which freighters from TransStellar (another CTI subsidiary, of course) surreptitiously ship off to medium-TL planets where it fetches the best price. CTI's presence not only allows it to use cheap slave labor but enforces a monopoly on Coraidi mineral extraction without bothering with monopoly rights, etc.; their competitors don't even know of this operation.

Neat and smooth--except, of course, for the poor Coraidi, but then if Ghod had meant them not to be slaves, he wouldn't have made them small, blue and four-armed... and he would have given them blasters to defend themselves. Generous quantities of money and muscle have kept everything running smoothly: according to the Survey, no minerals of any worth are present (a fairly cheap operation for a megacorp); and as far as the Peripheral Development Inspectorate is concerned, CTI is there to aid, assist and advise....

Unfortunately for CTI, the next PDI official due to make the five-yearly tour of inspection has (unlike all his predecessors) not shown himself amenable to bribery, so the operation will have to be sanitized for the two days of his visit. The picket ship will be hidden on a remote moon (no amount of camouflage can hide the lines of a Navy surplus Weevil-class monitor); the armed gralhoppers hidden away; and the base's defense systems put under wraps. As for the slaves, the least resourceful third will be released on some isolated island (after all, they will be easy enough to recapture later); the most troublesome third will be kept in an armed camp (under the suitably-authenticated pretext that CTI is handling security and detention duties for some Coraldi states). CTI cannot, however, disown the fact that it "employs" some Coraldi, so the least troublesome and aggressive slaves have been put in special camps (with full amenities, etc., needless to say) and kept dosed with depressants and tranquilizers.

This obviously gives an opportunity to run any one of a number of scenarios. The base is at a far lower level of security, an offworld inspector is snooping round the planet, two-thirds of the mining operations have been mothballed. Here are a few ideas that spring to my mind:

1. Players could be the inspectors and their teams, with only two days to discover the truth about Coraldon and CTI's involvement. CTI, on the pretext of having to defend them from "native bandits" will try to keep a firm grip on the inspectors' itinerary, flying them to the two or three Coraldi kingdoms prepared to support CTI's claims, and wasting as much of their time as possible with banquets, presentations and tours of mine workings.

2. The opposite, have them acting for CTI. They could try and prevent the inspectors from penetrating the carefully-rigged smokescreen. If they do, well, they have to prevent them from blowing CTI....An accident when the inspector is about to hand over his report? Perhaps he could be "persuaded" not to expose CTI (blackmail? a frame up?). Whatever happens, no suspicion must fall on CTI--too many competitors could gleefully seize on any opportunity to humiliate CTI.

3. Rather more grandiosely, have the players command (or form) a mercenary commando force hired by a rival megacorp or some other benefactor (not even CTI's counter-intelligence is perfect), using this window of vulnerability in CTI's defenses to wreck the installation or free the slaves, thus blowing CTI's cover story in full view of the PDI inspector.

4. Finally, a more long-term idea. Have the players inserted onto the planet secretly (while the picket ship is grounded, and the ground-based SADAR/SensorScanner posts are non-operational). Their mission would be to contact the Independent Coraldi states and try to forge some kind of anti-CTI coalition. Some other megacorp would quite probably use such a force and be prepared to supply arms from offworld in return for breaking CTI's monopoly and favorable status in future trade negotiations.

There are lots more ideas but I'm sure you don't need more help from me. By the way, Coraldi are small (1.2m) oxygen-breathing mammals with four arms, each with three small-clawed, fairly dextrous fingers. Coraldi society is based almost wholly on obligation, both personal and social (my country educated me, therefore I owe it a year of my life as national service).

The Coraldi mind is very linear, given to orderly sequences and rationalizations. Coraldi wars tend to resemble decades-long chess games, in which a side is quite prepared to surrender when it can foresee a military checkmate in sight. Coraldi settlement patterns are fairly Dark Age but well ordered and orderly. Most states are hereditary monarchies, with the king or queen or quing (sorry, didn't I mention that Coraldi are tri-sexual?) embodying the state and feeling an obligation (noblesse oblige, Coraldon-style) to the King(etc)dom. Their orderly minds mean that, realizing their weakness, no Coraldi nations have attempted to resist CTI, but where

actions or players show them that they could win, they would probably fight en masse together.

Anecdote time now--partly because I can't think of anything else to put in. The first concerns a game I ran while still at school. We were playing RQ but I had thrown in a few variants just to see how they turned out. One concerned spirits and their relation with the animal into which they are bound.

I decided there were three components: Soul, Spirit and Body. A human has Soul and Body (i.e. volition and spirit--small "s") while a disembodied Spirit in the RQ sense has Soul and Spirit (i.e. a personality bound in a "body" that exists on a non-material plane). When an animal and a spirit are combined, the stronger Soul (usually the spirit's) assimilates the weaker one and can use either its Spirit or its Body, interchanging from one to the other pretty much at will.

A character had a Bound Spirit (of Humakt) able to incarnate as a huge wolf-hound (SIZE 9). The character himself, though a strong, good-looking RuneLord, was also very short (SIZE 3, about 1m tall). Then the player (Howard Grey) had an idea. I thought about it, felt that--although in real life it would not be very feasible--the inhuman vigor of the spirit might make the difference, and anyway, I liked the sound of it, so... Howard's RuneLord finally got to use his hitherto redundant Mounted Lance skill, and the game was graced with High Humakt's Hearty, Handsome, Honorable (Homicidal?), Hard-hitting, Heavy-handed, Heathen-hewing Husky, Heavy Hell Hound Handling Holy Hero.-

I doubt anyone would seriously contradict me when I say that a key element in enjoyable roleplaying is to be able to arouse real and strong emotions. Humor, happiness, greed, sadness--these are all able to be generated, but fear is far harder once one is dealing with strong, powerful characters. A weak threat will not arouse fear, but too strong a threat and death and destruction await.

A good technique for arousing fear in players is to leave them (metaphorically) in the dark, hitting out at shadows, seemingly at the mercy of another. In a direct, face-to-face confrontation, though, it's a bit harder. (Fighting a tough foe can engender tension, excitement--but fear?). Something I tried quite successfully is to put characters up against an apparently invincible threat, which can be defeated by using one's wits.

For example, a character (an estranged Lunar noble, played by Andrew Holley) was trying to steal a magic rod from the surreal castle of a mad mathematician called Occam. (He needed to take this rod to the Center of the Earth to destroy a sliver of Death Iron a bunch of Chaotics were going to use to stab the Heart of the Earth,... but that's another story.)

Entering the castle from the roof, he eventually found himself fighting Occam himself (a great 2.5m Greek statue of a man), attended by a trio of squealing Igor-types who scurried obsequiously about him, holding doors open for him, (over)dressing him, and so forth. The fight took place in Occam's treasure room, a great hall literally awash with ccins and assorted magic goodies--undoubtedly the rod would be somewhere here; the only trouble was it didn't look as if our Hero was ever going to get the chance to have a look.

Occam produced a hit which generated a long, polychromatic blade of energy, apparently capable of slicing through anything, certainly presumptuous young Lunies. What was worse, he seemed to be invulnerable or damn near it. Every time the character got a really good hit on the evil genius, say severing an arm or deeply slashing a leg, one of the little Igors would dash forward and, squeaking "Here, master," proffer a spare arm or a tin of salve. Occam would rather lazily attach the limb or rub on the salve, and would instantly be as good as new.

The character, however, had no such resources and could hardly even defend :-

(continued in two pages--at the end of FNORD 7)

THE FNORD 7

by Mark Galeotti, 5 St. John's Rd., Hampton Wick, Kingston, Surrey, KT1 4AN, England

I am going to try and make this a brief Fnord. First of all, whereas Fnord 6 was about A&E 100, this one will contain comments to A&E #99. The post office managed to get my A&Es in the wrong order, but I would like my two commentzines to get into the same A&E, so I have to hurry. Incidentally, I'm also broke.

COMMENTSON A&E 99

Well, it looks like an issue with a record number of comments in it, but...I'm not in it! Sob. I'm sorry, Britain. I'm really sorry. Still, the rest of the flower of Britain's zinists didn't seem to have any need of me: at a rough guess I'd say we managed to clock up just over half the issue.

LEE GOLD (Tantivy): I see now that you reprinted the EG letter off your own bat--disregard my question in Fnord 6.

About gun spread and law enforcement: personally I feel that society in Britain is shifting towards situation b. Changes like the introduction of computers, etc. can be discounted as merely the adjustment of the existing system to new technologies. In addition, though, the law enforcers have received more and more powers, more and better equipment as a response to rising rates of violent (especially armed) crime. Take helicopters: although they have been used for traffic/demo control for a long time, their use in an active policing role is, I understand, fairly recent. Similarly, Britain now has new, armed police units (the Special Patrol Group, DII) and is now even able to call on the CRW (Counter-Revolutionary Warfare) wing of the SAS in certain incidents, while the number of guns issued to police is rising steadily. Bulletproofs are now being used outside of Northern Ireland and terrorist incidents; while one London police station (I think it's Paddington Green) has been rebuilt as an armored, bullet- and bomb-proof fortress. Police powers have been increased: wider stop and search powers, a more liberal (sic) interpretation of the "sus" (suspicion) laws. All in all, the British police are becoming more powerful and more powerfully armed (both legally--in terms of powers--and literally) as a response to escalating armed and violent crime. Some people (including many policemen) advocate an alternative to all this: tougher gun laws (which, as you'll remember, was my third alternative).

Hmm, heroic fantasy seems just as cliché-ridden as superheroism. "Now we shall show them how a true man fights"; "Barbarian dog!"; "a race that was old when Atlantis sunk"; "Mortal fool! Do you dare?!"; "Black sorcery is no match for honest steel"; "The sons of _____ have waited millenia for this hour". Of course, don't forget that all barbarians must have their full complement of mighty thews and volcanically glowing eyes, while always smiling wolfishly.

MIKE LEWIS: (Adventuring into Basketry): Wow, I dig the sound of those vat-grown starships! Why not tell us more.

PETER A. CLARKE (Anglo-Scottish Chronicle): Good games in the area? Wish I could oblige. There used to be a fairly good community of gamers round here, but it recently exploded, with people moving away or going to university and only a few scattered individuals are left. Sigh. There are many groups around here but none that I would really wish on anyone else. I may give you a ring sometime (or you ring me: 977-6650) - but you tell me if you find any good groups!

DANIEL JAMES (Ephemeral Transactions): I dare say quite a few people would disagree with your statement that there are no mages around today (though I wouldn't be one of them). Fair enough, man has shown a propensity to evade his own ignorance by calling on magic ("Rainstorms? Well, spirits cause the rain, while the Wild Hunt thunders overhead."), but people have also come up with some quite impressive

ALYNCIALLE...Issue 4

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After an absence of several issues, I'm back in A&E. I've noticed a number of newcomers and returning writers since I last wrote. Welcome, one and all.

I'm still running the Apple bulletin board dedicated to telegaming. Call at the modem number above if you'd like to see. I'm also interesting in seeing any and all FRP-related programs you've developed. I got some great ones from a couple of sweet A&Eers, to whom I'll be writing soon. Anyone wishing to copy off Apple software or trade printouts or programs for any computer relating to gaming, please do write. I also market a couple of commercial programs which I can send a brochure on.

I'd like to rave for awhile about my three-year-old VD&D campaign. I need some constructive suggestions on the current system; and although I don't think I'm prepared to change to a RQ environment (the players are too ingrained with AD&D), I think some comments would be helpful. My campaign, BLACKWREN: The Rescue of Alorraine, has been running for over a year on White Pegasus and seems to work well. I'm a storyteller DM and a novelist, so I'll begin the section with a bit of background on the "world."

Ladenia is a small, land-locked kingdom in the game world of Daraken. Most of the characters have traveled here from Ladenia's capital city of Lorleyn which not too faintly resembles an auld English village; it is home to the palace and government of King Berjuss. Others have come from as far as Rikentorn to the east or arrived by night from the mountainous Calisteene region. The area is 85% human and rather quiet, surrounded by forest and a nearby mountain range bounding the north and west.

For the past 20 years, Ladenia has occupied the Dwarven lands to the East, and the dwarves have retaliated, taking it back. This results in a continuing struggle for power over the rich and productive silver mines there. There are once again soldiers and mercenaries on the roads to and from Ladenia, since the latest Dwarven uprising outnumbered Ladenia's occupying troopforce. The present band of companions has lost one of its number to the call of his country already.

The world of Daraken is a welcoming one. Here the climate is temperate; this month of November is briskly chilly, with crisp smells and still some warmth to the days, but the nights are cold indeed. Especially if you're wandering companionless! However, most of our campaign's number have grown up hereabouts and become accustomed to the winters, not needing much to survive in this as yet snowless winter.

The party has gathered at a castle, currently between attacks on a kidnapper's lair; more on this nextzine when I hope to have a novelized writeup as well as a segment from my forthcoming novel. (Someday maybe both SOUTHERN EXPOSURE and WHITE PEGASUS will see real print...like in a zine!).

YELL FOR HELP WITH MECHANICS

My current VD&D campaign, BLACKWREN, is running under most of the conventions/charts of Original TSR Dungeons and Dragons/Advanced D&D (c) TSR Hobbies. My magic system, however, is more powerful, flexible, and enjoyable/realistic for the players as well as the DM. It takes into account more of the structure of the original game as played in the field(s) (rather, the 1977 dungeons of many of us!) and also draws on novels or legends about magicks for ideas on how these powers should work. Considering also the fact that most parties have to keep falling asleep or stopping to study spellbooks when playing straight lower-level AD&D, I believe this method ceases to so hamper the spirit of the game and enhances the players' enjoyment, along with the fictional value of the game as an art form.

Magic-users in this alternate universe are similar to but more balanced than

those in some other roleplaying games. (Ahem.) Magic is the technology of this medieval world, and it's available in several forms to characters here. The magician types are mages, witches, illusionists, and shadowjacks--each with a unique spell list. More on character classes next time; for now, I need comments on the system.

If a character can use magic, meaning that he/she is a graduate of an accredited magic school or has completed an apprenticeship with a magician of some repute, the character sheet will record his or her prowess as Power Points in magical energy accessible per day--and Klutz Factor or the %age base you have to cast spells accurately rather than klutz or miscast them. I include later a spell fumble table, which should give some insight on what might happen should you fail your casting roll so miserably that you misfire your spell. (It takes a failed casting roll and a missed klutz roll to get onto this table.)

The power point system, often seen as mana or Brownie Points, allows more spells than the AD&D method, but the balancing factor of misfires is your tradeoff. It takes a certain number of rounds to prepare a spell for throwing, and each spell requires a given number of Power Pts. These factors are more believable to me than the instant-erasure theory of present day AD&D. (The Rose Mary Woods Hum syndrome, for you Nixon fans.) I've allowed players to write up their own spells with some success. Maybe nextzine.

For now, inspect and critique time on this handout I give all starting in my campaign (always at Level 1).

Spells and Sorcery

Hear ye! Hear ye! Ye Wizards and Healers!

Each spell-casting character should have, with the list of his statistics, a value of *PP*, which stands for power points (MU) or piety points (CL). Derived from your INT or WIS as well as your CON, this number will determine the number of times you may cast your spell(s) for the day each day. ("Day" may refer to a real game day or to a period of considerable party movement/action as defined by the DM; days are separated by at least a four- or five-hour period of resting, regrouping, and contemplation.)

***Magic Users*:** Determine spells recorded in the spellbook at first level as in regular AD&D (standard chance-to-know spell chart, AD&D Players' Handbook). Choose spells for the day as explained in the AD&D Players' Handbook. Report your choice to me at the beginning of each game day in private notes. That game day, your character can cast that spell as many times as your PP for the day hold out. You are drawing this power from the energies of the planes themselves (even 747s), meaning that you will eventually tire, becoming unable to stand the stress of another summoning until after rest. (This is the primary reason that CON figures into the MU PP formula.)

Usually, casting one level X spell once will consume X+1 PP. The spells SLEEP, MAGIC MISSILE and IDENTIFY at level 1 require 3 PP, since they're really level 1.5. (This is in addition to all the restrictions placed in the PH under the listing for the spell, like range of effectiveness, etc.) In general, though, the formula will stand as $PP = \text{effective spell level} + 1$.

Spells must be prepped (prepared) one round in advance of casting, and prep time will begin when the DM is notified that you are casting. (Prep time may be thought of as time spent drawing a pentagram or magic circle, lighting candles of appropriate shade and scent, sprinkling and blowing sand/dust in the wind, gesturing and all applicable scattering of petals, potions and material components.) I shall roll D100 to see if you cast the spell correctly or klutzed it (you stuttered, slipped, were hit by a missile or fell over while reciting the incantation; perhaps you made an incorrect/lewd gesture at a monster or DM.) When you cast a spell, just as in doing calculus or needlework, you may do it perfectly the first time or you might screw up. Your skill will be tested, mistakes being determined by a D100 roll at time of actual spell casting (the round it goes off, after prepping). You do have a small chance of either having no effect or having funny things happen with the spell (depending on your skill/exp level), especially with a spell of your level or above. (Below there is no biggy; spells of above your level found in spell books may be attempted at a much greater chance of backfire/failure.)

