SHARK BYTES

1• 2004

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A new system for psychic powers

Part one of an ongoing serial thriller - Doc Savage, The Man of Bronze

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T H E B I R T H O F A F A N Z I N E

I've had the idea for **Shark Bytes** bouncing around in my head for quite a few months now—since the release of the *Savage Worlds* system to be precise! The only reason it took this long to come to fruition is that I've been too busy with school, life, and actually playing roleplaying games—something I had given up in frustration a few ago—to do much of anything else. With the hope that I would someday get around to doing a fanzine, I kept a notebook with me and jotted down any and all ideas that happened to spring from my fevered little mind. Finally, about a month ago, I made the decision to give this a serious try. Inspired by the likes of *EZ HERO*, *OD&Dities*, the old *Pegasus* and *Dungeoneer* magazines from the Judges Guild, and the venerable *The Dragon* (Issues 1-50), I decided it was time to get off my duff and make this dream of mine a reality. What you hold in your hands—or more likely, what's displayed on the monitor in front of you—is the result of that little creative spark that flared up so many months ago.

You may or may not know that I am considered a "grognard," to use the terminology of our wargaming brethren. I have been playing RPGs since 1977 when I first got my grubby little hands on a copy of *Dungeons & Dragons—Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures*. Since then, I have played or run over 70 distinct RPG systems—my "drug" of choice being *D&D* and *AD&D*—at least up until 1989.

It was then that I started playing *HERO*. I loved the flexibility of the system; however, although it was internally logical and consistent, it was near impossible to get my players to try it! In search of a simpler system, I first tried *GURPS*, which in my opinion produced better sourcebooks than rules, and then *FUDGE*. I was an avid *FUDGE* fanatic for 5-6 years before being introduced to the *D6 System*. This was a watershed moment for me—the *D6 System* was the closest thing to the "Holy Grail of Gaming" that I had yet seen. I dove in with unabashed enthusiasm and it was my system of choice for the next two years. About 1998, I started to weary of the whole RPG scene—after all, it'd been nearly 21 years since I had first started playing. I either packed up or sold my books and didn't play another RPG until I heard about the upcoming release of a little system known only as *Savage Worlds*. After downloading the Test Drive Rules, running some of the free adventures, and following the discussions on the Yahoo group, I was hooked! Finally, a truly generic system that was simple to learn, fast to play, and enjoyable—I had finally found my "Holy Grail". Thanks Shane! You put the fun back into a hobby that for many of us was dead and buried.

I love this game—it's my game of choice for every genre. I've always been a "pulpy" GM and *Savage Worlds* suits me to a tee. That said—I love to expand game systems. I'm an interminable tinkerer. Luckily, *Savage Worlds* lends itself to tinkering—much more so than any other system I have ever encountered. That's what **Shark Bytes** is all about—collecting ideas and inspiration from fellow tinkerers and putting them together in one place for all to see and enjoy. I hope you enjoy reading this inaugural issue as much as I enjoyed putting it together. Thank you to all who contributed for helping me to realize this dream of mine. I hope to produce many more issues for your future enjoyment. Until then, keep it Savage!

Bill Littlefield, the "Editor" ;)

SMILIN' JACK SPEAKS

Getting Savage—the genesis of Savage Worlds, according to Shane Hensley.

It all started on a rainy day when Pinnacle was at its peak. This would be about 1999 or so. We had beautiful offices, a staff of 14, four hot-selling lines (*Deadlands*, *Hell on Earth*, *Great Rail Wars*, and Matt Forbeck's brand new *Brave New World*). We'd swept every industry award you can think of, our listservs were hopping (that's *never* changed), and Hollywood first started knocking on our door. Things were quietly starting to get very rough business-wise, but creatively, we were rocking along.

I don't remember exactly what started the specific conversation, but it was probably an email from someone who just couldn't wrap his head around Deadlands. Or perhaps it was the fact that the Deadlands system worked great for small gunfights (like the Weird West) but got troublesome in larger skirmishes (like happened frequently in Hell on Earth). I'll be the first to admit Deadlands has a steep learning curve. Once you've mastered it, it's quite easy, and I can run massive fights in no time by using chips and having the players "chip" their own targets—but as a game *publisher,* it was supposed to be my job to make things as simple and streamlined as possible. Great Rail Wars had achieved that goal. Not perfect, of course, but super-streamlined, and it was responsible for bringing in hundreds of new Deadlands fans. It worked so well, in fact, that I thought it might make the perfect foundation for a new roleplaying game as well. We ran a very short adventure one day using GRW and it went over great—even without all the bells and whistles I'd later add on in its *Savage Worlds* version.

But this was 1999 and we had an awful lot of books out already. Changing the system on our thousands of fans—actually tens of thousands at that point—would have been suicide. So, we shelved the idea and pressed on…

Pinnacle went through a lot of changes over the next few years—breaking up with AEG, the disastrous Cybergames fiasco, and then *D20™*. Those stories are for another time, but the net affect of our delayed schedule and people *thinking* we were switching to D20 for Deadlands really hurt the line. (For the record, we didn't switch to D20, but I still get mail today saying we "sold out" and switched our entire line over. What we actually did was create the *Deadlands D20* in *addition* to classic and started dual-statting our books. We also sold over 9,000 Deadlands D20 books—a *very* good number in those days.)

So by 2002, Deadlands was one hurting puppy. There were still thousands of fans, but the stores and distributors just didn't want to carry us anymore. Most of it was our own fault—between slow releases, the misconception about D20, and the lack of elves, dwarves, or dragons in our line for a couple years there, we just couldn't make money on the 1,000 or so copies of any new release we were selling.

Hell on Earth was an even bigger problem. Sales out the door on it were less than 750 units. Oddly, our Internet orders for it were skyrocketing, however. Demand was there (and I personally think HOE had a stronger storyline than the Weird West simply because we learned a few lessons in presentation), but stores and distributors had universally decided it was a loser line and just weren't ordering. I'll take the blame for a lot of PEG's problems through the years—but this one mystifies me. HOE is and remains a strong game and an awesome setting, and I think they really screwed the pooch on this one.

But with PEG's growing debt and declining sales, something had to be done. I let the line die and started mentally planning its rebirth.

I just wasn't sure how yet. *Weird Wars* would fill the void, and a couple of Deadlands books that had already been written or promised (*Lone Stars*, *Great Weird North*, and *The Unity*) came out, but it was more of an obligation to the fans than anything else.

In March of 2002 I took a trip from Virginia all the way to Madison, Wisconsin to an invitational wargame (which to my surprise turned out to be *Fields of Honor*—my first Pinnacle product!). Along the way, I decided to stop and visit and game with some of the awesome folks who have helped me through the years—Mark Metzner and his gang in Louisville, KY, and Dave Ross and Aaron Isaac and their friends in and around Normal, Illinois.

About Wednesday night, Mark ran a game of *Godlike™*. I've never publicly admitted the name of this game before, but I think that it's okay to do so now. I believe the authors have moved on and my comments won't hurt their business in any way. Suffice it to say, the system just wasn't for us. We tried to do a small fight with a couple of Nazis and four PCs and it was a nightmare. (Caveat—these were the demo rules, we might have gotten things wrong, and I have no interest in bashing Dennis' game.) Everyone decided to quit and we talked about playing *Halo™* on the Xbox™.

Then I mentioned that I had a World War II adventure that we could try, and it would probably go pretty fast. I told them to make Great Rail Wars characters real quick, pick a couple of special abilities, and we'd go to it. Characters were made in 5 minutes and I ran the adventure from our Weird War book *Dead From Above*. We started at midnight and finished around 2 am. It was an unqualified success. Mark and his gang had a blast and we couldn't stop talking about how easy it was.

My next stop was in Normal, Illinois. That afternoon we played a massive Great Rail Wars battle with Scott Leighton, Dave Ross, Aaron Isaac, and I believe four others. Eight

people with over 2,000 points each and we started and finished in just a couple of hours. And it was a *blast* (Scott's *Holy Roller* exploding through the ranks was definitely the highlight of the game!)

That night we went to "Dr. Rob" Lusk and he ran an awesome Deadlands adventure. It was a blast, but Rob did something we hadn't done in a long time. He ran it with miniatures—almost like a miniatures game but with all the fun of roleplaying thrown in. He had an incredible cave complex set up and figures for everything. I was truly amazed.

When the game was over, Dave, Rob, and I talked about my experience at Mark's with the WW2/GRW game. The conversation grew more interesting and intense, and we sat around and talked until 4 am in the morning about what we *really* wanted in a game.

The concept of combining the simplicity of a miniatures game with the depth of a roleplaying game really came together during this conversation.

T he rest of the trip had little to do with *Savage Worlds*, except that during the 20+hours on the road alone, I couldn't stop thinking about it—how to handle "leveling," special abilities, and so on. I was literally burning with desire to make this game, and use it as the basis for the relaunch of Deadlands and World War II.

Things solidified later on when we were playtesting the Russian Front. My good friend Jason Nichols was running it using the D20 system, and our platoon was tasked with overrunning a German 88 position hidden in some ruined buildings. It was a nightmare. Say what you want about D20, but it's not set up to handle lots of extra NPCs and big battles of 20+ combatants.

I mentioned my trip experience to the guys and they were dying to try it. We worked up some rules, and we started playtesting tons of different games over the next few months—French and Indian Wars with a platoon of NPCs, *Legend of the Five Rings*™, Matt Wilson's Witchfire trilogy, *D&D*™, and of course Deadlands. Zeke Sparkes especially was on board from the formal beginning and was instrumental in keeping it fast, furious, and fun—which became our tagline.

Rumors of what we were working on started to slip out, and playtesters formed. Brent Wolke and Randy Mosiondz were two of the first "strangers" to jump on board and help out, and they became—with their partner in crime Jason Young—part of the core team for the game's future.

I pitched the game as "rules light" in the beginning—which was a mistake. It's not that it's *particularly* rules-heavy, but it is as crunchy as it gets. What it *is*, in our opinion, is *easy*. The game allows Game Masters to throw out dozens of bad guys, include dozens of NPC allies, and go to it with almost zero bookkeeping.

That led to another small mistake of mine. I once said *Savage Worlds* was for "mature" gamers, which was taken by some as a slight to D20 players as being "immature." I corrected and clarified this then and will repeat it now. Our style of gaming is for those gamers who don't have (or don't want to commit to) tons of time to prepare. We wanted a

game that allowed you to create NPCs in minutes, required super-minimal bookkeeping (figures are up, down, or off the table in combat), and didn't tax the mind and energy of 30-somethings who had kids, wives, jobs, and so on to deal with.

The formula worked, and we quickly discovered that *even younger gamers were looking for something simpler as well*. I don't offer this as a critique of D20—just a comparison. Creating and running a game for D20 can be a very tedious exercise. We wanted to offer an alternative to that, and our sales and awards say we've succeeded.

O ne last tidbit—the name of the game came from a pitch I took with me to United States Playing Card Company on September 11th, 2001 (yes, that day). I pitched a game called *Blood Moon* to them that morning, but in my folder was another pitch called "Savage Worlds." It was to be a "Shane-style" revision of the D20 OGL featuring whatever licenses we could get—such as Conan™, Flash Gordon™, Buck Rogers™, etc (USPC has WAY more money and clout than Pinnacle). I didn't make that pitch because Blood Moon went over quite well (and the day's events were quite draining, as you can imagine), but I liked the name, so I kept it for the new GRW/RPG hybrid.

It also reflected my personal tastes in settings. I like dark worlds where the heroes must *really* strive just to survive. *Winning,* if there is such a thing, is a major accomplishment. I think that's lacking in some of the most popular games, where you're expected to slay dragons and marry princesses weekly. Our games are pulpy, often horrific, and a little bit campy—like the works of Robert E. Howard or Edgar Rice Burroughs, and I wanted a title that reflected it. *Savage Worlds* fit the bill.

Savage Shane Hensley
August, 2004

NEXT TIME OUT—SAVAGE SETTINGS…

My kingdom for an adventure card!

What is the Adventure Deck? How do I use it? Where do I get more cards?

Feeling adventurous? This awesome 54-card deck adds a dash of player plot control to your Savage Worlds game! Players draw a number of cards equal to their rank at the beginning of the game session, and get to play one from their available choices during the game. Some cards establish long-running subplots, such as Enemy or Love Interest, while others grant you one-time bonuses, such as Backstab, or even grant your hero a magical weapon of some sort!

So goes the official product blurb for the *Savage Worlds Adventure Deck*, an awesome addition to the *Savage Worlds* system. This product can be purchased online through RPGNow as an 8.9MB zipped download. There's even a free demo of the product so you can see what you're getting into before you fork over your money. For $9.95, you get a 13-page color PDF file containing 54 cards and the rules to use them, five different card backs with which to customize the look of your deck, and a blank adventure card template for creating your own Savage adventure cards. While we're on the subject of new adventure cards, I should mention that Daniel Wood and Lee Reynoldson have both contributed several new adventure cards to this issue of **Shark Bytes**. These new cards can be found in the back of this issue.

The adventure deck rules fill only a single page and are easy to incorporate into your current game. Here's a summary: At the start of a session, you draw one card per your character's Rank. A new Edge—Destiny's Child (Background, Novice)—allows you to draw one extra card at the start of each session. You may trade your cards with other players at any time. You may play only one card per session; however, any card that allows you an additional draw does not count towards this limit. Adventure cards, like Bennies, do not carry over between sessions. The cards allow you to have a degree of control over what happens during the game. For example, *Bulls Eye* lets you double the damage total of a successful ranged attack. *Rally* causes all allies within sight or hearing to immediately lose their Shaken status. *Surprise*, perhaps one of the best cards in the deck, lets you spend a Benny to search through the remaining cards in the deck and take any card into your hand!

You have to assemble the cards yourself, but this is really easier than it sounds. I printed them, cut them out, and put them in card sleeves—the same kind used by CCG players. To give them a little extra "heft" I inserted a MtG™ land card behind each one.

SUBMITTING A SHARK BYTE

So, you want to be an author...

Now that the first issue of **Shark Bytes** has "hit the shelves," so to speak, I thought it my duty as your Editor to make it known how you, the aspiring author, can submit your work for inclusion into this illustrious publication. First of all, let it be known that anything submitted will eventually be included in an issue of **Shark Bytes**. Although your submission may need to be reworked until it is suitable, no one thoughtful enough to submit their work will ever be turned away. After all, this is a FANzine! Topic and length are irrelevant. If it's too short, I'll put it together with other short submissions. If it's too long, I'll edit it or serialize it. If it's not specific to *Savage Worlds*, I'll incorporate it into The Savage Driftwood section. You retain the copyright on your submission. So, you say you already have something ready to send me? Well, here are the boring submission rules:

1. Provide all written material as a RTF (Rich Text Format) file. The only formatting allowed is headers and bolded text (it makes it easier on us when we do the layout). If you have artwork you'd like included with your submission, send it along as well.
2. Compress (ZIP or RAR) all multiple file submissions.
3. If you're sending Adventure Cards—**do not send formatted cards**. Send only the title, quote, description, and the artwork (if any) you'd like used.
4. Submissions should generally be no more than 5000 words in length; however, I'm very flexible on this so long as your stuff rocks!
5. Adventures should contain finished maps. If you need help accomplishing this just let me know before submitting your work. There are plenty of Savages willing to lend a hand!
6. Send all submissions to editor@sharkbytes.info Send all submissions as attachments—please do not send as an inline message. Please include your full name, your PEG Forum username (if applicable) so that you get proper credit for your work.

The Magic Fish

Updating A Magical Medley, Part One

The Savage Worlds rulebook offers no extensive magical item lists, nor does it provide any concrete rules for creating them from scratch—heck, it doesn't even provide any examples for the poor GM! Instead, such things are considered the purview of the various plot-point books that are published by Pinnacle. Even so, these books contain very few magical items. To fill this void, I released a little document entitled A Magical Medley many months ago. However, looking back on it now, there are changes I'd like to make to many of the items—namely, simplifying the way they work! So, to address this issue, I present these new-and-improved items of arcane power.

