

## PRE-ORIGINS TRAUMA

Every convention is an adventure and this one was no exception. This time the adventure started a little early as Evil Mike spent the week before Origins lying in a hospital bed. But Mike is 100% gamer and the following week—with a permanent IV in his arm—we were driving to Origins. The SUV was packed to the gills with terrain, miniatures, pinnacle booth stuff, and of course our cameras. We almost had to leave the non-essential items, like clothes & bathroom stuff, at home. Fortunately Mike is an excellent Tetris player and our boxes and bags ended up firmly packed (with NO room to spare) in the van.

This time the drive to Columbus was uneventful.

## WE'RE EXHIBITIONISTS!

(Mike later corrected me that we were exhibitors and to stop telling everyone we were exhibitionists.) Yes this year our nifty Origins badges said Pinnacle Entertainment—Exhibitor on them. I personally thought this was very cool.

After arriving at the hotel and filling two plus luggage carts, we headed to our room to figure out how the boxes were all going to fit inside. We did it though and then headed to the convention loading docks to unload a few booth items. I thought helping to set up the Pinnacle booth was a lot fun. Mike disagreed and Shane told me later that I was insane. Ok...if I had to do it for every convention for the past n number of cons, I probably wouldn't enjoy

it either. But this was the first time and it was fun helping out.

After an enjoyable dinner with Clint & Jodi Black and family, Teller ran us through a very fun game of Pirates of the Spanish Main. Clint Black was our very own Captain Black! Very late that night we crawled into bed looking forward to Thursday and the games we were going to run.

## WHOSE ROOM IS IT ANYWAY?

We knew that most all of our games were full, so we were a little surprised to find only one guy sitting at one of our two games at start time. We soon discovered that the event location on the player tickets were different than the Origins' event book. Fortunately for us, our players found us not long after and our games went great. But this meant we had to check RPG:HQ everyday to see if our games were really in the room where we thought they were.

This year at Origins Mike and I were both running lots of Deadlands Reloaded demos. Mike's game called Hot Time in Hot Springs brought the posse to Hot Springs to see the largest crystal ever found. It turned out that the crystal was also a giant conduit for mystical energy. Needless to say the posse had their hands full once things started to heat up!



*The ORIGINS SUV packed and loaded*





### *Hot Times in Hot Springs*

My Deadlands demo was called Diablo Pass where in the posse is hired to discover what happened to a missing Hellstromme expedition in the Utah badlands. I had a lot of great players and many, many who were new to Savage Worlds. I know Mike had a lot of new player's too. And with Pinnacle selling the Savage Worlds Explorers Edition core rules for only \$9.95, none of them had a good reason not to pick it up.

Mike's second game of the day was a debut of Sundered Skies, a soon-to-be released setting with a fantasy bent that of course includes lots of the coolness that Pinnacle products are famous for. With flying ships, dragons, strange creatures, and a great story, I can't wait for this one to be released. It'll also give Mike and me a chance to use some of the 100's of fantasy miniatures we've bought.

My second game was in another setting that should be released real soon, The Savage World of Solomon Kane. Wow, this setting has tons of ideas and locations for games. My game takes place in

the jungles of Africa. The characters gather there at the prompting of Kane's friend and Africa Jujuman, N'Longa. There they find the area villages in distress and set out to destroy a growing evil.

Mike and I got lots of looks and a lot of questions about the fantastic terrain we used in both of these games. One player said "This game certainly wins for the best props of the convention!" On the down side, they were really

a pain to carry in the crowded elevators.

After the games were done and the exhibition hall closed down for the night a bunch of us went to the Mongolian bar-B-Q for dinner. I'm not much on veggies, but anyplace where they will fry up any kind of meat you want (with swords no less) is OK in my book!

The rest of the evening Mike ran some of us through his Solomon Kane game. Clint sat in on this one too and played Iron Savage Worlds—meaning he spent no bennies during the game. It was a fun game for the players, although Mike had to suffer some abuse because we were all a little tired and a little slap happy. But Mike took it all in stride and determinedly tried to kill our characters instead.

### **WE TURN INTO PUMPKINS**

On Friday we switched up our games a bit. Mike ran his ladies



### *Diablo Pass!*





*Whose Game Is It Anyway?*  
(Deb Gordon, Andy Hopp, Tom Wisniewski)

only Deadlands game and I ran two games of my Diablo Pass demo. I have to tell you that no one apparently paid any attention to the "ladies only" part of Mike's game description. Mike ended up with all guys except for Jodi Black, and Jodi wasn't even signed up for the game! They had a great time anyway.

At 3:00 was the Savage Worlds Celebrity Whose Game is it Anyway that raised money for the Fisher House--a charity that supports the families of servicemen. Clint Black, Sean Patrick Fannon, and I were crowd wranglers. We gathered the ideas the crowd came up with for the game's ever changing setting and the obstacles the celebrity players would run into along the way. Joe Unger was the master of ceremonies. Andy Hopp, author of Low Life and artist extraordinaire, was the Celebrity GM. The players were Shane Hensley, Jack "Statesman" Emmert, Deb Gordon, Tom "Count Zero" Wisniewski, Evil Mike, and Jackie Unger. Deb and Tom got in on the fun because

they won the raffle for the extra seats at the table.