Percentage chance to cast spell accurately: when spell level equals your exp level, your base chance to cast the spell accurately is 50%. When spell level is lower, base chance becomes higher; when spell level is greater, chance is lower as is only fair. (This is a special case: you copied spellbooks, chants or scrolls with aid of higher friend or stole and obtained some arcane writings, another person's spellbook. Normally you will have a chance to figure it out, but it's really over your head sometimes.)

Modifications to base chance: if INT = 18: +10%. INT 15 or lower: -10%. Elves, mirans and gnomes: +10%. Half-elves and halflings: +5%. Humans: tough luck.

For each level the spell is lower than your exp level, +30% to base chance. (Here, I mean that the spell would normally be possible for a mage of a lower level. Since spell level and experience level don't correspond, assume I mean "the minimum level mage to cast this spell.") If higher, -30% from base per level higher.

Material components are assumed used, with not much recordkeeping on the gamers' parts. You probably have small pouches on your belt, each containing small but sufficient amounts of each of the materials for the spells you carry. I assume these are reasonable quantities, replenishable in civilized settlements condoning magic and in certain dungeons.

Every magic user can read magic. You learned it in school. French majors can read French (usually), can't they? However, you may not be otherwise literate in the common tongue. Reading books or scrolls does not require a spell; otherwise, you could not scan your own spellbook nor any scroll without bootstrapping a spell first --nonsense. However, it requires the appropriate spell, material components, and a period of peace and quiet far from the madding catacombs to write magic. Similar restrictions apply, scholars, to researching spells, creating magic items, or enchanting magical components, including yourself, in undocumented ways.

Scrolls are read properly unless your percentile roll upon announcing that you are reading aloud that scroll is 20% or less. Roll of 10% or less = spell does not go off; 11-20% = half normal effectiveness (Fumble). Anyone literate (a rare skill in fighting men) may attempt to read aloud a magical scroll. Nonmages have a 30% chance with INT 18; 20% for INT 17, and 10% below. Clerics reading magic or Druidic writings while not of that class, +10% to this base; ditto for mages or druids reading close-but-wrong class scribing. If a scroll is classed as "usable by any class," then use table above for magic users reading magical spells instead of this one, which nullifies the idea that some are usable only by a certain class.

Cantrips are zero-level wizards' spells from DRAGON #59-60. These require no prep nor PP. At L1, you may cast one cantrip from your list (as chart later determines) at no cost each day. These do not require preselection and always go off. (Think of Samantha in BEWITCHED twitching her nose, and Disney's Mad Madam Mim's self-cleaning house with self-propelled appliances.)

In my world, you will very likely be able to get away with inventing all sorts of mischievous cantrips during your stays in towns without raising my ire, as long as it's all done logically without a power play sense, and all in a spirit of fun. They are really provided to stimulate your imagination about the probable use of mundane magic at an everyday level in such a society (things that are now replaced with technological items, such as those which used to be done by slaves). Not too much practical joking, though! Can't have people knowing you're a mage in certain parts of the world. They may not cotton to your kind....Imagine a group of wizards drinking beer at the local public house, levitating halflings and generally acting foolish. They'd soon be banned from town....

CANTRIP-PING CHART

Wizard's Lvl	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	ridiculously advanced
# Spells	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	7	7	7	8	level -4

NOTE: Zero-level wizards are those who are becoming double-classed later in their careers. They are learning a second professional skill after meeting a person who wishes to teach them. This may also be a wizard who is not an adventurer yet but an

NPC apprentice. Adventurer wizards do not start their careers at 0 level but at 1.

Your PP are figured as $PP = 23 - (3 INT + CON)/4$. This weights the two attributes affecting your control of arcane forces: INT which you must have to understand and direct the vibrations as well as memorize the physical sequences of conjurations and CON which measures your ability to withstand and bodily channel those powers.

Klutz Table for Mages

01-50	Spell does not go off	86-90	Spell hits nearest wrong target for half damage
51-60	Half effectiveness		
61-65	Random direction (D8: N, NW, NE ...to nearest mass)	91-95	Hits caster's group 5' radius half strength reversing in D4 turns (impermanent effects). If damage spell, vary using DM discretion.
66-70	Delayed effect (D10 rounds)		
71-75	Backfires, 1/4 strength, your area		
76-80	Wrong spell goes off (an existing spell, similar one--you stuttered)	96-00	Completely new, different, weird spell wreaks havoc for caster and foes (be creative; no PBJ, whips or butterflies, please!).
81-85	Spell is changed in some way (funky)		

Clerics: Those of the cloth (or arms, as the case may be) pray (as expressed privately to DM) for the miraculous deeds of piety working through you because of your faith. Determine spells known as in PH. That day you may then cast any combination of those spells as long as your PP hold out. Each clerical spell at lvl 1 uses 1 PP; there is no klutzfact but 1 round of prep time--after all it is a miracle! However, if your actions do not correspond to correct and faithful deeds within your alignment, your powers of healing may be removed without notice. (Conversely, prayer in dire straits may work wonders as in real life if the situation warrants it and if DM deems worthy....Ye worthy sages, take note.) Your PP formula is $23 - (3 WI + ST)/4$.

Our campaign has quite a menagerie of PC races. In fact, I've been accused of having more species than any atmosphere or environment could support in one society. My fantasy life doesn't espouse this, though, and I include such varied races as human, elf, half-elf, hobbit, halfling (human x hobbit!), dwarf, dwadwarf (dwarf crosses, softened dwarf strain, fairly rare except for rape), stout (dwarf x hobbit? rape again!), gnome, half-orc, orc (urghh), and several new ones invented by our crew, including simians, saurians, fairies (yargh), Smurfs (not mine! generally ignored), rillyti, miran and kriw. I'm definitely purloining NICOLAI SHAPERO's silithii from #100! Although couldn't it have been males who were pets, just to keep the Equal Opportunity Guild from coming down on your rules? Here are a few of my campaign's additional races.

Miran: this lovely race of shape-changers is an offshoot of the Elves, indeed resembling tall, catlike elves. The face is more pointed than human or elf in depth, with a darker stripe across the nose and cheeks where the whiskers would go on a kitten; and they have very large eyes with cat-slit pupils. They are no more clannish than elves and may be found in places conducive to elves and humans.

Shape change gives only functional ability, not special--bird changes must learn to fly in successive times of practice before attempting birdy battle, for example; and dragon changes obtain dragon breath but not languages or spellcasting. The L1 shape-changing table is representative: 15 minutes to change shape to a like-sized creature which can be held one hour (or if 30 minutes is spent in the change, you can hold it for four times that long, two hours). For creatures considerably larger or smaller than the character, only 150% or 50% size changes are possible, and it doubles the change time, halving the hold time on top of that. We haven't allowed this ability without practice; you must practice your shapes before making them believable enough for battle.

At L1, there is one shape, usually that of a familiar creature or a like creature (hobbit or your pet, instead of an exotic). As you level up; you can learn one more shape and reduce change time as well as lengthen hold time. More on this as

things continue to develop. Cayla Maran in my world has a familiar peregrine falcon and can make that shape and no other at her level 1; she's working on large cats for after next adventure, which will put her L2. Note: they are not shapestealers--we copy, not destroy.

Kriw: a Moorcockian humanoid flying race. Elf-sized and full winged; they are not strictly mammalian, having the avian hollow bones for lightness, but they are warm-blooded, have a breastbone to support their weight, and bear living young (not hatchers). Down covers their bodies with multicolored feathers on the wings, providing a built-in heraldic pattern. These may be of any color under the sun, with plumage patterns running in families. Usually they are multicolored and may have any sort of human complexion and features in the face, although some genetic spots have been seen with solid black feathers and a pale lack of down, perhaps resembling a pigeon- or peacock-plumed American Black with glossy dark skin and birdlike patterns.

Somewhat claustrophobic, these free spirits will enter buildings, but if there are no windows, a Kriw is decidedly uncomfortable. Like the Kirin, they see no reason for venturing underground unless there is a mission of rescue of a friend or such, but they will remain jittery as heck and probably not stay down long unless progress is within grasp--and no one else is available to grasp it. It has to be worth it to perform this sort of suffocation.

They organize as a loose clan structure family, disliking government and restrictions, but have pride in their own cultural heritage and strong code of ethics (read Neutral). (Designed by Terry Poot, a former A&Eer. For those who know him, he's doing fine and recently married Diane, a gal from his hometown of Kansas City. I believe the Wind Children of RuneQuest, which are not so detailed, influenced us in this design.)

Simlians are an ape race similar to those described in "Planet of the Apes." These primates are mutated, large, rather humanoid apes (they all talk like Roddy McDowall). Usually orangutans are the clerical spur, gorillas fighters (Vanilla Gorilla - white ape L/Good), and chimps thieves or MUs. (Some people here run them as technos too *SIGH*.) These guys are not naturally found on Daraken nor in human-concentrated areas but must have been first summoned by some sort of mage, after which they set up colonies and normally choose to live apart from the human. (Invented by Linda Conahue)

Saurian races resemble lizards, standing 6.5-7' and are predominantly of the desert lizard genus. These are not remarkably intelligent but do have a distinct culture and a strict racial moral code. They originate in the few desert areas of Daraken. (Chris Donahue)

Rillyti are a 7' tall froglike race resembling those in Karl Wagner's Kane series. They tend to be fighters, most likely samurai; they have a quite civilized and well built hidden home in Daraken's few swamps and Okefemokee marshes. (Group effort)

All these races except humans, saurean and Rillyti have infravision. This is not always a blessing. Infravision can be canceled by a nearby visible light source and is unclear at extreme temperatures, when things appear clouded or foggy. The air around objects in the room may cause different shadows at changing temperatures; bodies may appear oddly shaped blurs, and two small figures close together may seem one positively fuzzy wide infravision.

No race receives plus/minus adjustments on characteristics, since these are considered to have been taken care of in the dice-generated curve. Otherwise there is too much minimaxing of racial characteristics, especially if players are allowed to crack the dreaded Players' Handbook. (The exception is thieving abilities, which may be affected by race. This does not appear to perpetuate the "I'll be a Grey Elf because they get +20% EP and +10% in whoring skills and +16.5% to saves vs poisons" syndrome. No character is limited to a maximum level nor is any race inherently

superior to the others. All are adaptive for the environment and make for interesting characterization. It seems too arbitrary to impose class restrictions upon level of knowledge and profession, although some of my players insist upon maintaining the chart shown later on allowable classes by race.

This notwithstanding, although not all the races are entirely suited for a given profession, skill or class, there should be a satisfactory combination to add a little spice. It's just as in America, with not everyone suited for his dream work but pursuing it if desired anyway. All the races have particular advantages accompanied by disadvantages of a like nature.

No comprende? Que pasa.... There are no racial languages. Do all white people on Earth speak one tongue? (I know some palefaces speak with forked tongue.) No more than all blacks celebrate Qanta (an African-American holiday celebrated after Christmas by persons believing African heritage should be preserved.) As Redd Foxx once said, "If you're going to send me home to my roots, don't send me to Africa. Take me to St. Louis." There exists the Common tongue, which is not exactly Esperanto; rather it is a slightly primitive system aided by universal hand signs and gestures.

And different languages dominate each country or continent. Your character would begin in the campaign speaking only two languages: Common and his native tongue. If he has a high intelligence and a traveling background, he may pick up a few more along the way. Monsters and boggles, however, if they are sentient communicating beasts at all, speak their own little clan-guages, which no school nor humanoid could teach. (Margaret Mead hasn't made the grand tour.) To learn Bugbear, for example, you must locate the friendly neighborhood bugbear to teach you. (Good luck. Hope you go well with Picante sauce.) Druids and Beast Masters will have some empathy with intelligent lifeforms, but again, that is the exception.

There are no alignment languages either. The concept of alignment is a nebulous one and again falls prey to the fallacy of all nice people being of one lingua as well as of one mind. Thieves do communicate using hobo's symbols, the pictograms and phrases of the Thieves Cant, and clerics may have scholarly languages in common. (Illegitimi non carborundum is a popular expression.) These are the notable exceptions. Communication between you if they no habla espanol here, in other words, is quite basic and there is probably no way to express advanced concepts out of the professional domain. You may be able to ask where there is safe haven, food and water or where the churches are or to note an easy burglars' mark from the scratching on the back alley fence, but you cannot ask for very complex or specialized information. Not without spells and interpreters, that is.

I've been examining a campaign-wide request for additional stats. Probably this is due to exposure to the powers choices in SUPERWORLD and CHAMPIONS. I've stuck to ST, IN, WI, DE, CO, CH for PCs mostly, after experimenting with other attributes. It seems that unless you're in a TFT system, where your chance roll is under your attribute rating for success, you can't relate performance to stats very often. Does it really work in RQ and C&S? (Cts?) Some suggestions I've tried.

Physical strength: a measure of brute force, endurance and to some extent size

Education: a measure of the knowledge the character can draw on. It's related to braininess and intellectual capacity but also reflects intellectual curiosity and past access to book-learning (information).

Common Sense tells exactly that: how much native intelligence and plain horse sense is in this person's head.

Intellect measures the elusive quality necessary in wizards: wisdom, quick thinking, sharpness or readiness of mind, presence of mind, and the ability to learn from experience.

Agility: physical robustness for dexterous whole body skills like speed (or its lack), clumsiness, klutz factor analysis, tendency to limp and fall down and have accidents a lot, handiness at jumping, aptitude for sports (like running from boggles) and other Olympic traits which I lack.

Manual dexterity: what type of juggler, lock opener or guitar picker you are

Health: constitution, family history of health, and hardiness.

Appearance: attractiveness, charm and charisma, sex appeal, etc. It can be useful in parleying, persuasion and gaining acceptance in groups, as well as being a convenient handle on others in daily life.

Vanity explains itself.

Lasting Charm does too. This is mostly a measure of friends' loyalty, associates' continuing attraction, and lovers' proposals after the person has been known long enough that appearance is not overly noted.

Self-esteem decides shyness or outgoingness. Extroversion and Introversion may affect the next thing, which is

LUCK: a luck factor is quite controversial. When accepted, high ones are generally agreed to be good to have should one be daring or have a low rating in the brains department.

Size can be computed from strength and health if anyone wants to be realistic in character description.

Stamina could be computed from constitution and strength.

Attack and Defense Ability were once derived from Agility, Dexterity, Size, Strength and Common Sense as well as a touch o' Luck. Often though we didn't end up using any of that stuff. This originally determined details of weapons handling and parries for my combat system, until players insisted they couldn't keep it straight unless I returned to straight AD&D. (The general herd, not particular intellects [mention later by name.]

I don't give formulae because I'm not so sure mine are too great. Please lecture me on what I should have done to integrate this smoothly into the VD&D rules. You'll probably tell me to play RQ or C&S. But how do I get people to convert? They want to use their old characters and are willing to change a few things or even add stats, but they want familiarity in the combat-to-hit tables, the spell lists and such. I could, of course, run my games with only the receptive attending (myself and Don, Terry Poot, Linda and Chris Donahue, Pandora and Valene Tiberdex, and perhaps some hangers on). This seems rather drastic, though, as I've been involved with a group at school and one in the neighborhood too. Suggestions solicited!

In addition to attributes, I was allowing Skills Learning (earning) as levels were gained. One began with four skills concurrent with level of ability earned and progressed at either plus to current skill if used or new skill and drop old one on level raising. The usual skills were available (Astrology, Tarot talent, herbalist, courtesan, trapper, navigator, literacy) as well as plausible ones suggested by players. However, again, these were hard to control and use. Perhaps I need a new system or should be content with a straight system!

RE PBZ: Nice to see realization of my PBZ idea. Looks like fun though I admit it does look like a monster of a database to keep up with! I also don't feel I would be comfortable calling everyone by first names and presuming to say what the person does instead of the person's character, especially since I've met none of you....So it's probably for the best I don't have time to run one. I would like, though, to take an inch to clarify that back when I proposed the idea and Scott took it over without contacting me, my objections were due to my feeling he could have phoned or written instead of assuming I was in oblivion; and also since no one ever proposed a PBZ in A&E before though it seemed an obvious endeavor to attempt. I never accused him of stealing the scenario itself. (I got it from a guy I was studying with. He never mentioned Ellison's Big Backyard (not Frontyard!) and had I known the scene was like one of Ellison's I would never have tried it! I don't wish to tangle with THAT dude over plagiarism; he can get mean!) Anyhow I thought it was more or less unique with me. Let's see how all the different ones it spawned came out....Too much work for me though! (I like the one lastish that ended up with everyone at the bottom of a pit....)

Here is the equipment list I made up after my PBZ proposition in #75 (with two notable additions at the very end, added 12-25-83, date this was typed in the Apple).