Arrow of Slaying
This menacing looking arrow with glossy, black feathers enables the user to slay any one creature with Toughness of 10 or less on a successful ranged attack. Against creatures with Toughness of 11 or more, it does 4d6 points of damage instead. This is a one-use item—once used it is forevermore treated as a normal arrow—but the character doesn't have to know that!

Boots of Speed
A character wearing these supple, leather boots doubles his Pace—his Running die remains unchanged.

Bracers of Defense
A character wearing these metallic bracers is treated as if he had protection equal to Armor +2 against all attacks. This bonus does not stack with any other Armor bonuses, except those granted by the *armor* power.

Bracelet of Luck
A character possessing this wonderfully wrought golden bracelet starts each session with an additional Benny.

Cloak of the Chameleon
A character wearing this shimmering cloak gains a bonus of +4 to his Stealth rolls, provided he moves no faster than his normal Pace. Opponents that fail to detect him are treated as being surprised should the character decide to act. Once spotted (automatic once he attacks), this cloak ceases to provide any benefit for the remainder of the encounter.

Cloak of Invisibility
A character wearing this unassuming cloak and placing its cowl over his head is considered to be invisible, as are any items in his possession. In the first round that an invisible character attacks, he automatically surprises his opponents. So long as he remains invisible, he makes his attack rolls at +6. Any reciprocating attacks are made at –6.

Notice rolls (at least those based on sight) to detect the character are made at –6 as well. Notice rolls based on any other sense other than sight are made normally.

Once detected, all penalties and bonuses are halved. If the detecting character achieves a raise on his Notice roll, the penalties and bonuses are negated altogether. A new Notice roll against the invisible character can be made each round.

Coronet of Mind Expansion
The coronet is constructed of precious metals and gems, and it is inscribed with strange geometric symbols. The coronet does not give off an aura of arcane power—its nature, although beyond the understanding of most, is entirely mechanical and its powers are derived from its internal construction and composition.

The device functions only when used by someone with the Arcane Background: Psionics and even then, only if worn on the head. In such cases, it reduces the normal Power Point cost of any power employed by one; however, the user must actually possess enough Power Points to activate the power in the first place.

Dissolve Magic Scroll
This parchment scroll contains an incantation written in the Common Tongue. When read aloud (treat as a full round action), it will dispel the effects of any power within 12" as if the character had used the Dispel power. This is a one-use item; the scroll crumbles into dust once the words are read. The scroll is treated as an AB: Magic version of the *dispel* power and is cast at a skill level equal to d12+3.

Elixir of the Sun
This small crystal vial contains a single drop of an unknown liquid. If kept in its container, this liquid causes the vial to act as a magical lantern that sheds enough light to illuminate an area equal to a Large Burst Template.

Gem of Intellect
Possession of this gem on one's self increases the character's Smarts by one die type for purposes of attribute rolls, and all skill rolls linked to Smarts are made at +1 (it does not affect the character's ability/cost to learn Smart-based skills).

Girdle of Strength

Possession of this studded leather belt increases the owner's Strength by one die type for purposes of attribute rolls, and all skill rolls linked to Strength are made at +1 (it does not affect the character's ability/cost to learn Strength-based skills). The girdle must be worn in order to derive any benefit from it.

Gloves of Agility

Possession of these calfskin gloves increases the owner's Agility by one die type for purposes of attribute rolls, and all skill rolls linked to Agility are made at +1 (it does not affect the character's ability/cost to learn Agility-based skills). The gloves must be worn in order to derive any benefit from them.

Helm of Command

A single ruby and a long red horsehair crest adorn this military-style helmet. Whoever wears this helm affects all allies within 5" as if he possessed all of the Leadership Edges described in the main *Savage Worlds* rulebook. Donning the helmet and uttering the command word inscribed on its inner surface activates its special power, which lasts for one hour. The helmet may be used once per day, and it otherwise provides protection as a pot helm.

Periapt of Vigor

Possession of this periapt increases the owner's Vigor by one die type for purposes of attribute rolls and determining Toughness. The periapt must be kept on the owner's person in order to derive any benefit from it.

Potion of Ethereality

This clear and tasteless liquid grants the user the ability to become ethereal. For game purposes, treat the character as if he possessed the Ethereal monstrous ability. The effects last for 1d6 minutes per dose. Each potion contains 1d4 doses when found (the GM should roll and keep this number secret).

Potion of Healing

This pale green potion, which smells of mint, will immediately warm the belly and lift the spirits of any who drink it. Each potion contains 1d6 doses when found (the GM should roll this number and keep it secret). Drinking this potion will immediately restore a wound and/or negate a character's Shaken status.

Potion of Quickness

This light blue potion, which smells of menthol, will improve the reaction speed of any who drink it. Each potion contains 1d6 doses when found (the GM should roll this number and keep it secret). Drinking this potion will grant the imbiber the Quick Edge for 3+1d6 rounds (the GM should roll this number and keep it secret).

Ring of Alertness

The wearer of this ring is treated as if he possessed the Alertness Edge. Its effect is continual as long as the ring is worn.

Ring of Arcane Resistance

This ring causes the wearer to be affected as if he possessed the Arcane Resistance Edge. The power of the ring is automatically activated whenever the wearer is the target of an arcane power or attempts to resist an arcane power, effect, or attack.

Ring of Fear

The wearer of this ring will cause all who can see him to be affected as if he possessed the Fear monstrous ability. This effect can be invoked three times per day by speaking the activation word found on the inner surface of the ring. Each invocation lasts one round.

Ring of Flying

This ring allows the wearer access to the *fly* power. The wearer may fly at a rate up to his normal Pace (his Climb rate is equal to Pace/2). It may be used up to three times per day by speaking the activation word found on the inner surface of the ring. Each invocation lasts one minute.

Sun Stone

This fist-sized stone gives off enough light to illuminate an area the size of a Large Burst Template. Roll 2d6 each day; on a result of 2 or 12, the magic that created the stone fades and the sun stone becomes an ordinary stone in all respects. The effect of the sun stone is continual—no activation word is needed to invoke its special effect.

Sword of Cleaving

This two-handed sword imparts a –2 penalty to the user's Parry value; however, each raise on the attack roll allows a +2 bonus on the damage roll (in addition to the bonus d6 normally granted for achieving a raise).

S A V A G E   D O T   C O M

The best, of the best, of the best…with honors, sir!

Since Savage Worlds burst onto the gaming scene a little over a year ago, it has attracted a huge and fanatical fan base. The fanzine you hold in your hand (or more likely, that is being displayed on the monitor in front of you) is a testament to that fact! In addition to an active discussion forum—in which the game's creator, Shane Lacy Hensley, takes a regular role—there are several excellent online resources that have been created by enthusiastic and dedicated fans. Listed below is the cream of the crop. If you have a Savage Worlds website and would like to have it listed in **Shark Bytes***, just send me an e-mail with the site's full title, its URL, and a brief description of its contents. As always, my e-mail is* editor@sharkbytes.info

PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
http://www.peginc.com/

You'll find tons of free downloads, an online store where you can purchase all of Pinnacle's products, and the latest news on the *Savage Worlds* system. Definitely the first stop for all you newly converted Savages!

THE PINNACLE DISCUSSION FORUMS
http://www.peginc.com/forum/index.php

Here's where to go to discuss just about anything related to *Savage Worlds*. Perhaps the best discussion forum on the Web, you'll never have to endure endless flame wars or deal with ugly trolls.

12 TO MIDNIGHT, INC.
http://www.12tomidnight.com/

A great company that produces some of the best horror-genre products I've ever seen. They currently have four *Savage Worlds* products for sale: *The Last Rites of the Black Guard*, *Weekend Warriors*, *Bloodlines*, and *Innana's Kiss*. They also have a bunch of cool freebies for you to download.

OLD GLORY MINIATURES
http://www.oldgloryminiatures.com

Need miniatures for your *50 Fathoms* game? How about *Rippers* or *Tour of Darkness*? This is the place to go.

LEGION PUBLISHING
http://www.legionpublishing.co.uk/

This company currently holds a license to produce supplemental products for all of Pinnacle's game lines. Their first *Savage Worlds* product, *Out of Sight*, is due out soon. They plan to release a *Savage Worlds* scenario every month after the line is released.

SAVAGE LYTHIA
http://savage.lythia.com/

An e-mail discussion list, a wiki, and a ton of downloadable files—what more could a Savage Fanatic want! By the way, its owner is the new webmaster for **Shark Bytes**! Check this site out now!

THE *SAVAGE WORLDS* YAHOO GROUP
http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/Savage_Worlds/

The birthplace of the Savage Yahoos—the greatest group of fanatical PEG Heads you'll ever meet! Even with the existence of the PEG Forums, this site gets lots of traffic! It's also the home of the official *Savage Worlds* FAQ.

SAVAGE HEROES
http://www.savageheroes.com/

This site is a depository for the myriad of fan conversions, original settings, and adventures that have sprung up on various websites. If you're planning on converting or adapting a setting to the *Savage Worlds* system, it's well worth the effort to check out this site first. Someone may have already done it for you!

THE *SAVAGE WORLDS* RING HUB
http://c.webring.com/hub?ring=savageworlds

'Nuff said!

FEEDING FRENZY

The Rules Meister fields your queries regarding the Savage Worlds rules.

*Welcome to the first issue of **Shark Bytes**! In this ongoing column, I will try to provide answers to your burning questions about the Savage Worlds rules. Just because these answers may be "official" (i.e., Shane has given the nod), does not necessarily mean that they are "correct". Always remember the Golden Rule: "The correct answer to any question about the rules is the one that makes your game fun—everything else is superfluous!" Now, let's get to the questions!*

Edges and Hindrances

Q: *When taking the Beast Master Edge, is the animal companion a Wild Card or not?*

A: No. The animal companion from the Beast Master Edge is an Extra, not a Wild Card. If you want a Wild Card animal companion, you must take the Sidekick Edge. The major advantage of the Beast Master Edge is that, if killed, the animal companion will be replaced within 2d6 days.

Q: *My character has the Ambidextrous Edge. I'm thinking of using one of his next advancements to take the Sweep Edge. Right now, I'm fighting with two weapons—can I do that using Sweep as well (e.g., make two Sweep attacks in a single round)? What if I took the Two-Fisted Edge at his next advancement?*

A: No. You cannot make a Sweep attack with a weapon in each hand. Attacking with a second weapon provides only one additional attack against one opponent, no matter what the circumstances. The Two Fisted Edge merely allows you to ignore the MAP for your second attack.

Q: *In our last session, a character with the Berserk Edge was Incapacitated. He was Battered and Bruised (according to the Knockout Blow Table), and it took him several rounds to recover to Shaken. When he recovered, should he still have been Berserk?*

A: Not necessarily. An Incapacitated character automatically loses the benefits of the Berserk Edge. So, a Berserker faces his normal wound modifiers when dealing with the Knockout Blow and Injury Tables. However, when a character recovers from the Knockout Blow Table, he returns to Shaken status. And, since the Berserk Edge is activated by being Shaken from physical damage, the character must make another Smarts roll or he goes Berserk again.

Q: *The text referring to the Giant Killer Edge says, "Your hero does +4 damage when attacking a creature at least twice as large as he is." Please define "at least twice as large."*

A: Generally, each level of Size represents up to a maximum of double the previous level. Since this is a flexible range, a creature one Size level higher is not necessarily "at least twice as large." However, a creature that is two Size levels higher certainly would fit this criterion. So, a human (Size +0) would not get the bonus from the Giant Killer Edge when attacking an orc (Size +1), but a half-folk (Size –1) would gain the bonus because the orc is two Size levels higher than him.

Character Advancement

Q: *The rulebook makes it seem like you can raise only one attribute once per Rank, while the new Test Drive Rules make it seem like you can raise an attribute at each advancement opportunity, so long as a different attribute is raised each time. Which is correct?*

A: You can raise only one attribute once per Rank. So, for example, if you raise your Strength from d6 to d8 after attaining 5 Experience Points, you may not raise another attribute until you earn 20 Experience Points (Seasoned Rank). The Test Drive Rules have been revised to reflect this.

Combat

Q: *According to the rules, your opponent gets a free attack against you if you leave melee. However, what if you have a situation where your character is adjacent to four opponents, but is only engaged in combat with two of them? If he decides to leave the melee, do the enemies get four attacks on him or just two?*

A: Four Attacks. The rule for leaving close combat applies to all adjacent opponents, not just those that are actually attacking. If a character is adjacent to four opponents and retreats, he is subject to an attack from each of them, even if he were actively fighting only two of them.

Q: *My group has gone back and forth on whether a character's opponents should get a free attack if he attempts to move past them.*

A: Moving past an opponent does not allow a free attack unless your opponent has the First Strike Edge and the movement would bring you to a position adjacent to him. Now, a character on Hold may make an opposed Agility roll in order to attack an opponent moving past him, so long as the opponent's movement brings him within attack range.

Q: *When fighting with both a rapier (+1 Parry) and a buckler (+1 Parry), do the Parry modifiers stack? What about if you have a rapier in each hand?*

A: In both cases, the bonuses stack.

Q: *The Savage Worlds rulebook (p.69) states, "To attack a target through an object, first decide if the attack hits." It then goes on to say, "If the attack would have hit without the cover modifier, the round is on target but the obstacle acts as armor for the target behind it." How is all this supposed to work in the real world?*

A: This rule actually needs a little clarification. Let's take it step-by-step:

1. Make your attack roll and apply any modifiers (range, cover, etc.).
2. Does the attack succeed? If it does, then the target receives no Armor bonus from the intervening obstacle.
3. If it does not, then take the result from #1 above and remove the cover modifier. Does it succeed now?
4. If it does, then the attack hits; however, the obstacle grants an Armor bonus to the target.
5. If it does not, then it has truly missed its mark and is considered a failure.

Example 1: You make a ranged attack against a target behind a 5' high concrete wall. Your attack roll total is 12. After applying modifiers for being at medium range (–2) and for cover (–4), your final total is 6. You hit, and the target gains no Armor benefit from the obstacle. Had your initial total been 8, you would have missed (8 – 6 = 2); however, without the cover modifier, the total would have been 6 and thus you hit. The target would gain the Armor bonus from the obstacle though.

There is one exception to the above: If a target is completely hidden by an obstacle, exposing no part of their body whatsoever, then they have **concealment** (effectively a –6 illumination modifier), **not** cover. In this case, if the attack misses, the target is not hit at all, but if the attack is successful, the target gains the Armor bonus from the obstacle.

Example 2: You make a ranged attack against a target behind a 10' high concrete wall, which you cannot see at all but are aware, is there. Your attack roll is 12. After applying modifiers for being at medium range (–2) and for concealment (–6), your final total is 4. You hit, but the target gets the Armor bonus from the obstacle because you must go through it to hit the target. If you had initially rolled an 8, you would have missed completely because the concealment modifier supercedes the cover modifier in this instance.

Arcane Powers

Q: *Does normal armor protect against damage inflicted by the bolt power? Does the armor power stack with normal Armor bonuses?*

A: Yes and No. Normal armor protects against damage from the *bolt* power unless the specific trappings of the power enable it to somehow bypass armor. However, trappings that allow this kind of advantage should be rare and balanced by an equal or greater disadvantage. The *armor* power does not stack with normal armor. The description of Armor bonuses in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (p.43) states multiple layers of Armor do not stack, and the description of the *armor* power says its result is "effectively giving the target Armor."

Q: *When using a power such as bolt, should characters be penalized for the range of the target just like when shooting a crossbow or other ranged weapon? If they fail, do they completely miss? If it's an area effect attack, do you roll for deviation if it misses?*

A: Yes, Yes, and Yes. Powers that have three ranges listed, such as 12/ 24/ 48, face the same range penalties as missile weapons, 0/ –2/ –4. For specifics, refer to the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (p.83). Area effect powers that miss do indeed deviate. Refer to the Area Effect Attacks section in the rulebook (p.66). It refers to "Grenades, spell effects, and other attacks that cover a large area…"

If you have a rules question for the Rules Meister, please email it to editor@sharkbytes.info. If you have a burning question that can't wait, check out the *Savage Worlds* Forums or the FAQ in the File section of the *Savage Worlds* Yahoo Group.