With the help (or hindrance) of the audience Andy Hopp wove a convoluted and insane game for the players, who added their own brands of zaniness at every opportunity. All of us had fun and more importantly we raised some money for a very worthy charity.

(This is where we start to turn into pumpkins.) We had met our friend Bryce at Flatcon last year and Mike had graciously agreed to run a Deadlands game for him and his friends working there at the con.

## MORE ONE SHEETS TO COME!

Want more One Sheets? Chaos Steve's Diablo Pass and Evil Mike's Hot Times in Hot Springs are coming soon as a free download on the Explorer's Website! Keep watching for the announcement!

Bryce brought seven friends with him and Mike ran them through a shoot 'em up adventure where they tried to take over the town to get the gold held in the bank. In the end they were successful and are all now living high on the hog somewhere in the west...I mean their characters are. The players all had to return to their various mundane jobs at the con.

It was 11:30 pm. We hurriedly cleaned up and headed over to



*Runepunk Showdown*



the miniatures room to meet Norm (Boldfist on the forums) and Dave (Grendel2175). They had a big, gorgeous RunePunk Show-down game to run us through. They even had Sean Preston, author of RunePunk, there and his right hand man Stacy Young. I think it was around 2:00 am when Mike and I turned into pumpkins and headed off to bed. We knew that Saturday was a busy day, with no time in between our games.



*Evil Mike's Sundered Skies Game*

## NO BREAK IN THE ACTION

For Saturday Mike and I had back-to-back games with the Pinnacle seminar following right after that. I had seven players for my Deadlands game and once again not all of them survived Diablo Pass.

My game ran a little over, so I was just starting to set up Solomon Kane when most of my players arrived. Then a minor disaster struck. I had left my Solomon Kane game up in my room. Fortu-

nately I had some friendly players setting around the table. I gave them some rocks, huts, and palm trees and asked them to set up an African village while I ran back up to the room. When I got back the village (and the game) was all set to go. We had a really fun time and in the end, most of players stayed around to help me put everything up too (Editor's note: Since my game finished ON TIME, Deb Gordon helped me lug all the stuff we were done with prior to Steve's game ending – Thanks Deb!) I really appreciated it because Mike and I were already late for the seminar. And you know

Shane was going to let slip some new information about upcoming games from Pinnacle.

We made the seminar and even got to sit up front with the rest of the Pinnacle crew and Ed Waterman from 12 to Midnight. The seminar went well. Shane & Joe had brought along all of the initial sculpting for the Slaughter Gulch game along with the maps for the game. These were just initial sculptings but getting the first look-see was fun.

We had another fun dinner with Clint, Jodi and family. Then we found out that Deadlands Reloaded had won the Origins gaming supplement of the year! After that Mike and I went to gather up his gaming stuff once again. We gathered with about 25 other savages in one of the gaming rooms, literally taking it over. Mike ran his Solomon Kane game for Shane, Teller, Tom, Deb, Sean Patrick Fannon, and Sean Preston (Editor's Note: Thanks to Sean Preston for figuring out that one of my PC's was not ready for prime time)! The 12 to Midnight guys ran three other games. I got in Ed Waterman's running of Chickens in the Mist. And yes my character died at



*Chaos Steve's Solomon Kane Game*



the beak of a giant chicken. There was lots of laughing, singing (Cutter brought his guitar), and even some dancing (I think that's what the other table was doing...) By the end of the night (or early the next morning) we were all dead... uh, dead tired that is.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Yep, Sunday is the last day. We only had one more Deadlands game each to run. My Deadlands game went great and once again I had seven players. This group tried a couple of things in the game that other groups hadn't thought of. Also, their dice were red hot! I heard a lot of whooping and hollering coming from Mike's table so I know his posse had a good time too.

Right after the game we had to hurriedly pack up, call for a luggage handler with two carts, and get checked out of our room. Then came the arduous task of loading the truck back up. Somehow we managed to fit everything back in. Now it was time to make one more run through the dealer area.

We found lots of bargains in the dealer area and our players will have many new foes to overcome in the future. I think Mike and I bought around 100 new figures and many new large critters. We also had to stop by the booth and pick up a few things we had brought for them to use. We said our goodbyes to Shane, Teller, Joe and Jackie Unger, Ed, and Jim of Studio 2.

Our final obstacle was fitting these

last few items into the SUV. After some rearranging, everything fit inside—a minor miracle.

## A FEW LAST WORDS

Origins was tough on Mike this year in his infirmed state, but he persevered and had a great time. I of course had a lot of fun too. We met many new friends and saw tons of old friends. It really is amazing just how nice all of the folks in our games were and just how nice all of the folks in general are at Origins. Thanks to all of you for making this Origins one of best yet. Mike and I are already looking forward to Gencon.



*Evil Mike getting his daily dose of Evil*



*Two Carts filled with gaming goodness!*



*The mysterious Teller, Jackie and Joe Unger*