It is substantially less ambitious (especially regarding firepower!) and somewhat shorter (though my descriptions are long-winded) than most of them. (Do you really keep all that junk loaded up in your living rooms and adjacent areas. Remember, that's where I placed you, watching TV and likely to be surprised.) I would have carted along....

My SCA armor for swashing, made of tanned hide with holes punched in it to lace up over my grass green tunic and knicks (accompanying armor). This is packed in a drawstring waterproof plastic sack you get at some shoe and clothing stores. (Bedroom closet) SCA knife and sabre nearby the packed costuming (ibid)//My three similarly packed belly dancing outfits, complete with two veils each, coin and bell belts and jewelry, three paneled skirts, harem pants and bejeweled ballet slippers as well as odd headdresses, finger cymbals and accessories (ibid) (One each of orange, green and purple) Knapsack (ibid) Canon AE-1 Program and Polaroid Amigo 600; hope they have film! Yep. (ibid)

Boy Scout and Girl Scout manuals, grabbed from the bookshelf by the fireplace (living room with gate)//Sandals, tennies, changes of clothes (jeans, T-shirts, skirts, sweaters, dress, skirt, halter, or WHATEVER) from the nearby closets or by throwing my clothes hamper in from the utility room by the washer (quicker but chancy) Blankets there too.//Flashlight (garage)//Shaklee sales kit (I'm a Shaklee distributor), a standard briefcase with boxed samples of their dried fruit and nut bars, vitamins, carob energy bars, and beef jerky for comparison tests; also small samples of cleaners, etc. (Kitchen)//Canteen (empty), thermos, that little lunchbox, 2 pt thermos carrier--for taking potato salad or fruit cocktail or pudding, with the freezer top; two Blue Ices and misc. food if any looks preservable. Don't bother to fill up jars though. Also grab baggies--Ziploc (Kitchen)

Jar of copper pennies on the mantle as a collector's curio. (They're worth more than a penny now.)//Bubble gum (have couple packs on table by TV in little carved wooden box)//BB Gun or (for purists) air rifle with pellets. (Meanies in my family shoot poor defenseless cans and bottles in open fields. Heartless brood.) (Coat Closet)//Overnight travel kit in a small suitcase. Throw in toothpaste, toothbrush, makeup, shampoo, hairbrush, oomb, rollers, Ambush or Tatiana perfume, and Junque swept from the top of the bathroom cabinet if there's time. (Powder room)

Bibles (New American Standard, King James and New Int'l versions from bookshelf, including--if there--the concordances, songbook and Halley's Bible Handbook). More books, likely ones I'm reading currently from the TV table, easily grabbed. Assume they're generic Swords and Sorcery, SF and Shakespeare. Those would be likely unless I'd been studying computer science or math. Also blank paper, spiral notebooks, diary and bound blank books, with pens and pencils from nearby roll top study desk.

Radio Shack solar calculator (an oddity Pandora left at my home after studying last week--on desk in den). Radio Shack Model 100 portable briefcase computer, belonging to Don, my sweetie (desk). Don, my sweetie. And his equipment list, whatever that would be. (He never said.) We would probably have been lying there watching TV together. And we'd go through together, grabbing Mehitabel, Angelbaby, Big Boy and Fred, my four cats who follow me wherever I go and sleep at my feet. They're house cats, so no prob finding them in the five minutes.

We'd be in jeans and shirts as stated with regular trinket jewelry (engagement ring, school ring, friendship rings, Grandma's cameo or opal ring...). And that's all. The wall closes and that's the end of the fantasy (for me, at least).

Well, now you know what I really hoped to see: what y'all thought appropriate and adequate on a timer under pressure. I wouldn't go through the gate because I have responsibilities, plans and unfinished business in this world, but interesting to see it really being run.

A NEW TEXAN APA? Believe it...or not. After the demise of the Outer Planes APA out here in Fart Wuth, I found that there was no representation of Texas in the FRPg APA world that I knew of. I have always wanted to start an APA, although I feared that I didn't have the time and dedication. I've decided to take the plunge.

THE LAW OF FIVES: BUT DO YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW CTHULHU BETTER?

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A review of the Cthulhu Companion, (and other stories).

By Chaosium Inc., P. O. Box 6302, Albany, California 94706-0302. \$8.00.

This is the Chaosium's latest supplement to its Call of Cthulhu game. It is an 8½"x11" booklet with 64 pages. Included are second edition changes in the basic game. There are two pseudoscholarly articles; one on the manifestations of the Cthulhu mythos in Mesoamerica (Aztecs, Mayas, etc.), the other on the origin of the names in the mythos. Additions to the original game include new skills, phobias and insanities, monsters, and a description of five typical prisons of the era. Four scenarios are included; Paper Chase, a short scenario for one investigator; The Mystery of Loch Feinn and the Secret of Castronegro, typical CoC scenarios; and The Rescue, for all you werewolf fans out there. There are also some excerpts from various mythos writings; some of Lovecraft's poetry; The Lair of Great Cthulhu, a folksong; and a "Sanity Quiz", a list of ghastly, unspeakable, cthulhoid adjectives.

I am disappointed with this supplement, perhaps because the first two were so great. They were Shadows of Yog-Sothoth and The Asylum and Other Tales. each \$10.00 for 80 pages. They have scenarios only but include some source material in the scenarios themselves such as a description of the ocean liner Nauretania in Asylum and the spectral hunters, a new servitor race, in Shadows. Though the Cthulhu Companion costs proportionately the same as the other supplements it is less valuable since about 1/6 of it contains material of only tertiary importance. The excerpts and poetry might, for example, give someone inspiration or provide atmosphere but I prefer finished scenarios or direct source material. I am also disappointed in one of the scenarios, The Secret of Castronegro. The main hook used to get the investigators into the scenario is never fully explained. Unless you have a particular fancy for some specific part, such as the prison write-up, stick with the first two books.

Most of Shadows is a series of seven interconnected scenarios which lead to a confrontation with Cthulhu himself, though some of the earlier scenarios can be taken out for individual use. There are also two bonus scenarios, one for beginners. Asylum has seven independent scenarios; Some of them can be dropped into an ongoing campaign as needed; two scenarios for the times when investigators go mad, one ocean voyage, and one hoax. Of the two my favorite is Asylum. (Q. Is that because you wrote one of the scenarios? A. Well, not entirely.) The first scenarios of Shadows are relatively bland but the stakes rise to such heights that my mind goes on overload contemplating it all. If I were running a CoC campaign I wouldn't start with Shadows; what came after would be such an anticlimax after defeating Cthulhu himself. (On the other hand if he wins you can start an Aftermath! campaign: After the rise of R'lyeh).

ELLIS SIMPSON (98): Why aren't there plastic fantasy miniatures? Heritage (I think) once made boxed sets of plastic versions of their metal figures but they didn't seem popular. I haven't seen any in ages. The reason is expense. Metal miniatures are made in expensive vulcanized rubber molds but plastic miniatures need expensive metal molds. I read in the late Fantasy Modeling magazine that it costs \$100,000 to begin producing a typical plastic model kit. Perhaps when FRP gets as big as wargaming or model railroading we'll see more plastic fantasy miniatures.

STEVE GILHAM (100): I liked your thoughts on Another Tolkien Scenario. One thing I would like to see is a contemporary techno-magical civilization RPG similar to the Lord Darcy stories or Anderson's Operation: Chaos.

THE EBON UNICORN #49

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This is the first issue of TEU to be done on my new computer, and hopefully photostencilled by Lee, amazing cost notwithstanding. Since Christmas I've been doing everything on the computer. It has to be used if it is going to pay off as an investment. However, I'm afraid that despite the fact that I've missed another issue of A&E, this will have to be a short zine, as I'm in DC and about to head back to Austin. My A&E #101 is waiting for me down in Austin, so I'll restrict my comments to #100.

COMMENTS ON #100

GENERAL NOTE: I don't want to seem a wet blanket, but it seems to me that if A&E #100 were considered as if it were just another issue, without any of the trappings of numerical significance, it would come off as one of the least interesting issues in some while. Although it is nice to see old contributors back and although everyone clearly made a special effort(perhaps with the exception of myself and a few others with bad timing), the overall result was an issue which I would probably not select as one to read a second time. Perhaps everyone tried too hard and felt too much pressure to do something 'significant'.

OLEG ZACHAROV: Excellent cover. If you read this, I'd welcome any art you'd care to send to ABYSS. We're always looking for new and unusual styles. If Oleg doesn't read this, I hope that Lee will pass on my interest.

LEE GOLD: I like to use thieving organizations which are based around the concept of a gang or mob, with different factions or groups in conflict with each other, most similar to organized crime in the Italian city states of the Renaissance. Having rival groups and interests adds a bit of dynamism to crime, more than just the opposition of the law.//As you pointed out, there is a delicate balance in publishing your own games, and it really only becomes stable if you can simulate or parallel the arrangements which maintain larger game companies. For example, before RE could reach equilibrium, we had to develop relationships with printers, distributors, and large shops. In fact, we really have to have the large staff as well, but in the form of volunteers who do proofreading and assembly work, plus the three of us who do writing and design work(Eric Olson, Lew Bryson, and Myself). By working as a cooperative with a large supporting volunteer structure, we are able to produce an acceptable if somewhat less slick product with excellent idea content and a price which is actually lower than the competition, but it took us 5 years of scraping by to get to the point where we can establish and maintain a budget and a publishing schedule and not be afraid of running out of money or having production problems. If people are interested, I can go into some of the specifics of dealing with distributors, printers and the industry on a small scale. It might be useful. Letme know.

THE GYGAX LETTER: This was a great idea. The ideal reprint. I won't dribble on, but the contrast between these comments and his image and actions since that time is striking. Actually, I've been getting the impression that Gygax is not so much a monster as the victim of business circumstances which forced him into a defensive/aggressive position. I also hear that should TSR break up(a looming possibility), Gygax's role and attitudes might go through a metamorphosis depending on the fate of D&D after such a break up.

STEVE GILHAM: Interesting notes on technoevil, though I must point out that it is really only in a certain group of romanticist-descended fantasists that this relationship can be found in literature, and that evil has a far different source and nature in most mythology and legend, as well as the works of many other fine writers. Your idea reminds me somewhat of Ralph Baksh's "Wizards".

BILL PESCHEL: Your 'Future Schlock' notes were interesting. Have you noticed that now that SPACEGAMER and FANTASYGAMER are two separate magazines, they're both way behind schedule. For that matter, DIFFERENT WORLDS is not only horribly behind schedule, but seems to be distributed by carrier pigeon, almost impossible to find. Also, take a look at the new SORCERERS APPRENTICE. It is a fine magazine, but \$4.95 a copy? I suspect they are in serious trouble.

MICHAEL A. JOHNSON: I found your reactions to TCT both somewhat amusing and a bit disturbing. It troubles me that someone who I have respected heretofore could produce such an ill-considered and (I hate to say it) careless piece. It does nothing to enhance your stature as a gamer or critic. I suppose that you have guessed from these opening comments that I found your 'impressions' to be inaccurate and poorly done in the extreme. Clearly something which isn't stated in the piece must have prompted you to such irrational ire. Of course, your 'impressions' are just that, 'impressions', as it is clear that you read the first couple of pages and then skimmed the rest of the rules, picking out areas which looked confusing, without reading the accompanying explanations. Your main target seems to be the complexity of the rules, yet, they are among RPG rules I have ever seen, involving fewer tables and calculations than everything except TFT. I'm glad you read the combat section, and you clearly liked it, yet it is on the same lines as the other sections you didn't like, and.

Thank you for your specific comments. It seems as if a single comment in the introduction really set you off. I don't see why an effort to make a system realistic and 'tight' mechanically is a problem, or why it implies paranoia about cheating. It is really only intended so that every character gets a fair deal. I also don't understand why you feel that the character's attributes are irrelevant in the use of skills. By god, if I had a DEX of 1 I wouldn't be a particularly good typist or driver. Natural talent certainly is relevant to skill use. Combination of skills is actually rather simple, and kept open for GM interpretation. As to the combat orientation of the system, your comments may have merit in some campaigns. I wouldn't know, as we only engage in combat every 5 or 6 adventures in my two campaigns. If you ask me, the emphasis seems to be on problem solving and situational tactics. Finally, I thought the scenarios were, if anything, a bit sketchy, with a lot of need for GM improvisation.

Don't take my response hard. I appreciate your interest, but your comments just don't fit what I've observed and feedback we've gotten. Certainly, there are some problems in TCT, and you hit on some valid points. The spaceship section was radically botched, there are points where RPing experience is assumed, and the print is small. TCT is not intended for the new player. It is designed for the kinds of players who buy RE games, experienced gamers who want to branch out into more challenging and original backgrounds where the emphasis is on role-playing and character development. If you have further comments or have looked at the rules more deeply, I'd welcome further reactions.

ALASDAIR MCINTOSH: Even I, in my fog of involvement, am aware that it is too much to hope that YRS will ever be as popular as RQ. True, RQ runs counter to my tastes. YRS is an expression of my tastes as a designer. These tastes change, and sometimes I'm less than pleased with YRS.

HANK GRIFFIN: Welcome to A&E.//Interesting RQ variant ideas.

ELLIS SIMPSON: Regardless of the quality of Judge Dredd, I suspect that a RPG based on it would be a marketing marvel if it were done right. The explosion of popularity for the series over hear is nothing short of amazing, and there must be something to the comic, as it is the only comic book which I can pay attention to long enough to finish an issue. There's something about my early training against reading comics which makes me unable to concentrate on most comics, but I find that I can read Judge Dredd.//Sorry, so far positive response to my RQ comments is about 30% ahead of negative response.

PLAY BY ZINE: I may be an annoying, egocentric pedant, but might it be that the PBZ is taking up a lot of space in A&E which might be devoted more profitably to other areas of endeavor. I reserve judgement on this topic, and am certainly not proposing anything, but I'd welcome comments. Does everyone love to read the PBZ sections? Perhaps moves should be sent by mail and Scot should write up a synopsis of the action.

TERROR FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

I love undead. Not your average, run of the mill zombies, skeletons, and vampires, but the wild spirits and manifestations which are indigenous to the worlds of Dark Fantasy which I seek to create in my role-playing campaigns.

D&D and many other systems are criminally guilty of making the undead mundane. It seems like everything is guarded by some sort of walking corpse or restless spirit. What's worse, in D&D, these undead are pitifully underpowered, with first-level parties ripping easily through a force of mummies as if they were a wall of paper.

There is really much more possible with the concept of the undead. For something which is dead to live on, there must be a reason, something unresolved or unrepentant which makes it cling to life after death. This can be an earned or unearned status, or a status provisional on peculiar circumstances. There are three elements to any being, Spirit, Mind, and Body. Something can be classed as undead when any one of these is missing. Spirit can be described as the immortal identity of the individual. Mind is the rational faculty. Body is the vessel for these elements in life. Normally, a person who loses any one of these elements will die. However, in exceptional cases where an outside force can make one of the three elements sufficiently strong that it can fill the role of one or even two of the other elements and keep the person living while truly dead.

Using this guide, undead can be classified. Mummies or Zombies are usually bodies living on without mind or spirit, strengthened by magic. Naturally, a body which can live on in this state must be truly powerful. Ghosts are spirits living without body and sometimes without mind (Banshees, Poltergeists: note that the spirit includes emotional and other elements which, combined with the mind make the whole personality). Liches are body and mind without spirit, as are vampires, the one preserved by magic, the other by feeding on emotions to replace their lost spirit. Other variations and combinations are possible. One interesting permutation is the undead that has never died, specifically, those people who lose their souls, and live on in service to the new owner, often in the hope of regaining them (soul and spirit are roughly the same concept).

The thing which makes undead really interesting is examination of the forces which keep them alive. Magic is the most obvious, a curse or treatment is used to preserve some for a specific purpose. Some are kept alive by their own inherent magic. More interesting are those who feed off of one element of living persons, such as possessing spirits like the Dybbuk, or soul-stealing spirits like the vampire. Often, earthly existence is linked to a place or object, as in the case of the Draugr or Wraith, which is linked to the remains of its body and to its gravesite. Such undead are preserved by the extended power of the Mind or Spirit, but not strong enough to travel far. They usually live on in order to complete some task or avenge a wrong.

One interesting fallacy is that the undead are also unnatural. This assumes that death is always a natural state, and that undeath is not. I like the idea of natural undead. Certainly, those preserved by powers of their own, without outside magic are natural. Even more interesting are elemental undead, those whose preservation is associated with a spiritual/magical tie to a natural element or sub-element. This option allows for the existence of woodland undead spirits with powers over the forest, or sea undead, or desert undead, wind undead, fire undead. These can exist as spirits or in a physical form, and make an excellent change for characters. I like to have such undead created by the means of their death. Thus, a vengeful witch burnt at the stake might come back as a fire-spirit, roasting his killers alive. Such an association might also arise as an association during life. Undead status of this kind is also often a gift of gods or beings who are either too weak or unwilling to fully raise the person. Instead, they may let their spirit live on in a wind or body of water, perhaps serving them.