BLOOD IN THE WATER

JB's Collection of House Rules, Part One

This column will present a selection of optional and variant rules and additions culled from the ranks of the Savage Fanatics who frequent the Pinnacle Discussion Forum. Since I have received an inordinate amount of requests regarding the Savage modifications I employ in my own games, I thought it would be appropriate to kick off this column by obliging. Keep in mind that none of these rules were created to address any particular deficiencies in the Savage Worlds core rules—I've yet to come across any—but rather to tweak an already great set of rules into something that my group really enjoys playing more than any other system out there. After all, isn't that what house rules are all about?

Adventure Deck

First off, let's talk about the Adventure Deck. Now, I love this product, but I do have one gripe with it—I can only use one card per session! What's up with that? My games are pulpy to the extreme, and in keeping with that feeling, I allow my players to use any and all of their Adventure Cards during a single session. You can even keep them between sessions—but it'll cost you. For each card retained, you must subtract one Benny from your normal allotment at the start of the next session.

Bennies

While we're on the subject of Bennies, do the "official" uses for Bennies seem…well, a bit limited? Maybe it's just me, but I think players should be able to use Bennies for just about anything their fevered little minds can dream up—within reason, of course, and so long as it doesn't mess up my brilliantly crafted scenario! Some of the uses I have allowed for burning a Benny include:

- To negate an unskilled modifier.
- To negate up to two points of penalties (regardless of source) applied to the character's next trait roll.
- To pull just the right tool for the job out of your pack—even if it's not on your gear list.

I also allow spending multiple Bennies. For example, spending two Bennies can double the damage you just inflicted on an opponent. Three Bennies will let you accomplish nearly any task—provided your account of how it was accomplished entertains me! Get the idea? The only limit is your imagination and the GM's patience!

Initiative

We all know that allies act on the Initiative card of their controlling Wild Card, right? Not in my games they don't! Every Wild Card and each group of allies get their own card. The only time a group of allies may act on the card of their controlling Wild Card is if they're within 5" of him and he possesses the Command Edge.

Movement

Both crawling and crouching characters count as having Light Cover against attacks made from 6" or more. Prone characters cannot move at all and count as having Medium Cover from attacks made from 3" or more.

It seems that Shane forgot about jumping in the vertical plane. Characters can jump up to ½" vertically. A Strength roll grants an additional ½" for each success and Raise.

You can run, but can you run *really* fast? I allow characters to sprint. This doubles their normal Pace but inflicts a level of Fatigue for each consecutive round in which they sprint. Fatigue levels acquired in this manner are recovered at the rate of one level per minute of inactivity or five minutes of light activity.

Combat

I have discarded the notion of the Wild Attack as well as the Defend Option and have combined their effects into one simple option—the All Out Attack/Defense maneuver. Basically, you may raise your Fighting skill by any number (I recommend a limit of 1-4 points), as long as you decrease your Parry by an equal amount. The inverse is also possible.

There are no restrictions as far as when the All Out Attack/Defense maneuver may be employed, except that the bonus/penalty applies to all of your attacks and lasts until the start of your next action. If you choose this option, you may take no other actions. Employing the All Out Attack option saddles you with a Fatigue level. This fatigue is recovered in the same manner as that incurred by sprinting (see above).

As far as damage is concerned, here are my changes:

- I use the new "official" damage rule—if you get a raise on your attack roll, you roll an extra d6 (which may Ace) when determining damage.
- I don't use the permanent Injury Table.
- If you're on the Knockout Blow Table, a successful Healing roll doesn't restore any Wounds, but it does grant a +2 bonus to any Vigor rolls you're required to make.

The only other change I've made to melee is to the grappling combat maneuver. Note that this option doesn't apply if both participants are willing to grapple—in such cases use the rules as written.

1   You must make a successful Fighting roll to "get a hold" of your opponent. If you fail, your action is consumed and your turn ends. If you succeed, you make an opposed Strength roll against your opponent (you may add +2 for every raise you achieved on your Fighting roll). If you win, your opponent is entangled and may take no action for the remainder of the round; otherwise, he escapes your feeble grip. With a raise, he's Shaken as well.

2   At the start of your entangled opponent's next action, he may make an opposed Strength roll to escape. If he fails, he remains entangled and gains a Fatigue level. If he succeeds, he breaks free, but the attempt consumes his action. With a raise, he may act normally.

    How do characters reload their weapons in my games? Reloading a magazine or belt-fed weapon is a regular action. You may reload and fire in the same round with the normal MAP. Reloading a single round in a chambered weapon,

also counts as a regular action, but reloading the entire cylinder requires a full round action. A quickloader makes reloading a revolver a regualr action.

Derived Statistics and Skills

I add additional Derived Statistics as the setting requires. Sanity and Honor are two that spring to mind. Both are equal to Spirit/2 + 2 . The mechanic for both is basically the same—make a Spirit roll when you do something that would have an effect. If you fail, you lose points. When a total reaches zero, you have a problem! More on these in a later issue…

    I've removed the Gambling skill from the basic skill list; it's considered a Knowledge skill in my games. I also got rid of the Guts skill—it's replaced by a simple Spirit roll. To account for experience, characters make this a Spirit roll at +1 for every Rank above Novice. I haven't yet had cause to add any skills—the Common Knowledge mechanic really does work!

That's about it. But, what about Edges, Hindrances, and arcane powers you say? Well, these and more are slated for the next issue of **Shark Bytes**! Until then, stay Savage!

Niklas Brandt's original sketch for the Shark Bytes logo and graphic bitz…

We're Going to Need a Bigger Boat

Because everyone needs another interesting piece of equipment!

What self-respecting roleplayer can honestly say he's never uttered the words, "Gee, I wish my player had one of those." I didn't think so! That's what this column is all about—new gear, gadgets, and equipment to load your characters down with. In this issue, I refine the rifle scope from the Pinnacle website, Rich Finder details a couple different types of grenades, William Reger presents a way to see in the dark, and Daniel Wood serves up some gear for all you shutterbugs!

Rifle Scopes
Rifle scopes grant a +2 to any shot against a target beyond short range, as long as the character does not move. The benefits of the scope do not apply when using double tap, three-round bursts, or fully automatic fire. The benefits of the Marksman Edge and the aim maneuver stack when using a rifle scope. A rifle scope weighs two pounds and costs $250. Many models feature built in ranging devices (+$25) and night vision capability (+$100)—treat as if the user possesses the Low Light Vision monstrous ability.

Concussion Grenades
Concussion grenades emit an ultra-high frequency shock wave. Rather than causing damage, their purpose is to simply knock a target senseless. These grenades are favored in situations where collateral damage must be minimized. While they generally don't damage surrounding objects, fragile items such as windows will still shatter. Like all grenades, this weapon has a range of 5/10/20, and it causes 3d6 points of non-lethal damage to all within the area covered by a Medium Burst Template. In an enclosed space (i.e., no windows and a closed door), the final damage total is doubled. Throwing oneself on top of a concussion grenade does not reduce its effect. Concussion grenades each weigh one pound and cost $50.

Flash-Bang Grenades
Flash-bang grenades, also useful in situations when collateral damage must be minimized or a target must be taken alive, do very little damage. They are designed to blind and disorient their targets. Like all grenades, this weapon has a range of 5/10/20, and anyone caught within the weapon's area of effect (a Large Burst Template) is automatically Shaken on a failed Vigor roll at –2. Flash-bang grenades each weigh one pound and cost $50.

Night Vision Goggles
Night vision goggles grant the wearer the ability to see in the dark. For game purposes, treat the individual wearing the goggles as possessing the Low Light Vision monstrous ability. Some hi-tech versions may grant the additional capability to see in the infrared spectrum (+$200), which provides the Infravision monstrous ability when used. Switching between the night vision and infrared spectrum modes may be done as a regular action. Any sudden bright light (such as that from a flash-bang grenade) causes the wearer to become Shaken unless he passes a Vigor roll at –2. Night vision goggles weigh four pounds and cost $250.

Shutterbug Equipment
Shutterbug equipment can range from Kodak One-Shots ($10) to quality 35mm and digital cameras, each of which can cost upwards of $400. A 35mm camera weighs about two pounds, while a digital camera often weighs less than a pound. Both come with an average quality carrying case and required accessories (lens covers, USB cables, etc.)

A 35mm camera uses normal film, while a digital camera uses memory cards. A typical roll of film, which enables you to take 24 pictures, costs about $5 ($10 after including development costs). Changing a roll of film takes two full rounds, although it can be done in a single round if the character passes an Agility roll. A digital camera can hold up to 300 average-quality images on a standard memory card ($25). Swapping out memory cards counts as a regular action.

Normally, you may take up to three pictures per round; however, 35mm cameras can be outfitted with a motor drive (+$50) that enables you to snap up to six shots per round. If cameras play a recurring role in your campaign, it is recommended that you offer your characters the choice of picking up the Knowledge (Photography) skill; otherwise, you may simply default to a Common Knowledge roll.

What to do with a drunken sailor...

Determining exactly what happens when you botch that drinking roll.

The Carousing mechanic found in the 50 Fathoms setting book adds a new and exciting element to your Savage Worlds game. Those failing their drinking rolls are in for a rough time the next day. But, what if old snake eyes pops up? What kind of fun could we have with a drunken sailor?

The following is an optional rule for Carousing in *50 Fathoms*. When Carousing, a character that rolls snake eyes (double ones) on their drinking (Smarts) roll is in for a big surprise. The GM rolls d100 and consults the table below. As always, the GM has the final say and doesn't even need to tell the drunk what the result is until it is appropriate. Even if the result is nothing, the GM can choose to keep it under his hat—just to make the player squirm!

The Drunken Sailor Table:

1. Bad food. You now have the Anemic Hindrance for 1d6 days.

2. Dirty wench. You now have the Anemic Hindrance permanently.

3. Bad booze. You now have the Bad Eyes Hindrance for 1d6 days.

4. Really bad booze. You now have the Bad Eyes Hindrance permanently.

5. Naughty. You now have the Bad Luck Hindrance for 1d4 days.

6. Really naughty. You now have the Bad Luck Hindrance permanently.

7. Drank too much. You now have the Clueless Hindrance for 1d6 days.

8. Booze vs. brain cells. You now have the Clueless Hindrance permanently.

9. " Matey! Me boots be talkin' to me! And pass more rum." You now have the Delusional (Minor) Hindrance for 1d4 days.

10. You ticked someone off. You now have the Enemy (Minor) Hindrance.

11. You really ticked someone off. You now have the Enemy (Major) Hindrance.

12. You got fleas from somewhere. You now have the Habit (Minor) Hindrance from constant scratching.

13. Loud drunks. You now have the Hard of Hearing Hindrance for 1d6 days.

14. Really loud drunks. You now have the Hard of Hearing permanently.

15. Bad fall or good brawl? You now have the Lame Hindrance for 1d6 days.

16. Really bad fall or good brawl? You now have the Lame Hindrance permanently.

17. You took a bad blow to the face. You now have one wound and when it heals, you have the Ugly Hindrance.

18. You got a really bad/ugly/embarrassing tattoo, right on your face no less. You now have the Ugly Hindrance.

19. You are wanted for murder (and you are guilty).

20. You are wanted for murder (and you are innocent).

21. You are wanted for theft (and you are guilty).

22. You are wanted for theft (and you are innocent).

23. You wake up in jail for murder (and you are guilty).

24. You wake up in jail for murder (and you are innocent).

25. You wake up in jail for theft (and you are guilty).

27. You wake up in jail for theft (and you are innocent).

28. You must have hit the grog pretty hard, because the wench you woke up with is far from the beauty you thought she was last night.

29. You wake up to find yourself legally married.

30. Female characters become pregnant and male characters are going to be a daddy.

31. You spent twice the money you thought. If you have to pay more money than you have, then you owe someone in this port the difference, and they want it back.

32. You spent three times the money you thought. If you have to pay more money than you have, then you owe someone in this port the difference, and they want it back.

33. You spent half of your total money carousing.

34. You picked up a debt from gambling. You owe the gambler (who WILL get his money) 1d10x10 pieces of eight.

35. Nothing special happens.

36. You suffered a wound last night.

37. The person you woke up with has different plumbing than you prefer.

38. You have a new friend in this port (who may show up elsewhere if the GM sees fit) who is absolutely irritating and a bother, getting in the way and causing trouble.

39. You have a new friend in this port (who may show up elsewhere if the GM sees fit) that is very helpful, knowledgeable, or has connections of some kind.

40. You have become very popular in port, but you can't remember why. You are +4 Charisma while in this port.

41. You have become very unpopular in port, but you can't remember why. You are –4 Charisma while in this port

42. You bought an odd, expensive item for 1d10x10 pieces of eight. The item should be of no use: a strange wooden tiki, an ugly hunk of tin on a string, a broken pipe, etc.

43. You lost 1d4 teeth in a brawl. With four teeth lost you have a 50% chance of having the Ugly Hindrance.

44. You accidentally shacked up with the enemy last night (Doreen and Kehana, Kieran Privateer and Ograpog Pirate, Elementalist and Inquisitor, etc.).

45. You wake up marooned on a nearby island.

46. Your crew has gone without you.

47. An annoying animal won't leave you alone. It's not directly dangerous, but it makes sounds at inopportune times, or it steals small important things.

48. Killed yer liver. Flip a coin. If it comes up tails, you're dead!

49. You wake up tied to a tree a few miles out of town.

50. You wake up on someone else's ship.

51. You did something crazy that you don't remember, but the crew does. The drunk must leave the room while the rest of the crew decides what he did. It should be something harmless and stupid. (for example: insisted he was a parrot, demanded a hug from a cat, tried kissing a Monkape, etc)

52. You are missing a finger.

53. You find that you have 50% more money than you thought.

54. You somehow gained a random relic.

55. You found a treasure map (fake).

56. You found a treasure map (real).

57. You lost some random inventory item.

58. You somehow acquired a deed to some land nearby.

59. You find a contract signed by yourself and someone you can't remember. You can't even remember what the contact is for and the details are very vague.

60. You now suffer from nightmares.

61. You have a small locked box that you can't open. It seems to be magically sealed. How to open it and its contents are up to the GM.

62. You ticked off the crew. 1d6 hired crew leave on account of you.

63. Your clothes are gone. Wherever you wake up, you are naked as a Monkape and your clothes are nowhere to be found.

64. Some of your gear is broken, and it should not be discovered until it is used.

65. Established some connections in this port. You have the Connections Edge, but only while in this port.

66. You have a few extra items in your gear list: approximately 50 pieces of eight worth of mundane objects.

67. You have 25% more cash than you thought.

68. You have lost all of your money.

69. You have twice the cash you thought.

70. Someone else paid for your carousing last night.

71. Your favorite weapon is broken.

72. You wake up to find yourself buried up to your neck in the sand on the beach.

73. You wake up sealed in a coffin. How you got there is any one's guess.

74. You really over did it last night. You are incapacitated for 1d4 days, unless someone with the healing skill can revive you at –2.

75. Lose a Benny.

76. Gain a Benny.

77. You killed one of your own hired crewmen. It's up to the rest of the crew what to do with you.

78. You wake up in the bed of a married man or woman's bed. It is up to the GM whether or not their spouse is around or how powerful their spouse is.