Undead are generally over used and when they are used they are not shown off to their best advantage. Undead should be rare and powerful, with powers and attributes clearly based on logical principles of the paranormal, either those proposed here or ones of your own. There is a subtlety and flexibility possible in running undead which is missing in most campaigns, but can add an enormous amount.

That's going to have to be about it for this issue. I like undead, so I'd welcome comments on the ideas given above. Letters are also welcomed at the address at the head of the zine. I'll skip plugs for the time being, and leave poetry to another time as well. Keep up the good work, one and all, and I'll be back with some widely desired mega-plugs and other useless trash soon. Dave N.

GOBLINOID OUTPOST #1

dragged out from the caves of the Goblin King by PFC Mons J. Johnson/A Co 123rd Sig Bn, APO New York, NY 09036, Box 334; typed expertly by the stupendous Lee Gold.

About myself: I first played D&D about seven years ago. I am 20 years old. I played (and DMed) frantically for a year or so, then sporadically for the next six. I am a true gamer and will try any game once. My current favorites are Diplomacy, Junta, Nuke War, Third Reich, Titan, and of course RPGs. I haven't played or DMed for awhile though, and it is time for the bi-annual Phoenixing of my world. One more item of interest: the last A&E I read was #66, so the comments might be a little outdated. (My only other A&E is #31.)

NEW SPELLS

Tired of having your carefully crafted goblin warparty (of fifty) complete with 3rd level half-goblin magic user getting blown up by the first fireball that comes their way? Well, here is your solution: COUNTERSPELLS.

For every spell 3rd level and above, there is a counterspell two levels below it. For every other spell 5th level and above, there is a counterspell two levels below it. So instead of picking Magic Missile, your L3 half-Goblin mage could take CS Fireball (counterspell fireball). Of course, the spell is absolutely worthless until someone casts a fireball at you, but it is nice to have. If you can see the magic user casting the spell, your counterspell will automatically be effective--providing you can cast it (i.e. you aren't busy at the time). If you didn't see the spellcaster (or were surprised), you have to make a save vs DEX to cast the counterspell (as you have a feel for the spell if you have a counterspell to it) before you are plastered.

If you are trying to counter a spell that isn't directed at you, it acts as a Dispell Magic (instead of automatically negating the spell)--plus you have a -4 (20%) on your save vs DEX if you have to make one. A spell is considered directed at you if you are in its area of effect.

Remember that for all non-offensive spells 5th level and above, there is a counterspell. So the counterspell for MSIII (monster summoning 3) is CS MSIII (a 3rd level spell). Another good one to have is CS Gate, a 7th level spell (5th level for clerics), if only because it would be very demoralizing to the opposing MU or Cleric. All counterspells are short in casting time (maximum of 3 segments for CS 9th level spell) because it doesn't take much to disrupt a carefully balanced spell. In all cases, the MU cannot be doing anything that would disrupt the normal level of concentration it takes to cast a spell, even if it is only a counterspell.

ELEMENTAL SHIELDS: Shield of Fire, Shield of Air (Lightning), Shield of Water (Ice), Shield of Earth. Each shield spell works exactly like the normal Shield spell does plus it will neutralize attacks of its opposing element up to twice the MU's level in D4. It also neutralizes attacks up to the MU's level in D4 of the other two, non-opposed elements. It also inflicts the MU's level in damage on anyone attempting to strike the MU from the front unless he saves vs magic. This spell is (tentatively) 4th level.

Example: Norad the Blue (a specialist in detection spells) takes Shield of Fire because he had heard there was a 48HP White Dragon nearby. If this dragon breathed on our gallant MU (LiO MU) after he cast the Shield, the player would roll 20D4 and subtract it from the 48 pts damage (ignoring a negative total). However, if a red dragon breathed on our poor MU, the Shield of Fire couldn't stop any of it. If Norad were hit by a lightning bolt or an earthbolt spell, the Shield of Fire would stop 10D4 damage. Remember these spells work exactly like Shield spell, so they only affect attacks coming from the MU's front.

PRISMATIC SHIELD: 7th level spell with the same duration and general characteristics as Shield but with the specific effects of Prismatic Sphere (i.e. it stops

everything coming at the front of the MU, but you can always throw a fireball just behind him.

MAGIC ITEMS

Magic Tarot Cards: a simple yet interesting magic item. It is a standard (or non-standard) set of Tarot cards. (you can describe it to D&D fanatics as an oversized Deck of Many Things) that will react to a PC's questions. Once the item's owner has figured out generally how it works, he states a question to the DM; the DM himself takes a deck of Tarot cards and arranges them so as to best answer the question. The confused player will place out the cards as he thinks they are supposed to be placed and try to figure out what the Seven of Pentacles means next to the Jester. The other players will be staring at the cards and making all sorts of suggestions as to what they mean. (The great thing about this item is that usually the players will understand but only after the event has occurred.) Another plus is that the PCs will probably end up spending lots of gold on mystics and end up running all across the wilderness to various oracles trying to get a correct interpretation of the cards. You should in all cases as DM make it obvious and direct, or at least as much so as the cards can get.

CROSS OF TURNING: this is a cross or star of David or some such strong religious symbol. It can only be made by a devout high level cleric. To remain potent, it must spend at least half of each month undisturbed in a church or other holy spot (i.e. not in your backpack). It allows anyone of the same religion as it to turn undead like a cleric. If a person can already turn undead, it adds 3 levels to his ability. If concentrated upon, it will glow with a blue-white radiance, if the wielder is under the observation of undead. This powerful item is loaned out by the church to faithful members who are or will be threatened by the undead, especially when on a quest for the church.

SWORDBREAKER: any weapon with this enchantment has a 10% chance per plus above the opposing weapon to shatter the opposing weapon when met in a parrying situation, instead of the normal 5% per plus. Also, at the end of any round where you haven't already rolled to shatter your opponent's weapon, you get a roll at 5% per plus. (Watch the Sword and the Sorcerer to see how the weapon works.)

I use a variation of CHAMPIONS rules of breaking things for RQ weapon breakage (after I had a shortsword chop up a two-handed sword in two rounds of combat). Faulty weapons get a lower Def but the body is just the size of the weapon.

GAME REVIEW: TITAN

The Fantasy Monster Slugathon Game is an apt description. It has a simple combat system, where you get a number of dice equal to your creature's size--and a skill factor of 2-4 (multiply size times skill to find approximate worth of your creation). The game incorporates terrain, but its best feature is the mustering of new creatures so you build your forces from lowly gargoyles, centaurs and ogres to serpents and the mighty Colossus. Another nice feature is that it works well with 3-6 players and can be played with 2. The graphs are also nice. The only bad feature is that it takes about six hours to play. I definitely recommend this Avalon Hill game to everyone, even if you can't afford the 20 bucks.

With the invention of Fiegan's Flickering Fluorescent Frictionless Spell (actually it doesn't make a surface frictionless; just almost frictionless) L5, affects 5 sq ft per level of MU, duration 2 rounds/level; 4 dice vs DEX to avoid falling while walking slowly; +1 die for each added difficulty) magical traps and magical transportation received a great boon, because you can easily cast this spell permanently on a surface or have it activate under a set of circumstances. (I'm not going into the particulars of enchanting, just the possible applications.)

One interesting trap is to cast this spell on the bottom of a swift-moving, waist-high stream. Anyone foolish enough to walk across without a rope will slip and get washed downstream to the awaiting giant crab. (Why are there traps in dungeons? To catch Giant Rats, of course.)

I seem to have gotten away from the intended subject: magic applied to transportation. The first and most obvious use for the 4F spell (you don't think I'm going to write that silly name again, do you?) is on wheel hubs and such so wheels spins freely. Two problems with this. 1) Springs didn't come into great use until the late middle ages. 2) The roads in the middle ages were atrocious.

The crazy Dwarf, Tharlus the First, set up a wind-powered skyway between his three main strongholds in the mountains. This required a box-like car with two shepherd-like hooks that held the car to an overhead cable much like a power line. The hooks were enchanted with the 4F spell, and sails were hung below the cars. This project was hideously expensive and had huge cost overruns due to the expense of putting up towers in between the 15 miles in extremely mountainous terrain. (Though there was little opposition to the project from opponents due to the area's peculiar geography.) During the operation's short term (it's still working), it has had only two accidents and one act of sabotage. The whole set up only required the enchanted hooks on the four cars (plus replacements).

With the invention of a polarizing spell that made the 4F spell frictionless in only two directions, another vehicle was invented: the Desertship. The Desertship was ordered by the King of Ir'ha (a small kingdom) to be built for the a religious pilgrimage across the Great Desert to the Mecca of my world. The story of its epic journey must be related elsewhere, but I will describe the vessel. It has two forward outriggers, two aft outriggers, and a rudder. The forward outriggers are 10'x4' planks with the front end curled up (so they won't plow into the ground), upon which the 4F spell polarized has been cast. These are connected to and support the main body of the ship by two composite supports (to give strength and flexibility). The aft outriggers are the same but not polarized. The rudder is a 5'x4' plank with the polarized 4F spell. The effect is to produce a catamaran capable of tremendous (compared to most other things) speeds across desert and other relatively smooth surfaces. I'm aware all you creative people out there can think of even better applications for this spell.

COMMENTS ON A&E #66 (better late than never)

JOHN SAPENZA: Once again a logical, interesting and useful zine. Liked your elemental staffs, and I'll use your saving throw chart at twice characteristic and thrice level. ("Once again" is a pretty strong compliment when I only have two A&Es.)

GENE CHING: You asked for comments on the Draconian Code. Here's one: Great! Superb!

MASON JONES: You're talking about Paladins and Anti-Paladins. Why limit Paladins to only two alignments? Anyone could be a Paladin and exemplify his alignment or what his god desires in a man. I can see it now: Druidic Paladins! Perhaps with a twistic Druidic type god, you get the Knights of Nee.

DEAN SUMMERS: Very nice story about the Quest Party. The last couple of lines were just perfect.

JOHN SYMS: Nice zine. About book creation: it seems obvious that no one would voluntarily submit to losing D4 or 2D4 levels yet you mention no particulars about someone resisting the spell.

ROBERT PLAMONDON: Interesting idea of basing your campaign on Europe. It is called Ouroboros because Ouroboros is a mirror of earth, and your campaign is based on earth. If I win the contest, I want +1 to movement rate (my characters always seem to be running from trouble). I didn't enter the contest in time because I was going to college (OSU ha ha). // Liked your Kobold Ostrich Cavalry.

ALEX MUROMCEW: Anyone who uses phrases like "nuke 'em till they glow" and "Grr, I'm furious" is definitely okay in my book.

JOHN HIVA: Merry Christmas (a bit late)

BEAR: the next one's for you.

Nextish: Indiana Dwarf and the Temple of Doom--or the new adventures of SuperBear. This has been a non-illuminati production. (I hope.)

LEE GOLD: Happy hundredth! Did you guess your hobby publication would grow so big spread so far or last so long? Ten thousand thanks to you and Barry for keeping this forum available to those of us who have enjoyed it for so many years.// Thanks for the explanation of the back cover (and a tip of the hat for MARTIN WIXTED on so cleverly constructing same).

OLEG ZACHAROV: A finely-detailed drawing and positively alien--a lizard riding a giant insect down the mountain from what looks like a shrine. Well done.

E. GARY GYGAX: Well, a fella is entitled to change his mind, I guess.

ROLLINSON & GABRIEL: I enjoyed reading your Dwarf Cult writeup for your preferred adaptation of Glorantha. My only criticism is that you change the name from Mostal. That way you break the connection from Stafford's version, leaving yours to stand as your own creation. Taking Greg's world and rewriting it isn't really useful when what you want is your own worldview using parts of his for background.

JENNY HEIN: I enjoyed your story. Fiction doesn't elicit comment otherwise simply because I can't add anything useful to it.

VINCENT E. BURCHETT: Very interesting writeup on the Hindu view of the elements. I wonder whether the five elements of India were the source of the Greek version I adapted back in A&E 60?

NIALL C. SHAPERO: Don't I know you under an alias? Welcome back to A&E, with your fancy printer and all. It seems different from the one Kay used (hi, Kay!) or a different setting (more words per page). Can we talk you two into contributing at least semi-regularly here on the pretext of publicizing OTHER SUNS? That makes it deductible, you know. I've missed hearing from you after TLOC ceased publication.

PETER A. CLARKE: Very interesting piece on laws and legal structure of a society. We tend to assume there is no law or law enforcement that PCs need to worry about, by and large. It's the D&D legacy of gaming as looting. One attraction of a long-running campaign is having to deal with governments and other lawgivers and persuading them you ought to be allowed to continue outside the funny farm.

LAURENCE J. P. GILLESPIE: Nice to hear from you again. Do you realize you've been gone long enough that a lot of readers weren't around to read the previous installment? I hope you can contribute more regularly again.

RANDALL S. STUKEY: An impressive compilation of ideas for superhero gaming. No comments because I don't play the genre.// Funny analysis of that can't-sell-magic rule in AD&D. They identify PCs from the propeller beanies, of course.// Unfortunately, there will be glitches in every rolegame, arising from the designers' desire to control powergrabbing by players--that's what all those power costs are about, after all. And nobody can spot all the resulting oddities ahead of time. I do like your suggested rule on cost reduction of odd-colorful items with no more practical power than easily-available technological items.

MICHAEL A. JOHNSON: I suggest your review of TCT would have been better-balanced if you had been less sarcastic. You can always say you don't like a game without denouncing the author...//Although $\pi = 3$ is an acceptable rounding off, the problem is with people who think it is exactly and precisely that; no fractions please, they confuse us. Any engineer who uses that value will not have his bridge stay up long. For most purposes, 3.14159 will do nicely and serves to remind us not to expect nature to be simple and exact.//When is your game coming out?//No, Carla doesn't bathe with her robes of cloaking on--but then, she generally doesn't bathe in public either. I got the combination by mixing mystery cults of the Roman era with pieces of Celtic and Norse mythology and a hefty dose of Buddhism until it felt right. The facets of the gem image was Bill Jaffe's contribution.

STEVE GILHAM: A very fine set of essays. You may have been wrong on how Tolkien thought out that particular detail, but you are quite right on his view of modern technology as an aspect of evil in its destruction of the environment. Local fans have dubbed the petroleum refining area we have to drive through from the south to reach New York City as "Mordor" on that principle.

I wonder whether D&D would have stuck with its medieval preference if it had dropped the idea of levels and looked upon people as people? The whole idea that the world is peopled with zero-level folk is an absurdity, designed to contrast the PCs as heroes in a simplistic fashion. It makes a lot more sense for the world to consist of people with good skill levels in their occupations, even if adventurers are better skilled than average at combat-related skills. From that, it's a quick step to realize that if most of the populace isn't mages, then you've got a magic-based technological "modern" analog of a society to work with. The only way that comes readily to mind to avoid that result is to severely restrict magic to people born with a special talent, which means that mages and other spellusers would be quite rare even among PCs.

By the way, I recommend to you a trilogy by Sheri S. Tepper based on a world in which talents are inherited and everybody lacking them is treated as pawns, to be used in the games that power struggles are structured into. They are *KINGS BLOOD FOUR*, *NECROMANCER NINE*, and *WIZARD'S ELEVEN*, published here by Ace Books. It's a stage between medieval and modern society largely because of the chaos built into it. The books have ideas that could be converted for our gaming.

WILLIAM PESCHEL: Welcome aboard. Your comments on the position of TSR are perceptive. AD&D didn't sell on quality alone but more from being the first to get there with something attractively packaged and aggressively marketed--and good enough to hook the consumer to stick with it. It was the total combination that did it. It will take a major effort for other companies to break the TSR hammerlock on the minds of three million gamers. I have hopes RQ3 as packaged and advertised by Avalon Hill will make that breakthrough, thus opening the doors to still other companies to find their way into the big market and public recognition. Keep your fingers crossed.

As for magazines, your comparison with the computer market and magazine support of specific products is quite apt. Note, however, that it was the popularity of D&D that produced all that success and circulation for *DRAGON* more than the other way around. There are literally millions of gamers who never see *DRAGON*; they just play their favorite game.

AH is planning to introduce a fantasy gaming magazine to complement *THE GENERAL*, their boardgaming magazine. TG never made a big success, despite AH's success at marketing their games, oddly enough. I'd like to see AH distributing DW as well as RQ3, but I don't think that's part of the deal. Oh well. We're stuck in the traditional circle: DW would come out more regularly if it sold better, and it would sell better if it came out more regularly. There's also the problem of attracting publishable material in sufficient quantity, to be blunt about it. You'd be amazed at the hours I spend working over articles to get them into publishable shape (the ones I don't give up on and reject completely), and I only do a minority of the work, just stuff Tadashi sends me. I do better with articles from A&E and TWH writers though.

MATTHEW F. PORTER: The objection people had to your using "character class" with reference to RQ is that it is so definitely associated with D&D. In fact, one of RQ's major design goals was to do away with the rigidity of the D&D character class. RQ, in its turn, has been accused of going too far in the other direction of openness, thus allegedly producing bland, similar characters. The skill group approach has been taken in *WORLDS OF WONDER*'s fantasy module (*MAGIC WORLD*), in which specific role models were set up, with groups of skills for specific specialized occupations. I don't know if anything like that will appear in RQ3 though I lobbied for it.

What we really need is a branching structure in the skills system that makes specializing in a particular area meaningful within game mechanics, thus inducing people who push rules to their limits to arrive at the desired end of individualized characters. RQ doesn't do this very successfully; and while I haven't played the Superhero games, which I think are the major attempt toward this in a sense, they too have their problems.

I'd like to have skills separated into believable occupational groups, so that the character's original choice of career leads to choosing to develop one set of skills instead of others because it makes sense to do so. This means rewarding that development and penalizing working toward other areas (the classic problem of keeping mages studying spells instead of competing with other characters' talents, for example). The best I have come up with is pricing skills so you choose a limited number (about half a dozen seems right) that you key your survival to--and get initial bonuses on those, plus all equipment they require, when you begin the campaign. All other skills are still available for study in RQ, but if you rule that studying them is both more costly and slower (such as only learning 1/3 at a time), then the player will see the logic of sticking to the chosen career skills. This needs a lot of work on details, however.

The problem with the character-as-his-possession question is a matter of balance and perspective. I have seen people who played their character's behavior as if the equipment were the active force and the character only the carrier. Yet your point of Man the Tool Maker/User is well taken. A character with useful equipment is not only more capable but also seems more distinctive. Is a puzzlement. In terms of roleplaying, the basic idea is to remember that the character is a person with likes and dislikes, hobbies and quirks, as well as a set of tools.

DAVID F. NALLE: You'll be collecting your share of offboard artillery for your attack on RQ over several issues. I hope you'll keep smiling after you dig your way out of the rubble. You are one of our better writers, at least when you aren't angry, and I hope you stick around to keep us on our toes. Just try to keep your frustrations under control.

Your discussion on the differences between the typical roleplaying rules and typical fantasy novel was interesting. I do disagree with your conclusion that magic ought to be "ripped out of most campaigns." I have observed that most people I see roleplaying are looking for a vicarious feeling of power and importance, and they expect to receive this in part by their characters acquiring the use of powerful magic spells and/or devices. If you are going to place all magic in the hands of powerful NPCs, what will you substitute as the dynamics of personal aggrandizement sought by these gamers? Any ideas you come up with would be appreciated.

I continue to believe it should be possible to keep people's jollies satisfied with a campaign in which the classic accumulation curve from D&D is dumped completely. Instead of starting small and working as hard as you can to acquire skills, for example, why not start with characters who have already been through apprenticeship and journeyman status and are already masters of their professions, if early in that stage, and thus not established and ossified too much to go off to explore? Instead of starting small and working hard to acquire skills, for example, why not start with characters who have already been through apprenticeship and journeyman status and are already masters of their professions, if early in that stage--and thus not too established and ossified to go off exploring? Instead of hungering for good equipment, why not already have equipment standard for your occupation? And training?

Then the point to the campaign would be what you go out and accomplish in the world. Deeds, not riches. It sounds as if it ought to be possible, but every game I've read is keyed to personal development (except, interestingly enough, TRAVELLER--which has had lots of complaints from people who cry out for a sense of personal development in their character!).

DON DEL GRANDE: Welcome back. Thanks for the comparison between OTHER SUNS and UNIVERSE. I hope Nicolai will answer your questions. BYLOS (original title, By

the Light of Other Suns) is intended as a hard science fiction game, so he'll be grateful for people finding errata to be corrected in future editions. He is working on the first supplement which should be out for ORIGINS, and several others are in various stages of development. I find the races the most interesting part of BYLOS personally, but that's due to seeing them played by the designer and associates, no doubt.

ROB ELLWOOD: A&E isn't packed with players like you for a simple reason: we are all individuals with our own experience and educational background, favorite books, hobbies, etc. Indeed, your opening comment that so many of us are "wedded to rigid rules systems" is hopelessly undefined and therefore unacceptable. What makes a rules system rigid? Is there a reason for this? I fear you have a lot of explaining to justify your accusation.

Why have rules at all seems to be your basic question. Why not just wing everything? That is easily answered. Rules exist to prevent or to settle disputes over whether something succeeded when attempted. Winging combat, in particular, invites bitter argument when you wing it by deciding that somebody's favorite character died without being able to convince the player that you acted within a reasonable decision framework. You can't simply ask the world to trust your judgment in all things, so we have rules to keep crucial decisions fair.

What you are groping for, I believe, is not freedom from rigidity in the rules you run the game with. You really want the rules not to get in the way of the adventure, right? You want your players to concentrate on their PCs' motivations, not the mechanics of how things are done. You want the game to be more than rules, and the rigidity of rules is less pertinent than their obtrusiveness and cliché-producing nature.

Well, that's really a different topic, and one that's been discussed at great length. Feel free to add your thoughts, but try to do it from a different viewpoint than "Why is everybody not like me," okay? You'll get more positive feedback that way.

HANK GRIFFIN: Glad you liked the writeup. Thanks for the kind words. It's interesting that you list two writers, Gemignani and Simballist, who haven't appeared in A&E for quite awhile, among those that stand out in your memory.

I'm unconvinced that it is possible to make all starting characters equal in power/ability as you propose. That would require all players to emphasize combat ability in RQ, which is not encouraged in all cults, for example. And in other games as I demonstrated in my ROLEMASTER writeups, different character classes are inherently weaker by design than others. This does not make the characters less interesting to play, however.

EVERYBODY ELSE: Thanks, RAEBNC, and y'all come back again.

ADRIAN BOLT writes that ...

Games Centre has gone into liquidation. They weren't open on January's 3rd; so he phoned them on the 4th and heard this. Graham Levin (owner) apparently put the blame on the loss of trade due to the Harrods bombing. Other comments have been that it's due to expanding too fast and then closing some of the shops down again; to each manager of each shop ordering individually (causing loss of discount for bulk orders and duplication of stock; that this will probably double Games Workshop's turnover; Air Mail buying of all new releases; and the overpricing this produces. Adrian adds, "Pity it couldn't have been TSR instead."



STARSHIPS AND SORCERY

ISSUE 2

From the Tombs of Netherwhere
the dim recesses of the demented mind of David Union, 4 Old English Rd.,
Worcester, MA 01609; (617) 775-4582

"I walk amongst men as the fragments of the future; that future which I contemplate."
--Zarathustra, Nietzsche

'Lo all, me again....Since I did not realize how long S&S #1 would take to appear, I figured I would try #2 before I got to see it in print, so as not to get too far behind in comments. I got #96 and now #99 and #100 after #97, so will comment on them somewhere in here. I would also like to thank Lee for all the work she did retyping the last one. I will definitely have to start using stencils.

THE WHY OF IT (part two)

"Okay, start'er up!" yelled Jim from across the reconverted movie studio. He had had a hard time explaining why he needed it to the committee, but with help from Bob he had received the necessary funding.

"You know, Jim," said Michael, "I think the committee has finally realized the dangers of giving you another year to spend their money. You're sure to get the go-ahead on schedule this time."

Then the huge coolant system started as the new deflection system was made ready for the test. "And this is going to repel the particle beam?" Mike had to shout to be heard over the noise.

Jim replied at similar volume, "We're not using charged particles. What this is supposed to do is warp the fabric of space around the detector, using very intense alternating energy fields."

"Oh, is that all," yelled back Mike as a saw-toothed image appeared on the oscilloscope.

"Oh shit," muttered Jim as he turned off the Deflect 1 and its cooler.

Mike lowered his voice and said, "And by the way I've been keeping my eye on that Jeab Smithers. I think that you should too."

"I'd say that most of the men have been keeping an eye or two on Jean. But she's OK. I interviewed her for this myself just like everyone else." He paused a moment, thinking. Nothing unusual was in her transcript but he had known Mike a long time and had learned to take his hunches seriously. They were seldom unfounded. "I'll check up on it," he said finally.

Jim headed for his office. Despite the setback, he was sure he could have the system working before launch. The deflection system would allow them to remove much of the bulky shielding in the readily accessible areas of the unchristened ship. That would leave room for more testing equipment and spare parts, always good to have around. He stared at the design specifications. The theory had taken the best blows of the international scientific community without a bruise. From there he had thought it would be straightforward.

"So much for optimism," he mumbled as he ran some tests of the device on his computer terminal to see where the working computer-model results deviated from the actual test. Tracing the deviation point, he tried a few changes but quickly gave up. If the entire project engineering staff couldn't fix it, he certainly couldn't. He hoped only that it would not require major redesigning.

Jim took out his TYT and tied into the data-communications network and then waited for the computer to clear for his priority coding. He punched in the area code for station Independence Two, where the ship had been built. He got a pulsed hum.

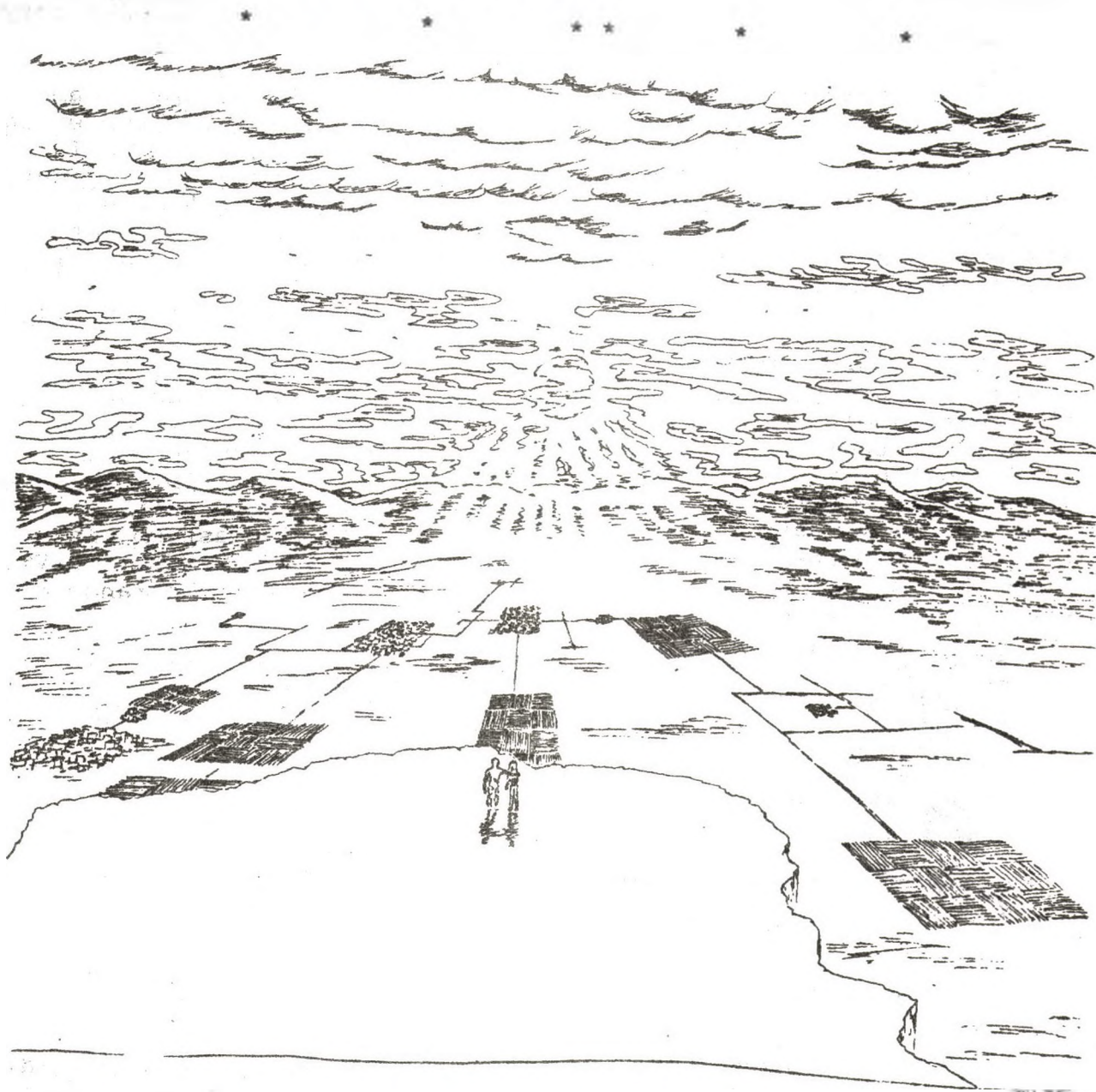
"Damn lines are always busy," he muttered, and then got up. He grabbed his coat and headed out the door, calling over Frank Turner, the radio specialist for the project. "Frank, make sure those primates at 1-2 have the F and H area bulkheads out by next week, will you?"

"Kay, boss, will do. This give us space for the radio telescope?"

"Maybe." Jim replied. "I hope so. See you monday." he said as he left the lab complex.

Jim pulled his collar up against the cold winter winds. He probably could use the extra sleep, but the last time he disregarded one of Mike's hunches he ended up with a broken ankle. So he had somehow to check on Jean Smithers. He punched up her transcript from his office files on his TYT as he headed for the Transcab station. As he remembered, there was nothing unusual. She was, though, putting in an unusually large number of extra hours, according to security records. That would be his excuse. Maybe by talking to her he could pick up whatever had made Mike uneasy.

His stomach grumbled. It would have to wait at least until after dinner.



SOME COMMENTS...

General comments on champions

Using gadget points for spells in champions works fairly well, and is not an infraction of the rules. In this way the player would specify what spells were to be used at the beginning of the adventure, much like a mage would prepare specified spells in SD&D. Remember that any power description, like "Energy Blast" or "Gadget Pool" are general references, NOT descriptions!

Also, we have recently made some game revisions to make the skill/dexterity balance work (their comment on months of testing is hard to believe). Dex costs 4pp/pt over 20, and con costs 3pp/pt over 20. The first skill level in one area has an unchanged cost, but the next two go down one category (1 pt if 3) in cost and the next two are normal, and the next two are up one category. Will report back on how well this works.

Misc:

It is possible to play a PC smarter than the player. Game familiarity helps, and as the ref goes around the table the extra time can be used to think and organize one's thoughts. Yes I realize there are limits to this, and i still prefer to eliminate the intelligence statistic if convenient. Lately have been trying Dragonquest: Not bad, but needs a new experience point system. Also, armor proficiencies seem necessary to better simulate some fantasy characters.

I have noticed recent interest in 'Lord Meson'. I have the first two, and was wondering wether there were any more?

VD&D experience point non-system: I generally take the number of sessions I expect the average PC to take to go up to the next level, get the points, and divide it out. This gives a base. I then modify it plus or minus 100% for role-playing. If I don't notice a personality, then there are no points. If the player did decent, then s/he gets base. If the player did a good job role-playing, but did not use abilities (cast spells, fight, etc.) where called for, then the base is halved. I have given 0 and 2000 on the same night, but fortunately the range is usually not too bad.



Back to champions, clairaudience and clairvoyance are already handled by the system, seeing into the past is done by a trivial combining two powers (power based on another power), and since without taking the character away from the player the GM cannot know the future, precognition is not playable in any game system

(beyond the generic vague glimpses). Baloon: how about 1½ points for each point of strength over 50, or just for each point?

Specific Comments #98

LEE: I have ordered LoA through local store (25% off) but has not arrived. Don't think distributors have it yet.

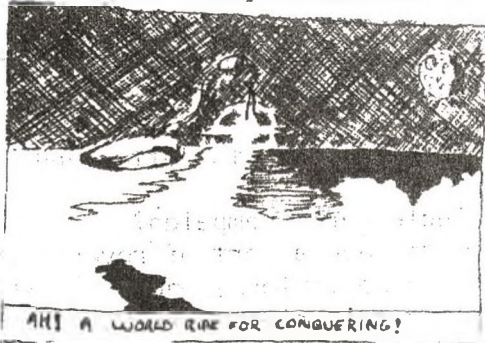
GEORGE PHILLIES: Enjoyed fiction as always.

DAVID DICK: I have on 2 occasions run female dwarf PC's.

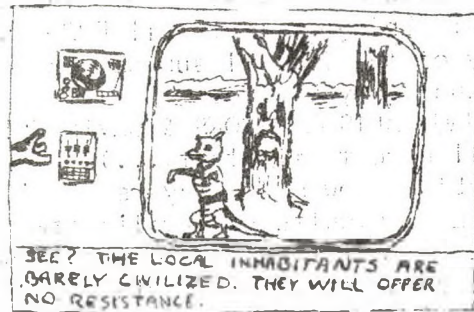
DAVID JOINER: Try Dragonquest character generation, but roll a dice first that determines the PC's primary attribute (set to 20 or higher if possible).