79. An enemy has captured you.

80. Bad booze: –2 to Agility and related skills for 1d4 days.

81. Bad booze: –2 to Vigor and related skills for 1d4 days.

82. Bad booze: –2 to Strength and related skills for 1d4 days.

83. Bad booze: –2 to Spirit and related skills for 1d4 days.

84. Bad booze: –2 to Smarts and related skills for 1d4 days.

85. Lost an eye. You now have the One Eye Hindrance.

86. Lost an arm. You now have the One Hand Hindrance.

87. Lost a leg. You now have the One Leg Hindrance.

88. Mages have no Power Points for the day. Nothing happens to non-mages.

89. You were in one hell of a fight. You suffered two wounds and need to roll on the Injury Table.

90. You were in one hell of a fight. You suffered two wounds and have an Arm injury (see the Injury Table).

91. You were in one hell of a fight. You suffered two wounds and have a Guts injury (see the Injury Table).

92. You were in one hell of a fight. You suffered two wounds and have a Leg injury (see the Injury Table).

93. You were in one hell of a fight. You suffered two wounds and have a Head injury (see the Injury Table).

94. Nothing. In fact, you don't even have a hangover !

95. You openly mocked, criticized, or threatened Jarris Jant, Bruno Baltimus, or some other powerful big shot. Watch your back.

96. You have suffered some liver damage. Your drinking rolls are now –2.

97. You have built up a tolerance. Your drinking rolls are now +2.

98. You have a key. What's it to? Who knows…

99. All your ammunition is gone. You won't actually discover that until you actually go to load your weapon or actively look.

100. Roll twice. This is a good time for the GM, to laugh.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF SHARK BYTES

The Man of Bronze, Part 2, The Message, A Preview of Pinebox Places, New Adventure Cards, Conducting a Ghost Hunt, Running a Savage Horror Campaign, RPGs in Poland, and LOTS more Savage stuff!

OK, HOW BAD IS MY CHARACTER HURT?

Breaking down the Savage Worlds damage system for all to understand.

The Savage Worlds damage rules, detailed on pages 72-74 of the rulebook, are quite simple on the surface; nonetheless, they are oftentimes misunderstood and thus improperly implemented. Not to worry though, in this article Matthew Mather will clear things up for you. Before you read this article, I suggest familiarizing yourself with these rules by carefully rereading the aforementioned pages.

Roll the Bones to Hit!

Since the attack roll may influence the final damage, let's quickly review the basics of how to perform an attack in *Savage Worlds*:

What skill do I use?
When making a melee attack roll, you use your Fighting skill. When making a ranged attack roll, you use your Shooting or Throwing skill. In both cases, Wild Cards also roll their Wild Die. The highest die total of the two (skill die and Wild Die) is taken as the attack roll die total.

What about modifiers?
Modifiers are applied to the attack roll die total. They do not alter the target number (TN).

How do I determine the TN?
The TN for melee attacks is equal to the defender's Parry value. For ranged attacks, the TN is 4.

Success
A final attack roll die total equal to or greater than the TN is considered a success.

Raise
For every increment of four over the TN, you score a raise.

So far, so good—there shouldn't be much confusion related to this area. The key point to remember is that Wild Cards take the best total—either that of their skill die or the Wild Die—and apply any applicable modifiers to it. This final attack roll die total is compared to the defender's TN to determine success or failure.

An attack roll die total that meets or exceeds an opponent's TN enables the attacker the opportunity to score damage. If a raise is obtained on the attack roll, then you may roll an additional 1d6 when determining damage. This bonus damage die may Ace, but since it is not a trait roll—you may not reroll it by spending a Benny.

(Editor's Note: The original system allowed a bonus of +2 to damage for every raise obtained on the attack roll. Shane has stated that this method will be obsolete—as far as the official rules are concerned—with the second printing of the Savage Worlds rulebook. Fortunately, either way works just fine and doesn't really affect the manner in which damage is applied. Regardless of the method you use, the manner in which damage is applied remains consistent.)

A Whole Lotta Shaken' Goin' On

To understand how damage works in *Savage Worlds*, you first have to understand what the Shaken condition entails: a character is either Shaken or he isn't. As explained in the rulebook (p.73), being Shaken represents a variety of things: being distracted, stinging from the force of a blow or taunt, or otherwise being caught off guard. Shaken characters may move only half their Pace, and they may not take any regular actions. A character's Parry value is unaffected by his Shaken status.

Shaken characters are not denied the ability to make any "reflexive actions," such as making opposed rolls, resisting an arcane effect, and so on, nor are they prevented from performing free actions. If all this talk of regular actions and free actions has your head spinning, a quick review of the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (p.64) should clear things up for you.

Can I Roll Damage Yet?

Damage is rolled according to weapon type. Damage rolls based on a trait (e.g., Str+3) may be rerolled by spending a Benny. Trait-based damage includes all melee and thrown weapons. Most ranged weapons have fixed damage rolls (e.g., 2d6), and they may not be rerolled.

If your total damage roll (after accounting for all applicable modifiers, including bonus damage) meets or exceeds the target's Toughness, you cause the defender to become Shaken if he is not already. Each raise on the damage roll inflicts a wound. Beyond that, characters take damage in two different ways, depending on whether they are Shaken or not:

Damage Roll - Result if character <u>not</u> Shaken
Success = Shaken
Raise = 1 wound and Shaken
Each additional Raise = +1 wound and still Shaken

Damage Roll - Result if character <u>is already</u> Shaken
Success = 1 wound and still Shaken
Raise = 1 wound and still Shaken
Each additional Raise = +1 wound and still Shaken

Wounds may lead to Knockout Blows and Injuries, but the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (pp. 72-74) is pretty clear as far as those areas are concerned.

Grin and Bear It

First off, let's get one thing straight—you do not spend a Benny to make a Soak roll! You may spend a Benny at any time (as a free action) in order to remove an existing Shaken condition. If a Benny is spent immediately after taking one or more wounds from a single attack, you may also make a Soak roll. However, if you exercise the option to make a Soak roll and fail to remove all of the wounds inflicted by the attack you are soaking than you are still Shaken! Does that seem a bit harsh? I think so, but that's they way Shane says it's supposed to work.

The Soak roll can be taken to represent many things—the character rolls with the punch, avoids getting hit in a vital spot, or just plain gets lucky. The player makes a Vigor roll and each success and raise negates a wound from that particular source of damage. If the Soak roll negates all the wounds from the damage, the character also recovers from being Shaken; otherwise, he is still Shaken after resolving the Soak attempt.

Parting Shot

Well, I hope this article has cleared up any misconceptions you may have had concerning the *Savage Worlds* damage system. If not, feel free to contact me. I will try to provide additional answers to any questions in future articles.

A HIERARCHY OF VILLAINY

Defining your Savage Villains

Designing NPCs in *Savage Worlds* couldn't be easier. You basically just give 'em the stats that "feel" right and move on with it. At least that's what I do. Such a method may seem a bit cavalier to those of you out there who prefer a more methodical approach.

Well, this is the best I can do. It should at least give you a base from which to start—after that, should you require a more "detailed" system, then perhaps you should consult the point value document that is available as a free download from the Pinnacle website. If you do this you'll basically be using a points system to create NPCs—you might as well play *HERO*—it does "points" better.

Using the following system, you simply decide on a basic level of power for your NPC: Goon, Mook, Henchman, Right Hand Man, or Boss and then fill in the blanks.

Goons
Skills: d6 in primary—d4 in the rest
Attributes: d6 in primary—d4 in the rest
Wounds: 0 (treat as an Extra—they're either Shaken or Incapacitated)
Wild die: ---

Mooks (The prototypical Extra)
Skills: d6 in all
Attributes: d6 in all
Wounds: 0
Wild die: ---

Henchmen
Skills: d8 in primary—d6 in the rest
Attributes: d8 in primary—d6 in the rest
Wounds: 1
Wild die: ---

Right Hand Men
Skills: d8 in primary and any other one skill—d6 in the rest
Attributes: d8 in primary and secondary—d6 in the rest
Wounds: 2
Wild die: ---

Bosses (Wild Card)
Create them just like Wild Cards.

The MAN of BRONZE

By Kenneth Robeson

*A complete book length novel of the exploits of Doc Savage and his five companions; a thrilling saga of a scrappy outfit hunting for a treasure and being hunted in turn! This quintessential Savage tale of adventure was written by Kenneth Robeson (a.k.a., Lester Dent) and was originally published in Doc Savage Magazine in 1933. We present Part One in this issue of **Shark Bytes**.*

THE SINISTER ONE

There was death afoot in the darkness.

It crept furtively along a steel girder. Hundreds of feet below yawned glass-and-brick-walled cracks—New York streets. Down there, late workers scurried homeward. Most of them carried umbrellas, and did not glance upward. Even had they looked, they probably would have noticed nothing. The night was black as a cave bat. Rain threshed down monotonously. The clammy sky was like an oppressive shroud wrapped around the tops of the tall buildings.

One skyscraper was under construction. It had been completed to the eightieth floor. Some offices were in use. Above the eightieth floor, an ornamental observation tower jutted up a full hundred and fifty feet more. The metal work of this was in place, but no masonry had been laid. Girders lifted a gigantic steel skeleton. The naked beams were a sinister forest.

It was in this forest that Death prowled.

Death was a man.

He seemed to have the adroitness of a cat at finding his way in the dark. Upward, he crept. The girders were slick with rain, treacherous. The man's progress was gruesome in its vile purpose.

From time to time, he spat strange, clucking words. Gibberish of hate! A master of languages would have been baffled trying to name the tongue the man spoke. A profound student might have identified the dialect. The knowledge would be hard to believe, for the words were of a lost race, the language of a civilization long vanished!

"He must die!" the man chanted hoarsely in his strange lingo. "It is decreed by the Son of the Feathered Serpent! Tonight! Tonight death shall strike!"

Each time he raved his paean of hate, the man hugged an object he carried closer to his chest. This object was a box, black, leather-covered.

It was about four inches deep and four feet long. "This shall bring death to him!" the man clucked, caressing the black case.

The rain beat him. Steel-fanged space gaped below. One slip would be his death. He climbed upward yard after yard. Most of the chimneys which New Yorkers call office buildings had been emptied of their daily toilers. There were only occasional pale eyes of light gleaming from their sides. The labyrinth of girders baffled the skulker a moment. He poked a flashlight beam inquisitively. The glow lasted a bare instant, but it disclosed a remarkable thing about the man's hands.

The finger tips were a brilliant red! They might have been dipped an inch of their length in a scarlet dye.

The red-fingered man scuttled onto a workmen's platform. The planks were thick. The platform was near the outside of the wilderness of steel.

The man lowered his black case. His inner pocket disgorged compact, powerful binoculars. On the lowermost floor of a skyscraper many blocks distant, the crimson-fingered man focused his glasses. He started counting stories upward.

The building was one of the tallest in New York. A gleaming spike of steel and brick, it rammed upward nearly a hundred stories.

At the eighty-sixth floor, the sinister man ceased to count. His glasses moved right and left until they found a lighted window. This was at the west corner of the building. Only slightly blurred by the rain, the powerful binoculars disclosed what was in the room.

The broad, polished top of a massive and exquisitely inlaid table stood directly before the window. Beyond it was the bronze figure!

This looked like the head and shoulders of a man, sculptured in hard bronze. It was a startling sight, that bronze bust. The lines of the features, the unusually high forehead, the mobile and muscular, but not too-

full mouth, the lean cheeks, denoted a power of character seldom seen.

The bronze of the hair was a little darker than the bronze of the features. The hair was straight, and lay down tightly as a metal skullcap. A genius at sculpture might have made it.

Most marvelous of all were the eyes. They glittered like pools of flake gold when little lights from the table lamp played on them. Even from that distance they seemed to exert a hypnotic influence through the powerful binocular lenses, a quality that would cause the rashest individual to hesitate.

The man with the scarlet-tipped fingers shuddered. "Death!" he croaked, as if seeking to overcome the unnerving quality of those strange, golden eyes. "The Son of the Feathered Serpent has commanded. It shall be death!"

He opened the black box. Faint metallic clicking sounded as he fitted together parts of the thing it held. After that, he ran his fingers lovingly over the object.

"The tool of the Son of the Feathered Serpent!" he chortled. "It shall deliver death!"

Once more, he pressed the binoculars to his eyes and focused them on the amazing bronze statue. The bronze masterpiece opened its mouth, yawned—for it was no statue, but a living man!

The bronze man showed wide, very strong-looking teeth, in yawning. Seated there by the immense desk, he did not seem to be a large man. An onlooker would have doubted his six feet height— and would have been astounded to learn he weighed every ounce of two hundred pounds.

The big bronze man was so well put together that the impression was not of size, but of power. The bulk of his great body was forgotten in the smooth symmetry of a build incredibly powerful.

This man was Clark Savage, Jr. Doc Savage! The man whose name was becoming a byword in the odd corners of the world!

Apparently no sound had entered the room. But the big bronze man left his chair. He went to the door. The hand he opened the door with was long-fingered, supple. Yet its enormous tendons were like cables under a thin film of bronze lacquer.

Doc Savage's keenness of hearing was vindicated. Five men were getting out of the elevator cage, which had come up silently.

These men came toward Doc. There was wild delight in their manner. But for some sober reason, they did not shout boisterous greetings. It was as though Doc bore a great grief, and they sympathized deeply with him, but didn't know what to say.

The first of the five men was a giant who towered four inches over six feet. He weighed fully two fifty. His face was severe, his mouth thin and grim, and compressed tightly, as though he had just finished uttering a disapproving, "Tsk tsk!" sound. His features had a most puritanical look.

This was "Renny," or Colonel John Renwick. His arms were enormous, his fists bony monstrosities. His favorite act was to slam his great fists through the solid panel of a heavy door. He was known throughout the world for his engineering accomplishments, also.

Behind Renny came William Harper Littlejohn. Very tall and very gaunt, Johnny wore glasses with a peculiarly thick lens over the left eye. He looked like a half-starved, studious scientist. He was probably one of the greatest living experts on geology and archaeology.

Next was Major Thomas J. Roberts, dubbed "Long Tom". Long Tom was the physical weakling of the crowd, thin, not very tall, and with a none-too-healthy-appearing skin. He was a wizard with electricity.

"Ham" trailed Long Tom. "Brigadier General Theodore Marley Brooks," Ham was designated on formal occasions. Slender, wispy, quick-moving, Ham looked what he was—a quick thinker and possibly the most astute lawyer Harvard ever turned out. He carried a plain black cane—never went anywhere without it. This was, among other things, a sword cane.

Last came the most remarkable character of all. Only a few inches over five feet tall, he weighed better than two hundred and sixty pounds. He had the build of a gorilla, arms six inches longer than his legs, a chest thicker than it was wide. His eyes were so surrounded by gristle as to resemble pleasant little stars twinkling in pits. He grinned with a mouth so very big it looked like an accident.

"Monk!" No other name could fit him!

He was Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Blodgett Mayfair, but he heard the full name so seldom he had about forgotten what it sounded like.

The men entered the sumptuously furnished reception room of the office suite. After the first greeting, they were silent, uncomfortable. They didn't know what to say.

Doc Savage's father had died from a weird cause since they last saw Doc.

The elder Savage had been known throughout the world for his dominant bearing and his good work. Early in life, he had amassed a tremendous fortune—for one purpose. That purpose was to go here and there, from one end of the world to the other, looking for excitement and adventure, striving to help those who needed help, punishing those who deserved it.

To that creed he had devoted his life.

His fortune had dwindled to practically nothing. But as it shrank, his influence had increased. It was unbelievably wide, a heritage befitting the man.

Greater even, though, was the heritage he had given his son. Not in wealth, but in training to take up his career of adventure and righting of wrongs where it left off. Clark Savage, Jr., had been reared from the cradle to become the supreme adventurer.

Hardly had Doc learned to walk, when his father started him taking the routine of exercises to which he still adhered. Two hours each day, Doc exercised intensively all his muscles, senses, and his brain. As a result of these exercises, Doc possessed superhuman strength. There was no magic about it, though. Doc had simply built up muscle intensively all his life.

Doc's mental training had started with medicine and surgery. It had branched out to include all arts and sciences. Just as Doc could easily overpower the gorilla like Monk in spite of his great strength, so too did Doc know more about chemistry.

And that applied to Renny, the engineer; Long Tom, the electrical wizard; Johnny, the geologist and archaeologist; and Ham, the lawyer.

Doc had been well trained for his work.