IAN STRAUS: If the NPC's are well role-played, all different, and consistently played, then the players better role-play. If the system rewards role-playing the players role play better over all (even the power gamers must role-play to gain power!), and finally the ref should allow for and not penalize role-playing (I'm sure I'm not the only one who's had a "DM" say "If you keep talking there in the corridor the monsters will come" (groan) as the "DM" picks up the dice). Detailed histories help, and good adventure startup (esp. reasons) makes a major difference.

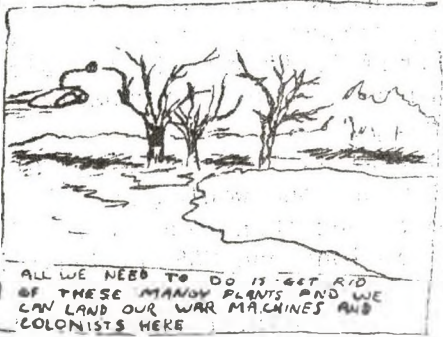
The Star Conquerors---



AH! A WORLD RIFE FOR CONQUERING!



SEE? THE LOCAL INHABITANTS ARE
BARELY CIVILIZED. THEY WILL OFFER
NO RESISTANCE.



ALL WE NEED TO DO IS GET RID
OF THESE MANDY PLANTS AND WE
CAN LAND OUR WAR MACHINES AND
COLONISTS HERE



... SIGH... THIS JUST ISN'T
MY DAY!

WAYNE SHAW: Suggestions on what could have been done easier in Champions? Lately we have tried "unstructured combat". Example-GM: "Ea player w/ spd 5+ go twice. Spd 4-, once (goes around table). Then villian(s) go once or twice. Seems to work w/ a large number of similiar villians (i.e. agents) or one mega-villian. General comments: re religion.

As to a supposed "Christian" opposing "the evils of D&D" I can say only that it is not a Christian. Christ said "Resist not evil...Judge not, that ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." (Luke 6:37.. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matt 7:1))(Who was it that said "The last true Christian died on the cross."?). On the other hand I'm not sure that A&E is the best place to discuss religion, excepting as it is relevant to RPG's and such. (Please note--as one of the few marxist-elitist-atheist-optimistic-nihilistic-jewish philosophy buffs around, I take any accusations of self consistency as a personal affront.)

NEW MONSTER: GAS GIANT

Frequency: Common # App: 1 Hit Dice: near infinite % In Lair: 100%
AC: 9 Move: damned fast Treasure Type: Nil INT: non
of attacks: 0 Damage/Attack: 0 Alignment: Neutral Size: Very Large
Special Attacks: Gravitation, Radiation, and Poison Gas
Special Defnses: Magnetic Field Magic Resistance: Standard
Psionic Ability: Nil Attack/Defense Modes; Nil

"The destroyer of morality, the good and just call me; my story is immoral."
--Zarathustra: Nietzsche

COMMENTS Continued #99

MARK GOLDBERG: I am 21, read and collect comics and read quite a bit else. And my memory is not poor enough to have to reread an sf book. In fact, rereading bothers me, as after I get about 40 pages into a book (second time) it starts coming back to me word for word and detracts from the book. Only REACH FOR TOMORROW held my interest and withstood that, excepting books that take more than one reading to understand (e.g. MY SYSTEM by Nimzowitsche, THE WILL TO POWER by Nietzsche, RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA --ending not understood first time by Clarke, etc).

MIKE LEWIS: Enjoyed zine. All FRPGs have some unrealism about them. That is probably the why of the fun. I suppose the games that bother me are the ones that do not accomplish what they try to.

STEVE GILHAM, ALISON BROOKS & DAVID FLIN: Fiction in A&E gets better and better. (We will have to fix that....)

BROOKS & FLIN: How many players are in this Middle Earth campaign?

DAVID NALLE: on cultural familiarity: I seem to have a sort of reverse problem. Rather than come into the game with a new set of expectations, many players around here expect the stock D&D world. In fact, they get disoriented if the world is CLOSER to the one of our experience. Any ideas of how to break them out of that mode? In Dragonquest, I started with a Renaissance era world, though one brought about by a combination of new technology and magic. Yet I find it difficult to get the players to treat it as different from the D&D world(s). Any ideas on what to emphasize/illustrate/do to bring them upwards a few hundred years?

MARTIN WIXTED: Roundless combat seems likely to rapidly get confusing for a large number of combatants. To keep track of who went when, one would have to set up a chart and mark each person as to who could swing when. And then each time the chart repeated itself, one would have a round. Both Champions and C&S do something like that. In Champions, Speed determines in how many phases (i.e. seconds) you can go again; in C&S it ends up as swings per unit time. On the whole I like the idea for a small scale fight. Of course, there are a lot more modifiers that could be added. For instance, bulky armor would probably increase the time for a given action.

OVERVIEW OF #100: Great! Don't really have time or space for specific comments this, but will get around to it...someday.

DRAGONQUEST:

One thing that bothers me about DQ is that the Spell Fumble Table is designed to take the MUs out of action for quite awhile (for certain results). Although I can see the reason (Fighters spend more time studying), I think this is a problem. In most cases, players don't enjoy sitting there watching others play. So I rewrote the table to eliminate this (with more damage-based results to the caster). Comments? I also rewrote the EP/cost for studying system a bit, in an attempt to balance the Fighter/Mage expense imbalance.

THE OTHER TRUE WAY #100

being a special issue, as befits a special issue number
written by Quentin Long, at 845 LaVerne Way, Los Altos, CA 94022

COMMENTARY

RANDALL STUKEY has been kind enough to send me an advance copy of his Qa Nean-gaath for #100, the better to let me make timely comments on it. So be it:

Comeliness Attack: Hmm, I think I like it this time around.

New Skills: no comment, save that they seem pretty good.

Astral Projection: Still no go. Flight + Desolid, with judicious application of Special Effects and such, is functionally identical to this'un; ergo, who needs it?

Clairvoyance: Buy +1 Enhanced Vision (or some such) with Range Instead.

Comeliness Defense: Hmm, I keep thinking of Firepower, my PC with INT 40.....

Companion: Interesting. Maybe now I can build Dr. Strangeclone (don't ask)...

Damper: Also interesting and useful to boot, but isn't it a rather cheap way to do Area Effect Power Drain?

Duplicate: Rendered obsolete by those playtest rules I mentioned in OTWs past. (George called it splitting.) And why can't both the duplicates have the full 8D6 EB? Dividing up the powers among the duplicates almost negates the purposes of splitting yourself up and doesn't seem to reflect any self-multiplier characters in the comics (none that I'm aware of, at any rate).

Gestalt: George has something called Psychic Link, but I think this one is unique enough to stand on its own. Not bad.

Impersonate: Question: what makes this different from Disguise on a 97 or less? Answer: It costs one helluvalot less. Conclusion: ignore this one.

Maglc: Bizarre. I prefer using Gadget Pts plus Gadgeteering to achieve this effect, but it's probably a matter of taste.

Mimic: George calls it PowerCopy. And why not allow a Mimic to copy gadget-based powers? The Super-Adaptoid can do that all day. [*Oops, apologies. Typist will shift into serif-style for rest of zine. Abject apologies.--LG*]

Pet: If you've got Companion, you don't really need Pet. Instead, give your Companion Disadvantages like "Non-Sentient" and maybe "Lacks manipulatory appendages" and suchforth.

Precognition: Time-twiddling powers give me the willies. If you want to use this, go right ahead, but don't say I didn't warn you....

Retrocognition: And thank you, Snowbird. Matt King (of Roleplayer fame) has a word for this: 20-20 hindsight. Useful.

Shape Shift: Hmm, George has Multi-form, but this isn't quite the same thing... Forget it; either the Multipower + Special Effects Route or else Gadgeteer.

Silence: George got it.

Combining: Roleplayer had this under the name Additive. It worked by letting an Additive power "stack" with another, non-Additive one (stretching stacks only with stretching, and so on). What's more, any two powers with Additive could stack (albeit most such combinations would be rather pointless--Armor and Tunnelling, for instance). To stack more than two powers, all of 'em except one (the one being stacked on top of) had to have Additive. I prefer that method of handling this idea.

Energy Creation: Force Wall by any other name....

Extended Range: Why not?

Exclusive Powers: Sure, just another of those "Limited Power" crocks George never specifically listed.

Side Effect: Hmm, not bad.

Starting Roll: No, no--you get your Activation Roll with the Limitation "only works on the first phase of operation!" What--you mean you've never heard of putting Limitations on Limitations? See, it lowers the bonus you get, and....

Monitored: Being watched is not--in and of itself--particularly damaging to superheroes. Ergo, this is needless; if the Monitor occasionally does more than Monitor, call it a Hunted.

Andromeda

Words: Robert A. Cook; Tune: Quentin Long


- 1) Centauri, Sirius, Hydra, Yalls
and, one by one, the ebon walls of distance fell;
from angry howls of fossil fuels
to silent, bursting molecules of FTL.
And soon those depths were gone and past
and vanished in the light years cast behind us far.
With each new reach we grasp and hold,
but still we hear from past the cold and farthest star
a gentle, whispered lover's song
that draws us on so swift, so long.
And though Man might forsake
the spaces left to take,
he'll always hear
the voice so clear that says, "Andromeda...."
- 2) The years will come and thence take flight
through endless depths of star-flecked night
to untold more,
while mighty empires, billions strong,
arise in undreamed, brilliant song and fade to lore.
The countless heroes, glory bound,
take flight at every planet found and leave their names
like blazing suns upon the sky
until that dome, itself, must hie where darkness claims.
And all through this the spacemen feel
the thread that binds like silken steel
to draw them out and past
their wisdom's highest cast
through endless night
toward some dim light that's called "Andromeda...."
- 3) While still we seek and more we find
beyond the reaches of the mind and still seek more,
the roving dreams of star-bound men
will drive us out to seek again in endless store;
and lest some monster doom befall
to purge our species, one and all, we'll surely go,
through tears and trials, triumphs, joys
that nought, however perfect, cloys nor distance slow.
Each conquest bids us yet be gone
a thousand light-years further on
that we may reach and see
that distant galaxy
while each new day
the spacemen say, "Next year, Andromeda!"

THE TIME TRAVELER


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by F.G. MACINTYRE
TUNE © 1983
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LYRICS by F.G. WYNPLAINE MACINTYRE

TUNE by QUENTIN G. LONG



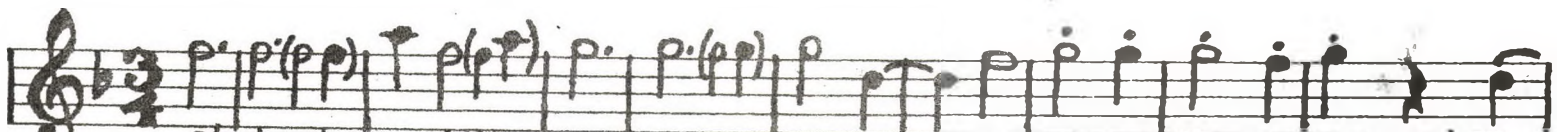
(1,3,5) Come on inside; we'll have a ride to any- when you like. I'll



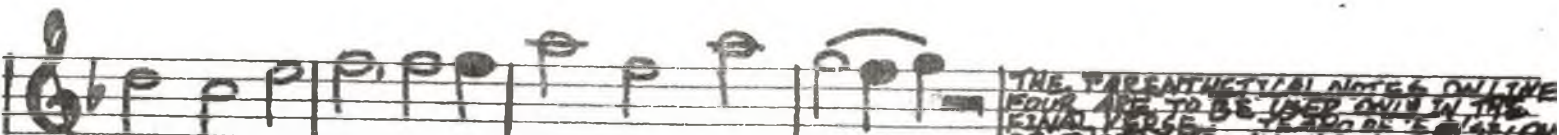
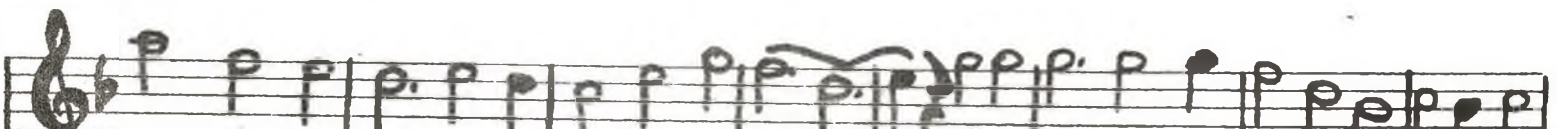
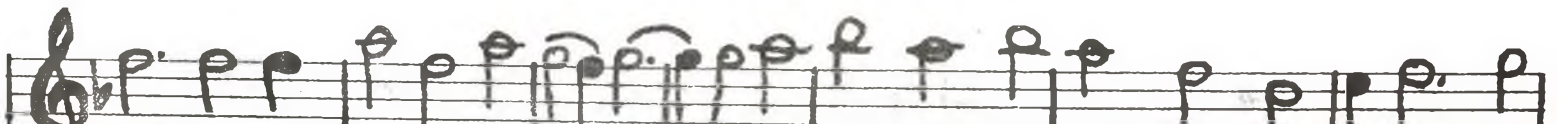

hit a switch and Time will twitch and clocks will backwards strike. You



needn't care for when or where we might end up to be; We



We will have great times,,you three times Inside my Time Machine! (24)

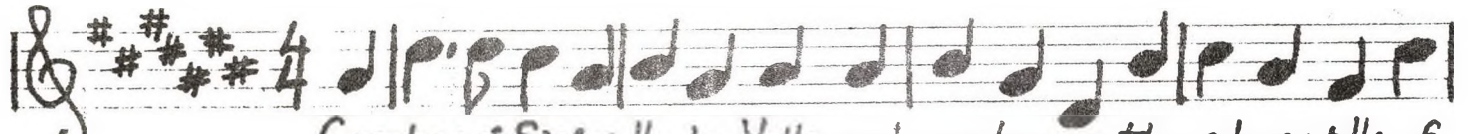


THE PARENTHESES ON THE FOUR ARE TO BE USED ONLY IN THE FINAL VERSE LEAD OF 5/1 BELOW TO THE READER.

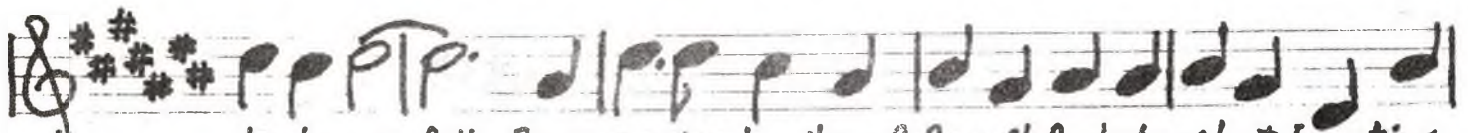
andromeda

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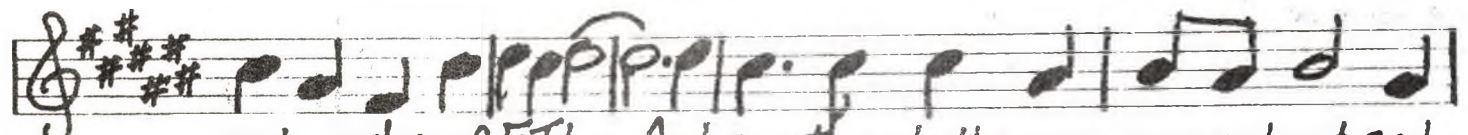
LYRICS by ROBERT A. COOK TUNE by QUENTIN LONG



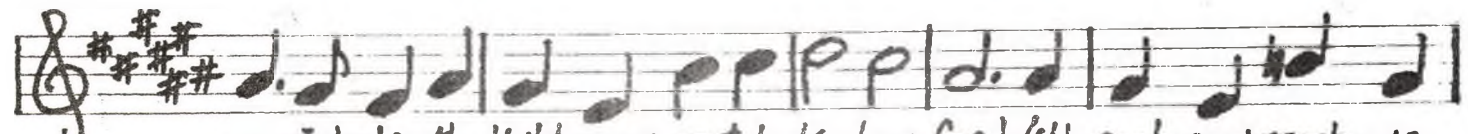
Centauri, Sirius, Hydra, Yalls and, one by one, the e-bon walls of




distance fell; from an-gry howls of fo-ssil fuels to si-lent, bur-sting



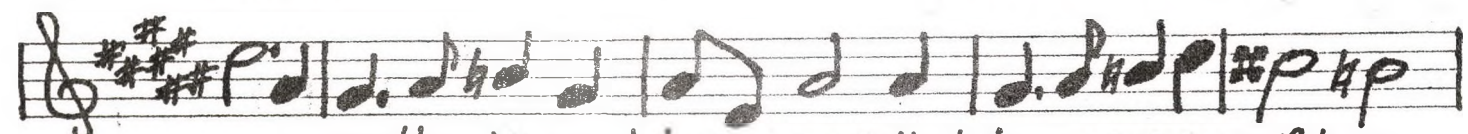
mol-e-cules of FTL. And soon those depths were gone and past and



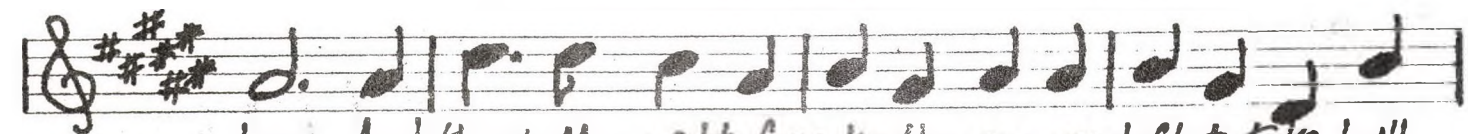
va-nished in the light-years cast be-hind us far. With each new reach we



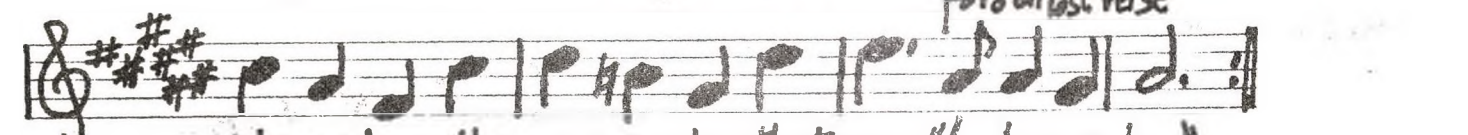
grasp and hold, but still we hear from past the cold and far-thest star



a gen-tle, whis-pered lo-ver's song that draws us on so swift, so



long. And though Man might for-sake the spaces left to take, he'll



al-ways hear the voice so clear that says, "An-drome-da..."
bra on last verse

PEREGRINATIONS ON A THEME 316 (the movie)

being the Magnum Opiate of one sedated Scot Fritz, who can be reached *with very long forelegs* at 6 Griffin Ave., Danbury CT 06810; (203) 792-7698.