Grief lay heavily upon Doc's five friends. The elder Savage had been close to their hearts.

"Your father's death—was three weeks ago," Renny said at last.

Doc nodded slowly. "So I learned from the newspapers—when I got back today."

Renny groped for words, said finally: "We tried to get you in every way.

But you were gone—as if you had been off the face of the earth."

Doc looked at the window. There was grief in his gold eyes.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAD

Falling rain strewed the outer side of the windowpane with water. Far below, very pallid in the soaking murk, were street lights. Over on the Hudson River, a steamer was tooting a foghorn. The frightened, mooing horn was hardly audible inside the room.

Some blocks away, the skyscraper under construction loomed a darksome pile, crowned with a spidery labyrinth of steel girders. Only the vaguest outlines of it were discernible. Impossible, of course, to glimpse the strange, crimson-fingered servant of death in that wilderness of metal!

Doc Savage said slowly: "I was far away when my father died."

He did not explain where he had been, did not mention his "Fortress of Solitude," his rendezvous built on a rocky island deep in the arctic regions. He had been there. It was to this spot that Doc retired periodically to brush up on the newest developments in science, psychology, medicine, engineering. This was the secret of his universal knowledge, for his periods of concentration there were long and intense.

The Fortress of Solitude had been his father's recommendation. And no one on earth knew the location of the retreat. Once there, nothing could interrupt Doc's studies and experiments.

Without taking his golden eyes from the wet window, Doc asked: "Was there anything strange about my father's death?"

"We're not certain," Renny muttered, and set his thin lips in an ominous expression.

"I, for one, am certain!" snapped Littlejohn. He settled more firmly on his nose the glasses which had the extremely thick left lens.

"What do you mean, Johnny?" Doc Savage asked.

"I am positive your father was murdered!" Johnny's gauntness, his studious scientist look, gave him a profoundly serious expression.

Doc Savage swung slowly from the window. His bronze face had not changed expression. But under his brown business coat, tensing muscles had made his arms inches farther around.

"Why do you say that, Johnny?"

Johnny hesitated. His right eye narrowed the left remaining wide and a little blank behind the thick spectacle lens. He shrugged.

"Only a hunch," he admitted, then added, almost shouting: "I'm right about it! I know I am!"

That was Johnny's way. He had absolute faith in what he called his hunches. And nearly always he was right. On occasions when he was wrong, though, he was very wrong indeed.

"Exactly what did the doctors say caused death?" Doc asked. Doc's voice was low, pleasant, but a voice capable of great volume and changing tone.

Renny answered that. Renny's voice was like thunder gobbling out of a cave. "The doctors didn't know. It was a new one on them. Your father broke out with queer circular red patches on his neck. And he lasted only a couple of days."

"I ran all kinds of chemical tests, trying to find if it was poison or germs or what it was caused the red spots," Monk interposed, slowly opening and closing his huge, red-furred fists. "I never found out a thing!"

Monk's looks were deceiving. His low forehead apparently didn't contain room for a spoonful of brains. Actually, Monk was in a way of being the most widely known chemist in America. He was a Houdini of the test tubes.

"We have no facts upon which to base suspicion!" clipped Ham, the waspish Harvard lawyer whose quick thinking had earned him a brigadier generalship in the World War. "But we're suspicious anyway."

Doc Savage moved abruptly across the room to a steel safe. The safe was huge, reaching above his shoulders. He swung it open.

It was instantly evident explosive had torn the lock out of the safe door.

A long, surprised gasp swished around the room.

"I found it broken into when I came back," Doc explained. "Maybe that has a connection with my father's death. Maybe not."

Doc's movements were rhythmic as he swung over and perched on a corner of the big, inlaid table before the window. His eyes roved slowly over the beautifully furnished office. There was another office adjoining, larger, which contained a library of technical books that was priceless because of its completeness.

Adjoining that was the vast laboratory room, replete with apparatus for chemical and electrical experiments.

This was about all the worldly goods the elder Savage had left behind.

"What's eating you, Doc?" asked the giant Renny. "We all got the word from you to show up here tonight. Why?"

Doc Savage's strange golden eyes roved over the assembled men; from Renny, whose knowledge of engineering in all its branches was profound, to Long Tom, who was an electrical wizard, to Johnny, whose fund of information on the structure of the earth and ancient races which had inhabited it was extremely vast, to Ham, the clever Harvard lawyer and quick thinker, and finally to Monk, who, in spite of his resemblance to a gorilla, was a great chemist.

In these five men, Doc knew he had five of the greatest brains ever to assemble in one group. Each was surpassed in his field by only one human being—Doc Savage himself.

"I think you can guess why you are here," Doc said. Monk rubbed his hairy hands together. Of the six men present, Monk's skin alone bore scars. The skin of the others held no marks of their adventurous past, thanks to Doc's uncanny skill in causing wounds to heal without leaving scars.

But not Monk. His tough, rusty iron hide was so marked with gray scars that it looked as if a flock of chickens with gray-chalk feet had paraded on him. This was because Monk refused to let Doc treat him. Monk gloried in his tough looks.

"Our big job is about to start, huh?" said Monk, vast satisfaction in his mild voice.

Doc nodded. "The work to which we shall devote the rest of our lives."

At that statement, great satisfaction appeared upon the face of every man present. They showed eagerness for what was to come.

Doc dangled a leg from the corner of the table. Unwittingly—for he knew nothing of the red-fingered killer lurking in the distant skyscraper that was under construction—Doc had placed his back out of line with the window. In fact, since the men had entered, he had not once been aligned with the window.

"We first got together back in the War," he told the five slowly. "We all liked the big scrap. It got into our blood. When we came back, the humdrum life of an ordinary man was not suited to our natures. So we sought something else."

Doc held their absolute attention, as if he had them hypnotized. Undeniably this golden-eyed man was the leader of the group, as well as leader of anything he undertook. His very being denoted a calm knowledge of all things, and an ability to handle himself under any conditions.

"Moved by mutual admiration for my father," Doc continued, "we decided to take up his work of good wherever he was forced to leave off. We at once began training ourselves for that purpose. It is the cause for which I had been reared from the cradle, but you fellows, because of a love of excitement and adventure, wish to join me."

Doc Savage paused. He looked over his companions. One by one, in the soft light of the well-furnished office, one of the few remaining evidences of the wealth that once belonged to his father.

"Tonight," he went on soberly, "we begin carrying out the ideals of my father— to go here and there, from one end of the world to the other, looking for excitement and adventure, striving to help those who need help, and punishing those who deserve it."

There was a somber silence after that immense pronunciation.

It was Monk, matter-of-fact person that he was, who shattered the quiet.

"What flubdubs me is who broke into that safe, and why?" he grumbled. "Doc, could it have any connection with your father's death?"

"It could, of course," Doc explained. "The contents of the safe had been rifled. I do not know whether my father had anything of importance in it. But I suspect there was."

Doc drew a folded paper from inside his coat. The lower half of the paper had been burned away, it was evident from the charred edges. Doc continued speaking.

"Finding this in a corner of the safe leads me to that belief. The explosion which opened the safe obviously destroyed the lower part of the paper. And the robber probably overlooked the rest. Here, read it!"

He passed it to the five men. The paper was covered with the fine, almost engraving-perfect writing of Doc's father. They all recognized the penmanship instantly. They read:

Clark, I have many things to tell you. In your whole lifetime, there never was an occasion when I desired you here so much as I do now. I need you, son, because many things have happened which indicate to me that my last journey is at hand. You will find that I have nothing much to leave you in the way of tangible wealth.

I have, however, the satisfaction of knowing that in you I shall live.

I have developed you from boyhood into the sort of man you have become, and I have spared no time or expense to make you just what I think you should be.

Everything I have done for you has been with the purpose that you should find yourself capable of carrying on the work which hopefully started, and which, in these last few years, has been almost impossible to carry on.

If I do not see you again before this letter is in your hands, I want to assure you that I appreciate the fact that you have lacked nothing in the way of filial devotion. That you have been absent so much of the time has been a secret source of gratification to me, for your absence has, I know, made you self-reliant and able. It was all that I hoped for you.

Now, as to the heritage which I am about to leave you:

What I am passing along to you may be a doubtful heritage. It may be a heritage of woe. It may even be a heritage of destruction to you if you attempt to capitalize on it. On the other hand, it may enable you to do many things for those who are not as fortunate as you yourself, and will, in that way, be a boon for you in carrying on your work of doing good to all.

Here is the general information concerning it:

Some twenty years ago, in company with Hubert Robertson, I went on an expedition to Hidalgo, in Central America, to investigate the report of a prehistoric —

There the missive ended. Flames had consumed the rest.

"The thing to do is get hold of Hubert Robertson!" clipped the quick-thinking Ham. Waspish, rapid-moving, he swung over to the telephone, scooped it up. "I know Hubert Robertson's phone number. He is connected with the Museum of Natural History."

"You won't get him!" Doc said dryly.

"Why not?"

Doc got off the table and stood beside the giant Renny. It was only then that one realized what a big man Doc was. Alongside Renny, Doc was like dynamite alongside gunpowder.

"Hubert Robertson is dead," Doc explained. "He died from the same thing that killed my father—a weird malady that started with a breaking out of red spots. And he died at about the same time as my father."

Renny's thin mouth pinched even tighter at that. Gloom seemed to settle on his long face. He looked like a man disgusted enough with the evils of the world to cry.

Strangely enough, that somber look denoted that Renny was beginning to take interest. The tougher the going got, the better Renny functioned and—the more puritanical he looked.

"That flooeys our chances of finding out more about this heritage your father left you!" he rumbled.

"Not entirely," Doc corrected. "Wait here a moment!"

He stepped through another door, crossed the room banked with the volumes of his father's great technical library.

Through a second door, and he was in the laboratory. Cases laden with chemicals stood thick as forest trees on the floor. There were electrical coils, vacuum tubes, ray apparatus, microscopes, retorts, electric furnaces, everything that could go into such a laboratory.

From a cabinet Doc lifted a metal box closely resembling an old-fashioned magic lantern. The lens, instead of being ordinary optical glass, was a very dark purple, almost black. There was a cord for plugging into an electric-light socket.

Doc carried this into the room where his five men waited, placed it on a stand, aiming the lens at the window. He plugged the cord into an electric outlet.

Before putting the thing in operation, he lifted the metal lid and beckoned to Long Tom, the electrical wizard.

"Know what this is?"

"Of course." Long Tom pulled absently at an ear that was too big, too thin and too pale. "That is a lamp for making ultra-violet rays, or what is commonly called black light. The rays are invisible to the human eye, since they are shorter than ordinary light, but many substances when placed in the black light will glow, or fluoresce after the fashion of luminous paint on a watch dial. Examples of such substances are ordinary vaseline, quinine—"

"That's plenty," interposed Doc. "Will you look at the window I've pointed this at. See anything unusual about it?"

Johnny, the gaunt archaeologist and geologist, advanced to the window, removing his glasses as he went. He held the thick-lensed left glass before his right eye, inspecting the window.

In reality, the left side of Johnny's glasses was an extremely powerful magnifying lens. His work often required a magnifier, so he wore one over his left eye, which was virtually useless because of an injury received in the World War.

"I can find nothing!" Johnny declared. "There's nothing unusual about the window!"

"I hope you're wrong," Doc said, sobriety in his wondrously modulated voice. "But you could not see the writing on that window, should there be any. The substance my father perfected for leaving secret messages was absolutely invisible. But it glows under ultra-violet light."

"You mean—" hairy Monk rumbled.

"That my father and I often left each other notes written on that window," Doc explained. "Watch!"

Doc crossed the room, a big, dynamic man, light on his feet as a kitten for all his size, and turned out the lights. He came back to the black-light box. His hand, supple despite its enormous tendons, clicked the switch that shot current into the apparatus.

Instantly, written words sprang out on the darkened windowpane. Glowing with a dazzling, electric blue, the effect of their sudden appearance was uncanny.

A split second later came a terrific report! A bullet knocked the glass into hundreds of fragments, wiping out the sparkling blue message before they could read

it. The bullet passed entirely through the steel-plate inner door of the safe! It embedded in the safe back.

The room reeked silence. One second, two! Nobody had moved.

And then a new sound was heard. It was a low, mellow, trilling sound, like the song of some strange bird of the jungle, or the sound of the wind filtering through a jungled forest. It was melodious, though it had no tune; and it was inspiring, though it was not awesome.

The amazing sound had the peculiar quality of seeming to come from everywhere within the room rather than from a definite spot, as though permeated with an eerie essence of ventriloquism.

A purposeful calm settled over Doc Savage's five men as they heard that sound. Their breathing became less rapid, their brains more alert.

For this weird sound was part of Doc—a small, unconscious thing which he did in moments of utter concentration. To his friends it was both the cry of battle and the song of triumph. It would come upon his lips when a plan of action was being arranged, precoursing a master stroke which made all things certain.

It would come again in the midst of some struggle, when the odds were all against his men, when everything seemed lost. And with the sound, new strength would come to all, and the tide would always turn.

And again, it might come when some beleaguered member of the group, alone and attacked, had almost given up all hope of survival. Then that sound would filter through, some way, and the victim knew that help was at hand.

The whistling sound was a sign of Doc, and of safety, of victory.

"Who got it?" asked Johnny, and he could be heard settling his glasses more firmly on his bony nose.

"No one," said Doc. "Let us crawl, brothers, crawl. That was no ordinary rifle bullet, from the sound of it!"

At that instant, a second bullet crashed into the room. It came, not through the window, but through some inches of brick and mortar which comprised the wall! Plaster sprayed across the thick carpet.

BE SURE TO TUNE IN NEXT ISSUE AND FOLLOW THE AMAZING EXPLOITS OF DOC SAVAGE!

Just give me one of each!

Spicing up the composition of your 50 Fathoms crew

When hiring a crew in the 50 Fathoms setting, it may be important to know what kind of people you're bringing on board. An honest merchant crew with a Doreen as First Mate isn't likely to hire a couple of Kehana with the Sneaky personality (as described in the Allies section of the Savage Worlds rulebook). The following crew generator lets you add a little more detail and flavor to your crew, while still adhering to the mantra of Fast! Furious! Fun!

As stated in the *50 Fathoms* setting book (p.32), one experienced crewman is found for *every* five sailors hired. You can use the tables below as follows:

- **Experienced Crewman**: Roll 1d20 on Table 1 to determine the type of experienced crewman you find. Then, roll 1d20 on the appropriate table to determine the crewman's race.
- **Regular Sailor**: Roll 1d20 on Table 2 to determine race.
- Roll any old dice to determine gender—odd is male and even is female.

TABLE 1

1	**Fire Mage** (Table 3)
2	**Water Mage** (Table 3)
3	**Air Mage** (Table 3)
4	**Earth Mage** (Table 3)
5-6	**Surgeon** (Table 4; Sailor: d10 Healing)
7-9	**Carpenter** (Table 2; Sailor: d10 Repair)
10-11	**Super** (Table 5; Sailor: Super Tattoo)
12-13	**Cook** (Table 2; Sailor: grants crew an additional ten days before Cabin Fever sets in)
14-20	**Marine** (Table 6)

Bluth's Crown: Specialists are always Mages.
Braven: Replace Marines with a Braven Ranger (page 59).

TABLE 2

1-2	Local*
3-8	Masaquani
9-12	Human
13-14	Atani
15	Kehana
16	Kraken
17	Grael
18	Redman
19	Doreen
20	Scurillian

TABLE 3

1-5	Masaquani
6-10	Human
11-15	Kraken
16-20	Scurillian

TABLE 4

1-2	Local*
3-8	Masaquani
9-12	Human
13-14	Atani
15-16	Scurillian
17-18	Kraken
19	Doreen
20	Kehana

TABLE 5

1-2	Local*
3-8	Masaquani
9-12	Human
13-14	Scurillian
15	Kehana
16	Atani
17	Doreen
18	Kraken
19	Redman
20	Grael

TABLE 6

1-2	Local*
3-7	Masaquani
8-10	Human
11-12	Kehana
13-14	Grael
15-16	Redman
17	Kraken
18	Doreen
19	Atani
20	Scurillian

*Local**: This roll draws from the local population. Aside from the following settlements, assume the local is always a Masaquani:
- Deiking, Dunich, New Madrid, and Tulago: All locals are Human
- Kaja: All locals are Grael
- Marasales: All locals are Kehana
- Maroa and Below Town: All locals are Atani.

BUCKET O' CHUM

An endless source of ready-made NPCs for your Savage Worlds games!

*In this issue, Theron Seckington details the Mountain Dwarf Skirmisher, which is a different take on the typical view of dwarves and combat. Theron also gives us the Zombie Hunter—as if I could somehow resist including something zombie related in a fanzine dedicated to a Pinnacle game! Finally, I've also included Mark Hauser—a Wild Card Extra from my very own Savage Redline campaign (see **Shark Bytes #2** for details)!*

Mountain Dwarf Skirmisher

In fantasy literature, one most often sees dwarves away from their mountain and hill homes, bravely wading into melee with axes flailing and crossbows singing in deadly harmony. Those are the ones their families like to talk about—the ones that have escaped the cramped caves where mining is the daily occupation. While underground, dwarven warriors need to take a different approach to combat. With no room to swing an axe, fire a crossbow (let alone reload), or move around without bumping your horned helmet into the carved walls, mountain dwarves have adopted new tactics for skulking about and picking foes off at their leisure. These crafty warriors never directly attack their foes. They may follow them at a distance for days at a time. Only when they are sure that they have the advantage will they strike.

These dwarves are expert at the art of the throwing knife, and once they close to range, they employ their wide-bladed short swords with brutal efficiency. These dedicated warriors are expert in the fields of climbing and skulking and have even learned to swim in order to cross the underground rivers they come upon—all too often as far as they are concerned! Because of the long periods of time they spend with one another and because they have come to trust their lives to their team members, these warriors share a bond of loyalty with one another that often supersedes that to family and clan. Because of this, other dwarves, although grateful for the service they provide, tend to see them as an outsider as far as traditional dwarven culture is concerned.

MOUNTAIN DWARF SKIRMISHERS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Spelunking) d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d4, Throwing d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (includes Armor bonus)

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal, Outsider, Slow

Special Abilities:
   Mountain Skirmisher: When in the confines of underground passages or narrow chasms, these warriors may add +1 to their Parry and make all melee attacks at +2. Their ability to work together as a team grants them a bonus of +1 on any ganging up bonuses they are entitled to.
   Dagger Volley: Some mountain skirmishers are specially trained to unleash a deadly volley of daggers. In such cases, they may throw up to three daggers as a single attack. Treat the attack as a standard auto-fire attack (–2 to attack roll). They may do this once per encounter.
   Low Light Vision: Ignores Dim and Dark lighting penalties.

Gear: Dagger x6 (Range: 3/6/12; Damage: Str+1; ROF 1), short sword (Str+2), leather cap (Armor +1; 50% chance to defend against head shot), quilted armor (Armor +1).

Zombie Hunter

It's a nasty job, but somebody has to do it if humanity doesn't want to get overrun by a bunch of flesh-eating dead things! Enter the zombie hunter—a dedicated hero who's willing to step up to plate and take a swing for humanity. The zombie hunter is no fool. He knows better than to try and fight these things up close. Personal firearms are his weapons of choice—the bigger, the better! Our hero also knows that ammunition does run out, weapons do jam, and sometimes you just plain get caught off guard—for these reasons he also carries a couple of "back-up" weapons.

ZOMBIE HUNTER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Repair d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Tracking d6

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 4; **Toughness**: 6 (includes Armor bonus)

Hindrances: Enemy: Necromancers (or other suitably evil types), Heroic, Mean (he shoots a lot, a LOT, of dead people for a living and it's sort of a thankless job; it gets to you after awhile)

Edges: Marksman (only if you don't use Headshot), Danger Sense, Headshot (see *Savage Tale #6: Zombie Run* for details)

Gear: Steyr AUG with scope (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 2d8; ROF 3; Shots: 30), sawed off double-barrel shotgun (Range: 5/10/20; special damage: shotgun; ROF 2; Shots: 2), outlandishly large knife (Str+2), baseball bat (Str+1), chainmail neck guard (for those biting zombies; Armor +2 for the neck), football pads (spray painted with zombie call signs, nicknames, and taunts; provides Armor +1 for the torso).

Mark Hauser (Novice)

Mark was born in 1970 and raised in New Hampshire. He grew up a "gear head"—cars, snowmobiles, and motorcycles are his passion. After the war, he stayed hidden in the mountains for several years—his only diversion being his fully stocked garage and his car collection. Just recently, he came into contact with a wandering band of "flatlanders". He traded several of his cars for food, water, and fuel. He's 5'8" tall, 165 pounds, and has blue eyes and blond hair. He dresses in jeans, T-shirts (or a flannel shirt if it gets cold), heavy riding boots, and his black leather biker jacket. A red bandanna and a pair of Oakley sunglasses are always around his neck. Mark is a generally likable guy. Some would call him a "northern redneck" and he'd be the first to agree. He is confident in his abilities and when it comes to racing—he thinks he's all that and a bag of chips.

MARK HAUSER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 6 (includes Armor bonus)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Overconfident

Edges: Ace

Gear: Rucksack, bedroll, set of clean clothes, leather biker jacket (Armor +1), 9mm pistol (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 2d6; ROF 1; Shots: 17) and 2 extra magazines (full), four days worth of food and water, 1985 Mustang GT (ACC/Top Speed: 30/56; Toughness: 10/3) with a full tank of gas.

ASTEROID ZERO-4

A Savage tale of adventure set in the depths of space.

GM MISSION BRIEFING

Research station Asteroid Zero-4 has blasted loose from orbit and is heading toward the system capitol. Nothing is in place to intercept in time *except the heroes' shuttle.* The heroes, simple miners on a routine mining trek, will have only 5 minutes (50 turns) to penetrate the main control center, set their explosive device, and escape. Otherwise, the asteroid will be too far along to stop it. If they succeed, the government will offer to buy the fruits of their labor (mined ore) at five times the market value, in addition to refitting their aging vessel with the latest technology. The research company is also offering a bonus of 500 credits for each recovered research sample or set of research notes. This tale is suitable for 4-6 Novice Rank characters.

OVERVIEW OF THE ASTEROID MINER

This small work craft has space for ten crewmembers (pilot, engineer, navigator, and seven miners). It carries typical mining gear: ten vacuum suits, one laser cutter, seven power hammers, a spike gun, a tool kit, and a man-portable explosive device. Feel free to detail the vessel; however, it plays no role in this scenario other than as a means of arriving at the scene of the adventure.

Selected Sci-Fi Gear

- *Vacuum suits*: These are fully sealed and reinforced suits (Armor +1) and helmet (Armor +2). If penetrated, these suits self seal up to three times. After the third time, the wearer must make a Vigor roll at the start of their action or take a Fatigue level. Once Incapacitated, death occurs in 1d6 rounds as the suit depressurizes. Also called vac suit.
- *Reinforced vacuum suits*: As above, but providing Armor +2/+4 (vs. bullets). The helmet provides protection equal to Armor +3.
- *Laser cutter*: (Range: 0/1/2, ROF 1, Damage: 2d10/2d8/2d4, AP 10/8/4, No range modifiers except damage reduction)
- *Power hammers*: (Str+4, AP 2, Parry –1, 2-handed)
- *Spike gun*: (Range: 1/2/4, ROF 1, Damage: 2d6 with AP 4 first round, then 4d6 Small Burst Template second round)
- *Tool kit*: Good for repairs and lock picking electronic locks; contains wrench, hammer, and screwdriver are –1 to hit, STR+1 damage.
- *Backpack Explosive Device (BED)*: This device is capable of destroying the asteroid if placed in the control center.

AN OVERVIEW OF ASTEROID ZERO-4

The research station Asteroid Zero-4 is constructed inside an actual asteroid. To enter the base, you must either maneuver the shuttle down a narrow access corridor (Piloting –2), or land (Piloting) and then move down a 60 foot (10") corridor to reach the Shuttle Lock Entrance. The entrance will cycle open automatically upon the approach of a shuttle, but those on foot must manually open the airlock door (See Area 1).

The station's power system is operational as are all life support and artificial gravity systems. Scanners show no signs of living objects in or around the station.

Unless a specific area description states otherwise, all normal corridors are 8 feet wide; narrow corridors are half this distance. Security cameras are located on the walls at either end of every corridor. Ceilings are composed of drop panels and are 10 feet in height. Floors consist of metal grating—except in the living and work spaces where they are solid metal panels with access hatches.

There are two types of doors throughout the research station: normal and armored. A metal grating covers all air vents, which are 4 foot square.

- *Vent covers*: Toughness 6 (Blunt or Cutting).
- *Walls and floors*: Toughness 8 (Cutting).
- *Normal doors*: Toughness 9 (Blunt or Cutting).
- *Armored doors*: Toughness 12 (Blunt or Cutting).

Area 1: **Shuttle Lock Entrance**. The door is secured by electronic code, but it can be overridden by a successful Knowledge (Electronics) roll or a Smarts roll at –2. A security camera is mounted in each corner of this area. Mangled chunks of flesh litter the floor of this area—whether it is human or otherwise, cannot be determined.

Area 2: **Vacuum Suit Locker.** This area contains extra vac suits. Six of the suits contain zombies! The door cannot be locked and must be opened by hand. A security camera is mounted on the wall opposite the door.

Areas 3 to 6: **Labs 1-4**. Each area is filled with zombie lab workers and scientists (one per PC per area). The doors cannot be locked and must be opened by hand. Samples and research notes for the various projects that were being conducted at Asteroid Zero-4 may be recovered. Recovering a sample or a single set of notes requires a full round action. A security camera is mounted in each corner of each area.

Area 7: Armory. This area serves as storage for security team gear (four sets of reinforced vac suits, four 9mm pistols, four sub-machine gun, four survival knives, extra ammunition, and four security radios). It also holds an alien harvester life form, now awake and feeling trapped! The door requires a security code to open or it may be "hacked" as the door in Area 1. A security camera is mounted in each corner of this area.

Areas 8 to 11: Crew Quarters 1-4. Each room has the personal affects of six people. All areas are empty except for a zombie dog in Area 9—use the wolf stats from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook and add the Undead monstrous ability. The doors cannot be locked and must be opened by hand. There are no security cameras present.

Area 12: Mechanical Room. This is where all the mechanical components of the research station are located. The door needs a security code to open, but may be "hacked" as the door in Area 1.

Area 13: Control Center. Doctor Muller, along with three other zombies, is located here. The door needs a security code to open, but may be "hacked" as the door in Area 1.

This is where the BED needs to be placed in order to destroy the research station. From this area, the characters may open and close any doors as well as access all security cameras. If they can hack into the mainframe (Smarts –6 or relevant Knowledge skill at –2), they can even depressurize the entire research station.

Area 14: Doctor Muller's Quarters. This is Doctor Muller's quarters with notes on his Xenon-9 experiment. Xenon-9 is a bio-weapon in which DNA from a hibernating alien creature is used to cause the death and subsequent control of target creatures through linked mind activity. The DNA, stored in the lab areas, has been bioengineered into a virus form. If injected into a target the effect is identical to receiving an actual bite from the Alien Harvester! The controlling creature must have both the antidote (which he must take himself once infected in order to avoid degenerating into a mindless zombie) and a special mind stimulator unit. Five antidote doses, in a black hard plastic case, can be found here; however, one dose appears to be missing.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS (Heroes)

Alek Aloshenka, Pilot
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Spaceships) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, and Zero-G Actions d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 5; **Bennies**: 4
Hindrances: Overconfident, Stubborn, and Loyal.
Edges: Ace and Luck
Gear: Vac suit, Peacemaker revolver with breach loading sealed firing chamber (6 rounds in chamber, 24 in belt, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 1, –1 to Zero-G rolls if not braced to fire).

Anda Aniko, Navigator
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Navigation) d8, Knowledge (Spaceships) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d6
Charisma: –1; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 5; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Curious, Habit (constantly chewing gum and popping bubbles), Quirk (compares everything to Anime)
Edges: Alertness and Danger Sense
Gear: Vac suit, portable 3-D anime player, and laptop PC.

Baun Bevin, Engineer
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Spaceships) d6, Notice d6, Repair d8, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 5; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Overconfident, Loyal, and Doubting Thomas
Edges: Mr. Fix-it
Gear: Vac suit and personal tool kit (just like the ships but of better quality).

Edmund (Ed) Fitzgerald, Lead Miner
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6 (5 with power hammer); **Toughness**: 6; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, and Hard of Hearing
Edges: Command
Gear: Vac suit and power hammer.

John Austin, Miner
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d4, Knowledge (Demolitions) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d6
Charisma: –2 (–6); **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6 (5 with power hammer); **Toughness**: 6; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Ruthless, Mean, and Loyal
Edges: Brawny and Ambidextrous
Gear: Vac suit, Backpack Explosive Device, and power hammer.

Axel Freeman, Miner
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, and Zero-G Actions d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6 (5 with power hammer); **Toughness**: 5; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Cautious, and Ugly
Edges: Quick and Alertness
Gear: Vac suit, spike gun, and power hammer.

Dale Dexter, Miner
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 5; **Parry**: 5 (6 unencumbered,–1 with power hammer); **Toughness**: 5; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Small, Greedy (minor), and Poverty
Edges: Brawny, Acrobatic (+1 Parry if unencumbered)
Gear: Vac suit, tool kit, and power hammer.

Jamal Jameson, Miner
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 6; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Clueless, Quirk (thinks he knows it all), and Vengeance (minor)
Edges: Ambidextrous and Two Fisted
Gear: Vac suit, laser cutter, and crowbar (Str+2).

Nathan Nelson, Miner
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, and Zero-G Actions d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6 (5 with power hammer); **Toughness**: 6; **Bennies**: 2
Hindrances: Bad Luck, Anemic, and Cautious
Edges: Nerves of Steel and Fast Healer
Gear: Vac suit and power hammer.

Victor Cortèges, Miner
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Asteroid Mining) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d8, and Zero-G Actions d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace**: 4 (d4 running); **Parry**: 6 (5 with power hammer); **Toughness**: 6; **Bennies**: 3
Hindrances: Lame, All Thumbs, and Quirk (always clumsy)
Edges: Brawny and Berserk
Gear: Vac suit and power hammer.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS (NPCs)

Zombie Crewmembers
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6
Pace: 4; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 7 (includes Undead Toughness bonus)
Gear: Improvised weapons (Str+1)
Special Abilities: Claws (Str); Fear (Sight triggers Guts check–after three successful checks, consider the characters to be jaded); Fearless (Immune to Fear and Intimidation tests); Undead (+2 toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage and bullets and other piercing attacks do only half-damage); Weakness (Shots to a zombie's head inflict +2 points of damage–piercing attacks do normal damage); Slow (–2 to Pace and cannot run).

Doctor Muller, Advanced Zombie
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6
Pace: 4; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 8
Special Abilities: As zombie plus AB: Super Powers with 20 Power Points. His power is known as Psionic Control (d8)
Gear: 9mm pistol (full magazine and two extra clips); Mind Stimulation Unit (MSU).

Muller can control any zombie within sight (including those visible on security cameras) at a cost of one point/zombie. By tripling this cost, the controlled zombie can utilize Muller's Fighting, Shooting and Toughness die types. Muller will try to kill the characters and add them to his "collection"–he's too far gone to realize that he will shortly be nothing more than a stain on the downtown streets of the system capitol!

Xeno-form, Alien Harvester
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 8; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 9 (Includes Natural Armor +2)
Special Abilities: Claws (Str+1); Bite (Str+Infection).

The creature may make two claw attacks or one bite attack per round. If both claw attacks hit, it may make an immediate bite attack at –2. If bit, the target must make an opposed Vigor roll against the attack's damage or be infected! In six rounds, the character will rise as a zombie unless a successful Healing roll (at –4) is made! After that, the antidote is their only hope. One vial will restore one zombie to their human form.