A VERY BELATED, VERY HAPPY, VERY HOLIDAYS TO YOU AND YOUR OWN. My vacation was splendid, thank you, even though we never got past the planning stages for a game.

Well, DEMESNE is coming together nicely, to the point that I am ready ready to present it to you wolves, so you can tear it to pieces in your search for perfection. Previous articles on Native Intelligence and the Sparrowsfeldian Dwarf will be in the game, so if you rip them out and put them in a ring binder, you will have about one thirty-second of the final offering. Anyway, on to Comments.

COMMENTS ON 399, fnord!

LEE: I heartily agree with your views on character background density. Your ct to STRAUS neatly sums up what I have been working on the past few.

KARIEVA: Good thoughts about the social action of role-gaming, but I don't think you are aware of the social conditions when you are in the process of gaming.//This is a request for you to print the middle Earth system you showed me in these pages.

GILHAM (one more time, with feeling): Agree that the name of the coin is arbitrary. I am saying that starting characters off with high rates of currency limits their desire to advance. Sparrowfield PCs start out with copper or bronze coins. This encourages them to try for iron, silver and gold--both as a status symbol and as a labor saver (1 gold piece = 12,000 copper pieces).

EDWARDS: Can I ruin your joke to stress that I did not use Python as an authority on Medieval life but as heroic and comic legendry, which seems to be as much a part of FRP as history.

MASTERS: HURRAH! Traveller Magic! Now the system is complete! (Which means, I like it!)

WIXTED: Appreciate the differences in combat systems. You just might have something there.

PBZ RETURNS IN #99: Hein, Vaughan, Teller, Keyes, Huddelson & Waters.

COMMENTS ON #100

GYGAX: Sorry but I disagree. The masses are sheep! They aren't ready to take responsibility for something as massively important as OD&D! I beg, I implore you, Mr. Gygax: take charge of this drifting vessel. You are the only true Dungeon Master. You must take responsibility for the future well-being of FRP! It all needs to be brought under one dynasty, with you as Emperor! Don't fail us!

PBZ RETURNS IN #100: Stukey (that's all?!)

WOOLLEY AND SEVEN: It took guts to stray as far away from traditional FRP as you did. It is a good concept that deserves to be developed.//One nit-pick: you should have given more examples. Apparently you had some trouble isolating more than three fate determiners.

GILLESPIE: Yes, developing a whole world is difficult. You need to invent hundreds of cultures, myths for them, monetary systems, languages, etc. What I do is to develop fully the section we are playing in, with detail decreasing as it becomes less likely the PCs will ever get there. I do have a very general concept of the whole world and can build up a locale in a short amount of time.

COMMENTS ARE FINISHED, SIR!

And now...

THE SPARROWSFELDIAN FAERIE

Faeries in Sparrowsfield are not actually a species but a loosely knit group of mini-avatars, physical representations of Spirit. For unknown reasons, circumstances sometimes encourage diva, anima or mana to take on substance and develop intelligence. We call these manifestations pixies, sprites, homunculi or imps, but they are no more related than paintings and operas.

What we know about Faerie is this: Faeries, without exception, are small, slight and fragile. Many can fly or glide. They have indefinite lifespans but seem to outlast most races. Faeries appear to be clannish, tribal and totem-oriented. Most groups identify with some natural entity, like a flower, bird, or insect group. This is reflected in the dress ceremony and character traits of the individual and group.

In DESMESNE, players may choose a Pixie or a Sprite character.

Pixies choose flowers, small birds or large graceful insects for their totems. They do an excellent job of mimicking these creatures, imitating their appearance, noises or calls, and characteristic movement.

Sprites are earth-bound and so choose small animals and forest plants for their totem. They are more barbaric and tribal than Pixies and do not get along well with them. Pixies and Sprites have banded together in the past to fight their mutual foe, the Imp, who is a physical manifestation of evil.

Both groups depend heavily on their mimicry for protection and defense.

Pixies and Sprites have racial and personal memory.

A racial memory is a record of all the events that have happened to most of the tribe. As long as an individual is in frequent contact with members of his clan, he will have an updated racial memory. This is not a sharing of consciousness but a re-experiencing of the moment as viewed by those who experienced it.

Personal memory is somewhat like racial memory in that contact with another lets a memory transfer take place, but the memory is definitely second person. The scene is recreated, complete with the emotions and thoughts, but the viewer is aware of whom the experience belongs to.

Some authorities theorize that faeries are not immortal but merely pass on the tribal history to each newborn, so that he functions as if he had been alive from the beginning. Other scientists couple this with the conservation theory (that this Spirit can only support a certain number of avatars) and suggest that as faerie "wear out," newborns are created, and both racial and personal memories are transferred. None of this is substantiated, of course, as it is impossible to get a straight answer from a Faerie.

Faeries have the highest Agility of all the races. This is used to the faerie's best advantage for defense.

All Faerie get Fly or Ride Mount and Mimic as Good skills (2D20 + 60). They also have magical skills like Ignite, Vanish, Animal Control, Sew, Moon Sight, Astronomy, Fascinate, Disorient, Glimmer, Cordwain, Weather Predict, Ventriloquism, Telekinesce, Dance, Animal Noises and Story Tell.

Operation: Chaos

Today is Friday, the 20th of January, 1984. The first OTHER SUNS supplement (THE ALDERSON YARDS SHIPBOOK) actually went out to the publisher this last Monday. Yes, it is a good three weeks later than I expected it to be, but the ship plans took far longer than I expected they would. The whole packet was something like 90 manuscript pages (lots and lots of artwork) so it will probably be a while before FGU has it out in the stores. The other supplements are also behind schedule (somehow, that seems to be characteristic of the breed) but with any luck they ought to be finished "real soon now".

OTHER SUNS is off and flying. I haven't got my first royalty statement yet, but according to Scott Bizar of FGU OTHER SUNS has been doing fairly well -- it has been ordered and more importantly reordered by a number of distributors since its release in mid-October of last year.

Comments on AE #99

LEE (re ct McIntosh): I most emphatically did NOT say that you could do a LoA version of the Hegemony. I did say that I would not object to co-authoring a high-tech LoA supplement (perhaps using some material from the background of OTHER SUNS). And I would not add PSI as a characteristic -- I would add Telepathic ability as a characteristic. The PSI talents would be equally open to all races, and would be treated as skills.

DANIEL JAMES: re attempts to put together systems for world generation for SFRPGs along scientific lines -- see OTHER SUNS, Chapter 12 (World Building) and Book 6, SCOUTS, (from FGU and GDW respectively). // Lower gravity worlds can still hold dense atmospheres -- it is escape velocity, after all, that is important (together with illumination at the top of the atmosphere of course). Look at Venus, after all. The surface acceleration is lower on Venus than on Earth, and the atmosphere is a good deal denser.

DAVID NALLE: in re your comment regarding a Thieves' Guild: "If such a guild were created, it would be a matter of at most a few months before it were wiped out or at least driven way underground." I suppose that's why there's no such thing as the Mafia in this country? It certainly doesn't seem to have been driven that far underground from where I'm sitting.

Comments on AE #100

LEE (re ct Mike Lewis): There is about 1/2 page devoted to contemporary slug throwers in OTHER SUNS. Just about the same amount of space is devoted to laser pistols and rifles. A formula for calculating damage and range based upon bullet characteristics, together with the necessary examples, would take up far more space (especially when the cost of ammunition and weaponry must be also given). And NO, Lee, the shell's mass and velocity are NOT the only factors (nor are they

Operation: Chaos

necessarily even the major factors) in determining range and damage done. The precise shape of the shell is EXTREMELY important (not to mention the precise physical properties of the shell coating -- witness the teflon coated bullet). The only reason that I could see for slug throwers passing out of common use would be if something else better and/or cheaper came along. And in OTHER SUNS, it is assumed that slug throwers are typically cheaper to build and maintain than blasters. Ammunition costs are artificially maintained at a high level by government taxes (and if you don't think THAT is possible, I've got a very nice bridge you might be interested in buying...)

WILLIAM PESCHEL: Actually, I would say that FGU is closer to the inertia stage than Chaosium, at least if you're basing closeness on sales. FGU, odd though it may sound, is still publishing far more titles than Chaosium and FGU sells more of each of those titles than the typical Chaosium release.

DON GRANDE: Actually, it should be 395 Kelvin in the case of airless worlds, and 295 Kelvin in the case of those terrestrial worlds blessed by atmospheres.//Random density and radii seem to be correct based on results obtained from Dole's ACCRETE program (and similar results from Sagan obtained from a modified version of said program). See the references in the appendix of OS.//Normal damage goes to hit points, as indicated in the rules. Energy weapons do END damage as well (also, as indicated in the rules). Blunt instruments do END damage first, then hit points when all END points in a location are exhausted (as described in the blunt instrument rule).//The actual range for a weapon (the distance it can throw a slug, or direct an energy bolt) far exceeds the effective range (the range at which you can expect to hit what you're aiming at). Also, I didn't want to make combat any more complicated than it already was in the game.// "1y/hr" is a typo -- but on my printer the lower case letter l and the number 1 look pretty much the same. So the printer bobbed it. Such is life. Jump speed is, by the way, a function of the drive size and the mass of the ship driven. A J-1 engine will drive a 1000 ton ship 10 light-years per hour, but it will only drive a 100,000 ton ship at 1 light-year per hour. //OTHER SUNS, by the by, sells for \$16.

Comments on AE 101

LEE: The upper 1% must be able to speak all three languages and the next 9% group must speak their language and the language of the common folk, but the common people need speak none of the languages of the nobility. It might even be considered "uppity" or presumptuous of them to attempt to learn same.

Now that OTHER SUNS is out you might add OS to the list of game system abbreviations at the beginning of A&E.

The random alien lifeform generation table is about as sense-free an exercise as anyone could wish for. I've had much better luck by just taking a look at some of the stranger creatures that

Earth has to offer and then putting them together slightly differently. What, after all, can one do to top the platypus?

ADELAIDE AND ENVIRONS

JAMES HEIN: But the suspension of disbelief is becomes difficult when the designer has thrown common sense or consistency out the window. It helps more than a little to have some reason behind the rule and design decisions made in a campaign or a game. Even if the players don't know WHAT the rule is, that there is one seems to make the whole crazy picture hang together better.

JOHN ABRAHAMSON: Now we'll probably end up calling it the "Australia Cup" (Peter the Hacker already caught me in that one on the phone a few weeks back). The best ship won, and more power to 'em.

CHRIS HEIN AND JENNY MURRAY: A skill in basketweaving? Ah well, I suppose it could be worse. The long list of skills may actually prove useful someday. It is, after all, a starting point.

CHRIS MURRAY: All you've really done with your "hit-point-less" system is produce a system in which a character has three hit points. When he has taken 1 point of damage, he is Lightly Wounded, when he has taken 2 points of damage, he is Heavily Wounded or Critically Wounded, and when he has taken 3 points of damage, he is dead. And weapons do either 0, 1, 2 or 3 points damage. Nu?

Concluding comments on AE #101

MARK GOLDBERG: Smart machines need not bring about the ultimate leisure society. If they are expensive to produce, and if the society as a whole has the attitude that slavery is a bad thing, the old fashioned biological methods of producing replacement personnel might remain more cost-effective over the long haul. If one creates a truly intelligent machine, is one then "right" in enslaving it? If so, is it not equally "right" to enslave one's own offspring for the duration of their lives (or, more to the point, enslaving someone else's offspring)?

* * *

Last minute notes: my new Z-100 micro arrived the other day and, true to form, it arrived in pieces. The mainframe and the software arrived the first day. Then two days later, the memory upgrade kit (to 192 kilobytes) arrived. I am still waiting for the color monitor to arrive. By now, I should know better. And for the moment, I am forced (?) to work on my slightly rambunctious homebrew Z-80 based system. Oh well, it served well enough in the creation of the OS manuscript, so I suppose I shouldn't complain.

Strange Adventures in a Strange Land

I smiled. Beneath me was the baby blue building that acted as headquarters for Los Angeles Society for Active SuperHeroes (LASFASH), my destination. I landed as quietly as my powers allowed. Security devices immediately went into action. I expected this and was prepared for a wait inside a titanium net. Five minutes passed before a brightly garbed super-type showed up on the roof.

"May I be of some assistance to you?" he asked, a note of sarcasm in his deep voice.

"Why yes, actually. I'm looking to join LASFASH, which would no doubt be much easier if I weren't in this net," I replied, as calmly as if I were sitting in an easy chair.

"Tumph. Well, according to the computer you aren't a known villain or mercenary. I guess it's safe." He considered me for a moment more, then pushed a button that deactivated the net.

"Thanks."

"Major Problems is downstairs. He'll see about registering you and all that other garbage," said my comrade, heading back inside the building.

"Name's Sputter, hero of the airways. You re...?"

"Sputter? What the hell kinda name is that?"

"Mine. What's yours?"

"Blaster."

"How original. Is this the elevator?"

"No, it's the elevator."

"Thanks."

"First floor. Major Problems."

"Gotcha."

The ride down was relatively short compared to those in most of the high rises in LA. I found the first floor deserted except for a guy dressed in a really tacky blue and green costume.

"Major Problems?"

"Heard you coming miles away, soldier. hardly what I'd call a quiet approach."

Sorry. Name's Sputter. I've come to join LASFASH."

He looked up from his paperwork to conduct an evaluation. I was wearing my blue and red tights, sucking in my gut as well as I could while he looked.

"Damn poor excuse for a physical body, soldier. I presume you have some sort of powers?"

"Yep. I can fly--"

"So can a DC-10."

"...and I have minor mental abilities."

"Telekinesis, pyrokinesis, teleportation, telepathy...?"

"Minor precognitive abilities."

"Such as?"

"Well, I can predict the storyline to most science fiction books after finding out who wrote them and reading the first few pages."

"What?!"

"Just kidding."

"A joke. We don't have time for jokes in LASFASH, soldier."

I wondered how he would look in a red, white and blue costume, toting a shield. Nah.

"Well, soldier?"

"I can make a nasty little mental zap."

"How powerful of a blast?"

"You ever see Scanners?"

"Fill out these forms. In triplicate, soldier." He turned back to his paperwork. I looked around his desk, checking for a red, white and blue shield. Nah.

"Sputter, huh? Why that name, soldier?"

"Comes with the powers, Major."

"Explain."

"Maybe a demonstration would be of some help." I stuck out my tongue and began to flap my arms. Seconds later I was airborne, flapping my arms wildly and making a plplplplp sound with my tongue extended.

"That will be enough, soldier." Major Problems sat down, a look of disgust on his chisel-featured face. "Do you have to do that to fly?"

I nodded. My lips become numb after doing that for a short while, making it hard to speak.

Before he could speak again, a light lit up on a map of LA behind him, followed by a beeper. He pressed a button and squinted his eyes. "Go ahead."

"Yeah, Major? this is Sgt. Gonzalez here on Wilcox Avenue. We got us a big fire raging down here."

"No problem, Dominguez...."

"Gonzalez."

"Right, Hernandez. We got just the man here. His name's Splatter--"

"Sputter."

"I mean Spitter. He's our newest member. He'll be there right away. Out." He turned and looked at me hard. I backed up a little under his intense gaze. "Think you can handle it, soldier?"