Asteroid Zero-4
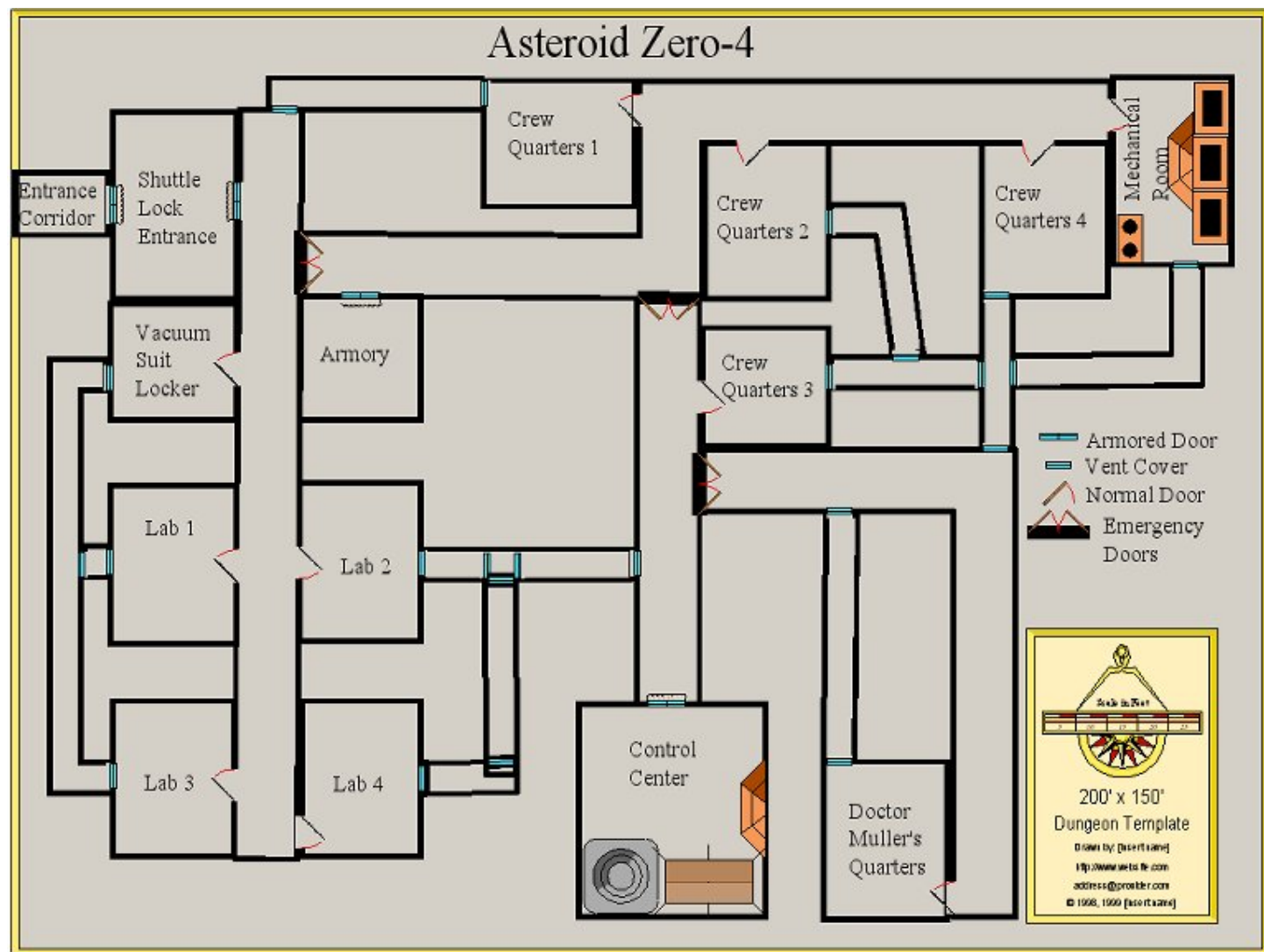
PROFESSIONAL EDGES

This article originally appeared in the Shooting Blind Column authored by Shane Hensley. I thought it made its point quite eloquently and thus bears repeating. Savage Worlds is a system unlike any other. Its apparent simplicity belies subtleties that are not apparent the first (or even the twentieth) time you play the game. The fact is 99.9% of the time you can represent a character archetype using the core rules "as written"—there is no need for additional Professional Edges. So, read this article and take it to heart—you might just save yourself a lot of time and effort!

Since the debut of *Savage Worlds*, I've see a lot of new Game Masters trying to make Professional Edges for every "character type" they expect to see in their game. The trick to *Savage Worlds* though is that most character types can already be made using the basic rules.

Take snipers for example: A lot of folks converting *Weird Wars* are trying to make a Sniper Professional Edge. But why is that? Everything a sniper needs is already there. Picture a character with a decent Shooting skill and the Marksman Edge. If he's targeting an unsuspecting target, the GM should give him The Drop. That, combined with a called shot to a vital area, makes him a very deadly sniper indeed. No separate Edge is needed.

Here's another good example to show you exactly what I'm talking about: So you're about to run a 1920s game. You decide you want characters like gangsters, gun molls, nosy reporters, and G-Men. Then you think about how cool it would be to make a Professional Edge for each. You want my advice? Think very hard about whether you really need a Professional Edge or not. *Savage Worlds* was written to incorporate most every character type already. Many times, new GMs want to actually create archetypes—not a new Professional Edge. Let's look at each one in turn:

Gangster: You absolutely don't need an Edge for this guy. In fact, it will probably hurt your game if you do as everyone will make this specific type of gangster. Leave your players alone and let them make their own gangster. Maybe one is a Tommy Gunner (Rock 'n Roll), another is a knife-fighter (Florentine, Frenzy, etc), and another is a sniper (Marksman, gun with a scope).

Gun Moll: A pretty girl who runs with gangsters and knows how to shoot a bit herself. You might be thinking of giving her some seductive power or something, but again, why? The Attractive and Charismatic Edges with a good Persuasion already cover that. And she can shoot a gun just like anyone else (or wield a knife or whatever).

Nosy Reporter: The Investigator Edge and Scholar go a long way to making a good Kolchak-type character.

G-Man: Now here's a real candidate. There's nothing in SW about law-enforcement powers because we consider that setting specific. So you make a G-Man Edge. Don't give the guy extra skills to reflect his training–let those be the requirements instead. Think about it in more like real life than a game effect. If he wants a badge, he has to have the skills to get it. So what does the Edge give him? Primarily law enforcement powers and the ability to ask for backup on occasion. Even that shouldn't be automatic (maybe it works like Connections).

Somebody posed this question to Clint, the resident *Savage Worlds* Rules Meister, awhile back on the forums.

Q: *Are there any basic guidelines for creating Professional Edges?*

A: Here's a basic framework, but it's more of an art than a science in *Savage Worlds*. I know this type of gray area is tough to get used to with so many games being based on exacting rules, but I think that's part of the attraction of *Savage Worlds*.

Basic Professional Edge
Requirements: d8 in skill / Benefit: +2 to the skill roll. Professional Edges should not normally modify combat rolls; however, that's not to say that they can't. However, if your Professional Edge does modify a combat roll, make sure that there are offsetting penalties to balance things out.

Expansions
- Reduce the skill requirement to d6 to get the benefit only in certain circumstances.
- Add another related skill at the same die type to get +2 to it as well.
- Change from skill to attribute to get a bonus to attribute rolls in certain circumstances or perhaps another related benefit.

IT'S A PARANORMAL WORLD AFTER ALL

The Mystic's psychic powers are <u>not</u> psionic powers you lunkhead!

Ed Wetterman, president of 12 to Midnight, Inc. and resident Savage Horror Expert, got together with the Rules Meister, Clint Black, to produce this awesome system for including psychic powers in your Savage Worlds games. As Ed would surely agree—and you will shortly discover—psychic powers are not psionic powers.

Horror storytelling is probably as old as humanity. Ancient humans gathered around their fires and told tales of beasts, dragons, and spirits, and these legends became our myths. In modern times, authors such as Stephen King thrill us with new stories of demonic forces and wonderful strangeness. Our favorite movies are replete with horror motifs, as well as many of our best television programs, such as Angel, X-Files, and Buffy. Roleplaying games by their very nature inspire tales of horror as the intrepid heroes fight evil beasts and demonic entities on a fairly regular basis. There have been very few companies that have devoted themselves to creating modern horror games and adventures, and so far only one for the *Savage Worlds* game system—12 to Midnight.

The 12 to Midnight adventures take place in the real, modern world. In our horror adventures, we like to take the world we live in and stretch reality so that shadows dance, monsters exist, and global conspiracies dominate man's existence. It has always been our goal to take many real beliefs in the paranormal and supernatural and use them in game situations.

The television psychic John Edwards claims to communicate with spirits of the dead, which show him images and "pull" his energies and attention to them. Other psychics claim to hear voices, have visions, channel spirits, experience physical sensations in paranormal situations, or even to read tea-leaves and cards to tell the future.

Now, these psychic powers are not the classic "psionic" type powers typical of most game systems, and they are not "magic" powers. These psychic powers are generally much weaker in nature, and though they may provide important information, they are not easily proven or seen by others. In the real world, this causes great doubt and disbelief among most of humanity, as when Shirley claims to channel "Xilbilboa" from the planet "Xaa" and states that Xilbilboa seeks to help humanity to live in a peaceful co-existence with each other. Most folks would say, "Yeah…right! Whatever Xilbilboy!"
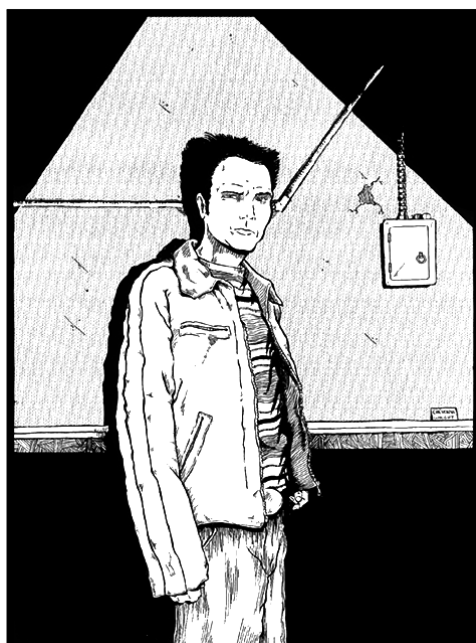
The Mystic
When playing in a modern horror game, we recommend that all of the Arcane Backgrounds, except for super powers, be allowed. Of course, the final decision is up to the individual GM. However, you don't use an Arcane Background to create a mystic, because mystics don't use "powers" per se. It is recommended that players wishing to employ a mystic character take the Sensitive Background Edge, and further develop this "mystical" power through the Psychic Static Hindrance and Weird Edges detailed hereafter.

SENSITIVE (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6
You are able to sense psychic, spiritual, and supernatural energies. The GM may allow you to make Notice rolls to detect these energies. You also gain a +2 bonus to any Knowledge (Rituals) rolls if using the rules for Ritualists—look for these in a future issue of **Shark Bytes**! (Example: Sharon Ossie is a mystic and she enters a house that is haunted by spirits. As she moves across the living room, the GM allows her to make a Notice check. If she is successful, he tells her that she suddenly feels as if the temperature around her has dropped by 30°—a great sign of restless spirits.)

PSYCHIC STATIC (Minor/Major Hindrance): You are especially open to psychic emanations. You suffer a –2 penalty to resist possession attempts, the effects of Weird Edges, and powers from the Arcane Background: Psionics. If you possess the Sensitive Edge, this counts as a Major Hindrance. Whenever any other sentient beings or spirits are within a number of inches equal to your Spirit die type, you suffer a –2 penalty to all skill rolls related to the Sensitive Edge and any Weird Edges. You may not have both this Hindrance and the Positive Reinforcement Edge.

AURAN SIGHT (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
This Edge allows the character to view another person's aura to determine base emotional state and health. To use this Edge, the character enters a trance-like state and may take no further actions for a full 10 rounds (one minute) of game time. This Edge requires a Spirit roll, and if successful, the character knows the general emotional state of the target, such as Happy, Sad, Angry, Confused, etc. If a raise is gained, then he also can read the overall health of the subject, such as sick, weak, strong, etc. If two raises are gained, then he may tell if the person has a developing health condition, such as cancer, diabetes, etc. Each raise on the roll also adds a +1 to any healing attempt on the target.

CLOSED CHANNELER (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
This Edge allows you to open yourself to one particular spirit or being. Making contact with the being requires you to enter a trance-like state where you can take no other actions, including movement. During this time, you may make a Persuasion roll to gain information from your spiritual "contact." Both the process of establishing initial contact and then maintaining it count as full round actions. If either you or the spirit wants to forcibly end the connection, the initiator must win an opposed Spirit roll with a raise. In whatever manner the connection ends, you're Shaken when it's over.

EMPATHIC (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
This Edge allows the mystic to feel emotions of others, both spiritual and living. These emotions range from sad and angry, to happy and loving. This Edge requires a Spirit roll, and a raise allows the mystic to judge the depth of the emotion (weak, moderate, strong, or overbearing). If the attempt fails, the mystic is "blocked" and cannot make another attempt for 1d6 hours. Empaths also receive a +2 bonus to Persuasion rolls and when initiating a Test of Will.

EMPATHIC HEALING (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Veteran, Empathic
You have the ability to heal others, but you may take damage yourself by doing so. To use this ability, you must

be able to touch the one to be healed. Upon doing so, you must make a Spirit roll with a penalty equal to the target's wound modifier. Each success and raise on this roll transfers one wound from the target to you; however, you get an immediate Soak roll to try to reduce the damage taken, which does not cost you a Benny. You can heal permanent injuries with this ability if you heal all of the target's wounds; however, you gain the permanent injury yourself unless you Soak all of the transferred wounds.

OPEN CHANNELER (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
This Edge allows you to open yourself to any and all spiritual energies or beings. Making contact with the being requires you to enter a trance-like state where you can take no other actions, including movement. Unlike Closed Channeler, you must force information from spirits. You must win an opposed Spirit roll to contact an available spirit; then you must win another opposed Spirit roll each round for control– both actions count as full round actions. You may use control to get the spirit to answer a question or to break contact with a spirit. Each raise on this roll garners more detailed answers if used to ask a question.

If at anytime the spirit wins the opposed Spirit roll, it may break contact and may not be recalled for 24 hours. If the spirit wins the roll with a raise, it may possess you, taking control of your body as if under the *puppet* power for three rounds, after which another Spirit roll may be made for control. In whatever manner the connection ends, you're Shaken when it's over.

PAST LIFE ATTUNEMENT (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
You can recall some of your past lives. This can occur through dreams, memories, emotions, or sensations. Effectively, this allows you to make Common Knowledge rolls in instances where the GM deems a past life fits the situation. In addition, when you spend a Benny to make a reroll for a skill roll, you gain a +2 bonus to the reroll. This ability represents tapping into the skills of your past lives. It is recommended that you come up with a list of past lives with the GM to speed things up during play.

PHYSICAL MEDIUM (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d10
This Edge allows a spirit or energy to "possess" a part of the physical body of the medium, but not the ego (conscience) of that person. (Example: Automatic Writing, Automatic Art, Walking, Pointing, Using Hands, etc.). This Edge requires a Spirit roll–if successful and the spirit is willing, that chosen part of the body may be possessed for 1d6 rounds. If successful with a raise, the spirit may continue to use the body part as long as it wishes, unless the mystic medium decides to "push" it out. If the mystic wants to forcibly end

the connection, he must win an opposed Spirit roll with a raise. In whatever manner the connection ends, the mystic is Shaken when it is over.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
The positive feelings of allies around you help you use your mystic abilities. You gain a +1 bonus to skill rolls when using the Sensitive Edge or a similar Weird Edge, as long as you have an ally within a number of inches equal to your Spirit die type. You may not have both this Edge and the Psychic Static Hindrance.