"Sure, Cap. I know that area."

"Major."

"Sorry."

"Move it."

I ran out the front door, arms already flapping. The site of the fire was about a five minute sputter away. Plplplplp. One of the problems with the way my power works--besides my inability to use a flying head ram maneuver--was the headache I developed after flying for too long. Ahead of me I could make out the flashing red lights and smoke common to fire sites.

With a loud plplplplp, I landed in front of the fire chief's car. He came over, wiping moisture from his sleeves and hair.

"You must be Sputter."

I nodded, praying my lips would get some feeling back in them before I had to speak. I looked at the burning building. Firemen were spraying the lower floors with numerous devices, with some noticeable effect.

"Look, we've just about got this thing under control, but there are a few people trapped on the third floor. You think you can get to them?"

I nodded, relieved that I hadn't had to ask the question myself. I began flapping and sputtering and was soon thirty feet in the air, heading for a gap in the flames on the fourth floor. The heat was intense, but I had protection against that and an insulated suit to boot. I could see the stairway ahead of me and headed for it.

A flaming figure flew from the stairwell, blocking my passage. "If you wish to save the miserable tenants of this building, fatso, you gotta pass through me, Pyro!" A bolt of flame leapt from his extended hand, enveloping me. No doubt, this was my baptism of fire.

CHAMPIONS

SHRP will soon surpass SFRP. I see no game system, other than D&D, that has the loyalty of so many sworn to it as CHAMPIONS. I have run four different groups in my campaign, ranging from 21+ year old Air Force types to my present group of mid-teens and late teens. Styles vary greatly but not the dedication. There is almost a fanatical frenzy to the players once the campaign starts.

One problem I have experienced with this popularity is that naturally you are going to pick up a lot of ex-D&Ders in your group. No problem in that, unless you like to keep your villains intact from game to game. I mean that D&D BREEDS KILLERS. I don't know how many times I've had to remind players that killing is looked down upon, especially when superheroes do it. More than once I have either asked certain players to disappear or watched them walk out after having their characters kill off supervillains, innocent bystanders or law enforcement agents.

Dropping rewarded EP (inverse of D&D?) for killing occasionally has effects but isn't guaranteed. Scathing remarks usually bring on hostilities, and jailing/prosecuting usually breeds new villains.

Minimaxers seem to be the biggest problem, as many consider killing the only efficient/intelligent thing to do. "You put them in jail, and they break out and come after you again. Stupid." Trying to explain that this is part of playing a superhero has as much effect as telling a D&Der that AD&D lacks consistency in design. Unimportant abstractions, no doubt.

I am watching the many interesting articles on CHAMPIONS here in A&E and anxiously await CHAMPIONS III. Keep up the good work, people. Any possibility of a SHRP fanzine offshoot of A&E? Is this even worth considering?

QUERY: All of you out there with info on AFTERMATH want to start presenting some of your work or trading it off? I have "Into the Ruins" and "Operation Morpheus" and am very interested in gaining any info that could be added to these. I have run one very successful/worthwhile campaign of Aftermath and would be very interested in reading write-ups, histories of various worlds (a little more than "Bombs go boom, man go ape"), and anything else connected with Aftermath. Are any of the earlier supplements going to be carried on/completed? Are there any Daredevil players out there?

COMMENTS

ROBERT SAUNDERS (102): Enjoyed writeup. Have played CoC five or six times but prefer Daredevils because of its open system. More, please.

JOHN SAPIENZA (102): So that's where all the excellent gamers are, eh? Sounds like that scenario was well worth the time and money.

VINCENT FOSTER; BUSHIDO & AFTERMATH were designed by Charrette and Hume, owners of TYR Games, who put out SPACE QUEST (also purchased by FGU) back in the 70s. I believe they co-owned Phoenix and had retained the rights to Space quest until selling to FGU.

R. M. PEHR (102): Have we ever been accepted by fellow persons? Why should someone accept a person who talks about "killing an orc with a +5 mace" in the middle of a lunch line? I usually don't associate with D&Ders in public, as most of them lose track of exactly what reality is. It gets to be boring after awhile listening to someone tell you about character X killing N number of beasties. (Sorry, only partially serious, y'know.)

QUENTIN LONG (99): Must disagree about V&V vs Champions re comic book atmosphere. Champions has gone much further with the feel of comics than any of the other systems available.//Other than GM fiat, how do you deal with minimaxers? I find myself putting them in situations that play up their weaknesses, if only to equalize things for the other players.

SHARDS OF TIME #3

Another transmission from Wayne Shaw at 9644 Lundahl Drive,
Pico Rivera, CA 90660 (213) 749-4448

Well, I'm trying this once again, having observed what a reasonably retched job the stencil was last time. This time I've done everything I can think of, so we will see.

Everyone will please note the change of address above. This is my parents' address and phone number, where I will be staying until I can find what is sometimes referred to as Painful Employment.

COMMENTS ON #101

BOLD: Your comments about Dan Pierson reminded me of a question which I have been wondering about. Understand that this may be a problem of ignorance. As I understand the magic system of LCA, a magician cannot affect the physical world without the intervention of supernatural forces. Now, while this is normally the sort of decision that I consider within the rights of a game designer to make, I find it a little peculiar in a system which is designed to be all purpose, as there are a number of terrestrial cultures which do not seem to have viewed magic this way, let alone possible fictional ones. The ability to manipulate the elements, at least, while not a power of individual magi in all cultures, certainly seem to be so in some.//On a related question, if I correctly understand it, there is a sliding scale where some sort of index of magical ability which goes down as a culture's technological index goes up. If this is correct, isn't that a little terrocentric? The fact that it has happened with us does not necessarily make it a rule.//In regard to your comment to Mike Lewis about firearms: the question of firearms properties is by no means that simple. There is a formula called the Hatcher scale which attempts to assess the killing power of a given round, but there is some real debate about its accuracy, and it does not really deal with questions of range which are as much a matter of cartridge design and barrel properties. Many of the factors which are important are not even available to the common gamer, and if it is going to be necessary to make up things to make a formula work, one may as well just make the whole thing up out of whole cloth.

GILHAM: I think you have ignored a possible compromise situation. This is one where the everyday practitioner of magic is not very powerful, and the ones that are powerful tend to be in positions of power and authority, and are therefore not too interested in upsetting the status quo. More on this later.

FRITZ/PBS: Presuming from the last response that my ability to predict weather has improved, but that there is no evidence that it has made a full-blown jump to manipulation, I will keep alert for sudden changes; desert weather is notoriously treacherous. I will keep my pistol and ammunition, but will offer up the rest of my material to anyone who is attempting to take inventory. When I finally go to sleep, I will suggest to whoever is on next watch that if they must awake me, they do it by calling my name so I don't overreact. Though I will keep the .22 near my when I sleep, I will wrap it up again to keep out grit.

AMIER: There are what I consider decent aging systems in three games I have seen: Swordbearer, Traveller, and Aftermath. The first of these is probably the best in my opinion. I don't think that a

straight percentage of death quite covers the situation, as most people do not go along hale and hearty, and then suddenly drop over dead (though that does happen) but usually show signs of declining health as they get older.

NALLE: re your comments to Galeotti: In most RQ games I have seen, social status is less important than cultic position, which is extremely fluid for most cults. Also, if there is a realistic attempt to represent the advantages of nobility (i.e. lots of money) some method of determination other than free choice must be made. I am also not sure that it is that hard for an adventurer to chin himself into the Sartar or Povic nobility. // Could you explain what you mean by there being no inter-relationship between aspects of combat in determining outcome? // It is unfortunately true that one of RQ's strongest points (the base background) has become one of its weakest with time. And this from someone who likes the world of Glorantha. // I think the desire for the presence of magic or absence is dependent on what sort of fantasy you are trying to simulate. High fantasy tends to be low-magic while sword-and-sorcery tends to be high magic. There is a larger amount of dreck in the latter because of the volume of it, but most of my favorite fantasy works are actually S&S, and I think it is usually a better model for most FRPs.

JOHNSON: The mentality of people who shoot at everything that moves is almost inexplicable. In one of my early attempts to run Traveller, a group managed to get themselves thoroughly straggled from an incessantly aggressive attitude in a scenario which one of my friends refers to lovingly as the "Not-so-high Crusade." Because they were in a police craft with, for civilians, good weaponry (an armed air-raft, some battledress) they insisted on going in with guns blazing, even though they knew that the medieval level opponents they were dealing with had eliminated previous high tech opponents. They discovered, among other things, that an ambush of fifty longbowmen doesn't really care that the three of you have automatic weapons. At any point, if they had done anything but try a direct attack, they probably would have been all right. But the closest they came to it was sending two scuba divers up a river which they had not bothered to check out for native lifeforms... I just wish that such occurrences would teach a group of players something. Unfortunately, the only message many find is the next time to bring more firepower. // I must point out that there are many specialists in religious studies who will maintain that Buddha did indeed break caste.

ELLWOOD: I cannot speak for other people, but I am concerned about the extensiveness of a rules set because of the nature of my playing group. Basically, a number of my players are not at all slow about calling me down if they think I am being unfair or inconsistent. Since I do, in fact, have times when I make bad decisions, and do not have a terribly good memory, a good rules set helps to first maintain consistency, and second, give me a basis from which to argue. I should note that I also prefer such things when I play, being suspicious of the perfection of game masters. // An interesting concept for a world, but I'd sure hate to have to do the maps!

NICOLAI: I should point out that I think you have the special ammo listed for the old damage of 2D6+1 rather than the new 3D6 on the .308 ammo.

MCINTOSH: Actually, the level of involvement of nobles can vary quite a bit. If a situation is reasonably momentous, many nobles may not care to delegate it. The culture may not be so stable that they

can do much about it, either.

GRIFFIN: I am afraid I must disagree with your metarules. I see an "all men are created equal" system as undesirable in most contexts. I will admit that too much initial variance on starting characters is undesirable, but since the first character to die is going to leave his player less than equal when he replaces him, why worry about it that much? In addition, I don't personally believe that is possible to construct a trade-off system where all trade-offs are really equal. Finally, in many cases, specific backgrounds should have advantages that are not visible in this kind of situation. As an example, on the average, an adventurer from the nobility should have an advantage over one who started life as a peasant. I realize that these are only opinions, but as a general set of metarules, I don't see them as particularly desirable.

COMMENTS ON #101 (Yes, I know, I typoed the other header.)

JAMES HEIN: I must point out that many of the arguments from a real-world scientific base are by people who are trying to run a world by consistent rules, and would rather try to adapt the natural laws they are familiar with, rather than invent a whole new set. As such, they may get overly rambunctious, but do not deserve that sort of castigation simply for the attempt.

ABRAHAMSON: I'm afraid I don't understand the problem with adapting creatures from other game systems to other RQ. I've done so many times. Is creating a new location chart that much of a chore?

SAPIENZA: It appears that RFGing is getting the same treatment that any fringe culture involving the young does--that is to say, fear and attack. The more things change...

HEYDT: You are correct. You can be sure that if I concoct any VI³ I will get well away from the group first--and stay away until it has been used.//I must point out that humans in most RFG can do quite impressive things in most cases if a statistical fluke comes up. And I'm afraid that that is all your examples suggest to me. Most carnivores on this planet have learned to avoid us because we are dangerous to hunt--but not because of our physical capabilities as much as our brains and tool-using capability. I will admit that we are physically more capable than many will admit, however.

DUNHAM: While I am a big supporter of RQ, I must take issue with Bart (SIGH: This stencil is not being nice) with part of your comments. There is still quite a way that game systems can go, if only by putting all the advanced systems together in one place (something which is not the case with RQ). For example, a proper merging of the game systems in RQ and Aftermath would be superior to each.

PATTERSON: There may have been more creativity in the worlds of D&D before there were modules, but not anymore. It all comes down to laziness. RQ used to get compliments because it wasn't vague and free-floating, but had a solid world associated with it. What it probably adds up to is that most people with non-Gloranthan worlds don't run them at cons for the same reason people with VD&D systems don't: too much transference hassle.

SAPIENZA (AGAIN): The only thing that has bothered me in the con-

traversy about high capability fights and resolution of same is that all of the solutions seem to pay Peter by robbing Paul. Your difficulty dice concept seems to deal well with weapon master battles, but seems to potentially reduce defensive parry utility all the way down the line.//All right, I give: will or won't RQ3 be out by the target date? You seem to contradict yourself.(Come to think of it, given the A&E cycle time, I should know the answer by the time this sees print.)//I see at least one person has seen Swordbearer. The social status system seemed like a refreshing change from all the identically armored little characters in a row.

DAWSON: Here we go again. I think you miss the point, Mike. Even those of us who are sometimes inclined to do things to excessively annoy the party do not do so because it is a self-defeating process. Whatever GMs in your group may do, in my (and most other that I've seen) group we do not have the time to go through adventures with just one character. If you cannot develop a character who will interact with the group, you simply find yourself unable to play. If your need is such that you cannot handle the tenets of the fact that RPG is normally a group effort, all I could suggest is that you take up writing. There you can do as you please. I am not in favor of operating a character out of character; but the proper solution is to not construct characters who are likely to keep annoying parties, or at least be cautious about what groups they happen to join up with. In basic answer to the question, while a character may act in certain ways, you are ultimately the one who controls many of the random factors in his actions. If you have maneuvered the character into a position where he must act out of character to maintain the game, then he should act out of character. Anything else is contrasurvival as a player. If you disagree, and must "die" for your art, don't let me stop you.

DE SILVA: Just what the world needed, collapsar-foamed steel.

GILHAM: No, I must disagree. In most systems, defensive magic is significantly weaker, at a given level, than offensive magic. All that my concepts require is that the more powerful mages be against the technomagic revolution--which you admit they probably would be. After all, as political and economic leaders, what they would mostly see in technomagic would be the threat to their position, not the potential advantages. Any industrial revolution is terribly subject to sabotage in any case.//In some groups this may be practical, but our group finds games often running overlong just with normal multiplayer continuity.

Well, that's the comments. Sorry about the abysmal spacing irregularities, but I cannot seem to get this typewriter to behave in regard to this.

Another interesting question came to mind this time around. I have had a rule of thumb for a long time that there is capability which an NPC has available which should not be at least potentially available to a PC. This has produced PC royal princes, player character High Priests, and other such unusual procedures. I am aware

that many people consider such arrangements undesirable, since they limit the sorts of situations the characters can get into. But I have found that they also create new situations not previously possible. What are other people's attitudes toward this question?

COLOR MAGIC

Since I have mentioned this before, I thought this might be an appropriate time to talk a little bit about it.

One of the things that ultimately drove me out of Runequest proper was the magic system. The only Rune Logic really worth its salt on the average were ones that augmented one's melee and missile ability. Attack magic, when seen at all was pitifully weak, with only a few exceptions (Shattering and Crack were on socially unacceptable cults; Firebear and Saver Spirit were either non-reusable or very sharply limited in availability; etc.) While I did not want magic specialists to overpower other types, what was turning out to happen was combination types were the only viable way to go. It seemed to me that the proper way for mages to relate to fighters was for magi to be more powerful but less durable, while fighters were vice versa. In standard RQ, a serious mage had so much Power available that a straight fighter did not have a chance of outlasting him, while a straight mage could not deal with any sort of a combination type.

Along comes Charlie Luce with his idea for an RQ mechanic adaptation of the Andre Norton/Isaac Bonewitz/Diane Sawyer color magic. It sounded like exactly what I was looking for: a system where most mages were weak but had a potential for power, and where they were relatively potent short term at the expense of longterm utility.

It should be understood that this system is 90% Charlie's, as he is more than a little proprietary about such things. Fundamentally it works as follows: Every intelligent being has one affinity Color and one antipathy Color. The first is a 5% base knowledge skill for him, while the latter he can never learn at all. All others are 0% knowledge skills. Each Color allows you to learn spells up to 1/5 your score in that color in points; you may use spells up to that or your intelligence, whichever is lower. Furthermore, you may attempt to improvise spells up to the maximum which can be learned minus one. A learned spell has a normal 100% chance of success; an improvised spell has a chance of success equal to the skill -5% per point, +5% if it is similar to another spell already known, +5% for each previous attempt to improvise it which succeeded. The chance for improving a magic skill is INT% if a spell from that color was used in a meaningful situation; the chance of failure if used to improvise; or the normal progression rules if used as a knowledge skill. Points of a specific spell may be reduced by constructing a Focus, which will allow the caster to: A, use a spell larger than his intelligence will normally allow; B, use less power; C, use it faster. Spells are broken into the various colors by association, and there is fairly little overlap.

The above is a rough outline of the general system. Elaborations include a system for the effects of metals on spellcasting, and the affinity/antipathy charts for various species. As may be noted, this concept could easily be used for systems other than colors; but it does pretty much necessitate breaking spells into five or more groupings (there are 15 in the Colors.) The rules for improvisation provide for a limited amount of fiddling with spells, along range/area/duration and such, mainly. As might be imagined, creating the initial spell list is a bitch.

All out of Time again. Until the next Shard...

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