PRECOGNITIVE FLASHES (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Seasoned, Danger Sense, Sensitive
You see visions of the future when you come in contact with other sentient beings. These visions are of a highly emotional and usually dangerous event. The visions happen very quickly and are hard to decipher. When the GM says you are experiencing a Precognitive Flash, you must make a Spirit roll. On a failure, it takes you 1d6 hours to recall a general idea of what you saw. On a success, you see a vision, and with a raise, you gain more specific information. If you roll a natural 1 on your Spirit Die, you are Shaken from your viewing of the future, even if your Wild Die is still successful. On a Critical Failure, the GM may roll on the Fright Table to determine the effect on you.

PSYCHIC BOND (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Common Bond
You have an unexplainable link with one other character. You may "feel" strong emotions, or be sensitive to various feelings and health of her. The bond may be created through shared emotional trauma. You will not generally know exactly what has happened through this bond, but with a success on a Spirit roll, you will gain more detail, such as "You feel a pain in your leg, as if it is broken." A raise on this roll allows the other character to send a distinct impression that can be related in ten words or less, such as, "The Dark Man is chasing me at the warehouse." This Edge always reacts to the other character being Shaken or taking one or more wounds.

If the other character also has this Edge in respect to you, you both gain a +2 bonus to your Spirit rolls. Also, if either of you has the Arcane Background: Psionics or Sensitive Edges, you both gain a +2 bonus to your roll. These bonuses can stack. On the negative side, if the character with whom you are linked ever becomes Incapacitated, you are automatically Shaken. There is no range limit imposed on this Edge. If the character with which you have the bond ever dies, this bond carries through to the "other side."

PSYCHIC COMMUNICATOR (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Seasoned, Sensitive, Spirit d10
This Edge allows the mystic to hear, see, or feel spiritual energies or beings that wish to communicate with the living, normal world. On a successful Notice roll, the mystic will hear a voice, see an image, or feel the spirit's presence for one round. Each raise will continue the communication for extra rounds. (Example: Edward Johns is a mystic who makes a living communicating with the spirits of departed loved ones. The first contact is with an aunt, who tells Edward that the key to the chest is hidden beneath the kitchen rug. Edwards passes this information on to the relative of the aunt. This is representative of a success and one raise.) If the attempt fails, the mystic is "blocked" from using this ability for 1d6 hours.

PSYCHIC READER (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Smarts d6
This Edge allows the mystic to communicate with spiritual beings through some medium, such as tea leaves, crystals, or Tarot Cards. This Edge requires a Spirit roll and on a success, the reader may answer one question with a generic 'Yes', 'No', or 'Maybe' type answer. With each raise, another or follow-up question may be answered. If the attempt fails, the reader may be given an answer at random, that may be correct (GM's option.)

PSYCHOMETRIC SEEKER (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
This person is so in tuned with the natural and spiritual forces of the universe that he may find or locate persons, places, or things. Dowsing for water is an example. The mystic needs a focus, such as a necklace, a rock, a stick, a glass of water, or a similar object. This focus must be determined when this Edge is selected. Whichever focus is chosen, the mystic may only use that type of focus for all future seeking activities. This Edge requires a Notice roll. The attempt will take 1d6 hours and if successful, the seeker knows the general direction of what he is seeking. If successful with a raise, he knows the direction and the general distance. If successful with two or more raises, he knows the exact location of the object, person, or thing sought. If the attempt fails, the particular target may not be sought after by the mystic again.

PSYCHOMETRY (Weird Edge)
Requirements: Novice, Sensitive, Spirit d8
By touching or holding an object (non-living thing) linked to a past event, your character may gain impressions or visions of the past. Make a Spirit roll to "read" an object. A success grants you a basic impression, while a raise provides more details of the event.

TELEPATHIC (Weird Edge)

Requirements: Seasoned, Empathic

This Edge allows the mystic to "read" the thoughts of a person, spirit, or entity. The mystic must remain focused in a trance-like state for a full minute (10 rounds), concentrating on the target. This Edge requires an opposed Spirit roll. If successful, the character knows the basic emotions of the target at this time (see Empathic), and he receives an image of something relating to what the target is thinking on at that moment. (Example: Mary uses her Telepathic Edge on the captured killer, Slash Martin. She is successful and sees a vision of him hiding the body of his victim in a drainage ditch.) For each raise, more details are added to the image. This is not direct communication, and the images may seem confusing to the character. If the attempt fails, the telepath is "blocked" and cannot make another attempt on the target for 1d6 hours.

TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATOR (Weird Edge)

Requirements: Veteran, Telepathic

With this Edge, the mystic may project thoughts, ideas, and visions to another living being. The mystic must enter a trance-like state for a full minute, concentrating on the target.

For every 100" from the mystic, subtract –1 from the roll for distance increment, and there is no penalty for using a touch contact with the target (holding hands, etc.) A success allows the mystic to project one "vision" or "word" to the target. Every raise increases the number of visions (images) or words. (Example: Jane, the telepathic mystic, is separated from her companions and is being held by a demonic being in the basement of the abandoned building the team was investigating. She concentrates on contacting Markus, her best friend on the team. He is one level above her, approximately 80" away. She is successful with one raise. She sends an image of the stairs leading to the basement, and a second image of her chained to a gurney in terror.) If the attempt fails, the mystic is "blocked" and may not attempt any further telepathic communications with the target for 1d6 hours.

TUNED IN (Weird Edge)

Requirements: Legendary, Sensitive

You have reached a higher plateau of thought. You can now use any of your Weird Edges that would normally require you to enter an extended trance-like state as regular actions.

Of course, more of these types of Weird you mine, why don't you show me yours! Horror game aids: *Beyond the Veil* and at the Savage Heroes Website. Here you *Call of Cthulhu* and *Chill* conversions by William Littlefield, and some cool horror articles include new Edges, powers, and you're looking to spice up a horror

12 to Midnight is currently working adventure *No Trespassing*, which takes lost civilizations. Jerry Blakemore, the *Skinwalkers*, which uses the Navajo witch horror adventure. Finally, we are include about a dozen maps, with It'll be a great gaming aid with lots of **Shark Bytes #2**! Let us know what you Midnight forums.

edges are possible, and now that I've shown Butch Curry has posted a couple of great *Scene of the Crime*, and both are available may also find additional articles and aids: Gary Thomas, a *Bureau 13* article by ideas by Jason Young. These aids and other bits of crunchy goodness; so if setting, check them out! on three horrific projects. First is the your team deep into Mexico in search of author of Weekend Warriors, is writing legends as a backdrop for an exciting developing *Pinebox Places*. This book will descriptions, NPCs, and GM Plot Ideas. crunchy bits—look for a preview in think of The Mystic over at the 12 to

Be sure to keep an eye out for the rules concerning Ritualists as well as additional material from the guys at 12 to Midnight, Inc. in future issues of Shark Bytes!

The Cradle Campaign

Mesopotamia—a great place for horror roleplaying whatever the millennia!

*The Cradle Campaign is the creation of Ed Wetterman and the property of 12 to Midnight, Inc. It is the setting for Innana's Kiss—a great adventure from 12 to Midnight—and Ed has graciously allowed me to reprint it for this premiere issue of **Shark Bytes**. The Cradle Campaign originally appeared in The Journal of American Paranormal Research as the first in a series of articles that will describe the ancient world of Mesopotamia and many of the various cultures, religions, places, and people found therein. As new information appears in the Journal, its "Savage" version will appear here in **Shark Bytes**. While based on actual history, the original author has taken certain liberties with the facts to create a roleplaying setting both in the ancient and modern lands of Mesopotamia—in other words, don't use this document as a source for a school report!*

Mankind created the first cities 10,000 years ago. This leap of civilization developed due to an agricultural revolution that advanced man from being a food gatherer, to becoming a food producer. The earliest settlements known were Jarmo in modern Iran, and Jericho in modern Iraq. Humanity developed new technologies such as the plow, the sickle, the hoe, and the wheel. The establishment of cities provided a central location with an abundance of food and protection for the people. These fledgling cities often fought for survival as barbarian raiders and newly developing tribes savagely invaded their lands and sought to steal, pillage and to destroy them.
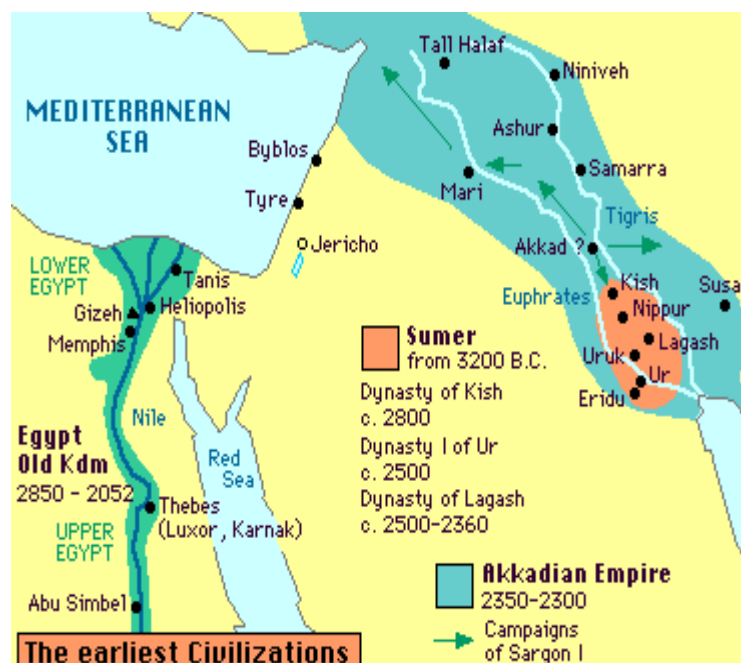
THE ANCIENT LANDS OF MESOPOTAMIA

SUMER: The Earliest Bronze Age Civilization

Sumer was one of many city-states that dotted the river valley between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern day Iraq from approximately 3500 BC to 2000 BC The fertile plains that made up Mesopotamia (the land between two rivers) was first settled over 7,000 years ago and would prove to be the earliest recorded civilization in human history. The Sumerians established city-states and advanced human technology in irrigation and construction as well as inventing the wheel, sail, plow, the first school system, Cuneiform (wedge-shaped writing), city walls, a number system in base 60-from which stem the modern units for measuring time, the 360° circle, and architectural advances such as the arch, columns, ramps and the pyramid-shaped ziggurats. By 2500 BC, the Sumerians had learned to work in bronze and skilled metalworkers turned out thousands of spearheads, swords, and created the first suits of armor.

Sumerian Society, Culture, and Religion

One of the earliest works of literature is the epic poem of Gilgamesh and his unsuccessful journey in search of immortality. The poem describes some of the various Mesopotamian myths and legends, as well as their religion and deities. The Sumerian religion was polytheistic and they believed in over 3,000 gods and goddesses.

The Sumerian gods were very human in their behavior, falling in love, giving birth to children, fighting and arguing amongst themselves, and even murdering each other. Despite their human foibles, the gods were considered immortal and all-powerful. Humans were nothing more than servants of the gods and existed only at their whim. To keep the gods happy, the people built huge, pyramid-shaped temples (ziggurats) in each city-state where they would offer various sacrifices to appease these fickle beings. Sumerian's strove to always appease the gods, as the displeasure of these deities would lead to fire, drought, floods, disease, or war. Priest-Kings became the earliest rulers of these cities living high in the ziggurats, just below the top level, in which the gods were believed to live. These Priest-Kings served as intermediaries between the deities and the people of each city-state.

The people believed that the souls of the dead went to the "land of no return," or "Sheol"—a dark gloomy place between the ancient sea and the Earth's crust. They believed that the souls of those departed were doomed and that, "Dust is their fare and clay their food." In Sheol, the soul of the deceased would linger only for a generation before it vanished forever. Bodies were simply buried beneath the floors of their homes with little ceremony and no coffin.

The city-states of Ur, Agade, Babylon, Akkad, Umma, Lagash, Urek, and Sumer often fought amongst themselves, in brutal wars of conquest and control of the fertile plains and water rights. Eventually the Priest-Kings lost their political power over the people of Sumer and were replaced by military generals, who established the first dynasties. The kings and priests enjoyed the highest levels of society, followed by the merchants, and the farmers. At the bottom were the slaves, some of whom were taken in battle from other city-states. Children were sold into slavery by their parents to pay off debts to rich merchants, priests, or the government. However, it is worth mentioning that Sumerian slaves could earn their freedom by working obediently and loyally for their owners.

Wealthy young men attended the first schools, where they learned how to become Scribes, and upon completing their education were guaranteed to become the top members of society. Women could pursue various occupations in the culture from merchants to artisans. They could own property, and even served in the lower ranks of the priesthood.

Eventually, the working of bronze was discovered in Akkad, and Sargon I, became the first conqueror in world history. His armies, clad in bronze armor and carrying shields, swords, and spears, spread throughout Mesopotamia and united the various city-states. His empire only lasted a few decades. As the other city-states learned the secret of making bronze weapons, civil war erupted throughout the empire.

A second empire arose about 2,000 BC, the Babylonians. Their greatest king was Hammurabi, who is best-known for writing a code of laws that unified all the city-states under one government and under one system of laws. By 1500 BC, the Babylonians were conquered by numerous nomadic invaders. This ancient land suffered many wars and was conquered time and again as many new civilizations rose and fell in the land between two rivers. The Assyrians, Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Ottoman Turks, British, and the Americans all came to this ancient land and fought wars of conquest within it. The lands of Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization, is truly a land of bloodshed and tears, ripe with stories of adventure that could provide inspiration for many Savage tales set in both ancient and modern timeframes.

The Sumerian Pantheon

The Sumerians believed in over 3,000 gods and goddesses and every deity was believed to be a celestial, all-powerful, and immortal being. The gods suffered, as did the later Greek and Roman gods, from the same vices and corruption that always plagued mankind.

The ancient Sumerians believed that the goddess of the primordial waters was Nammu, who gave birth to Ki—goddess of the earth, and to the god, An, the deity of the sky. An and Ki became lovers and gave birth to Enlil, the god of the atmosphere, who divides the sky from the earth.

The greatest of the most ancient gods were the Sumerian Triad—An, Enlil, and Enki. Enki served as the god of the earth.

Another important triad of Sumerian gods were the planetary gods, Nanna (Sin in Akkadian), god of the moon, Utu, the sun god, and Innana (Ishtar in Akkadian), the goddess of love, fertility, and war.

Here is a partial list of the major Sumerian deities:

Tiamat	She is primeval chaos, bearer of the skies and the earth.
An (Anu)	The sky god, father and king of the gods.
Enlil	The god of storms.
Ea (Enki)	The all-knowing god of the waters.
Sin	The moon god and son of Enlil.
Nusku	The god of fire and Enlil's vizier.
Marduk	Son of Ea. He eventually supplants the earlier gods and becomes the major deity in the pantheon.
Ashur	God of the Assyrians, and greatest of the war gods.
Annunnaki	The angels and demons who serve the god of the earth.
Ereshkigal	The goddess of Sheol (the underworld).
Namtar	Ereshkigal's messenger and vizier of the underworld. He is also known as the herald of death and disease.
Nergal	Husband of Ereshkigal.
Lamashu	A female demon known as "she who erases."
Nedu	The guardian of the first gate of Sheol.
Dagan	Male god of fertility and servant of the underworld.
Sebitti	The seven warrior gods led by Erra, also known as the Pleiades. Children of An and the Earth Mother.
Nanna	God of the Moon. Son of Enlil.

The Goddess Innana

Innana became the most influential of the Sumerian deities. She replaced her mother as An's spouse and became the true earth goddess. She wanted control of the underworld as well. The story of Innana's descent into Sheol is one of the oldest myths of the ancient world. Innana was viewed as the goddess of the living, and had fallen in love with a beautiful shepherd boy named Dumuzi. She set him upon the throne of the "city" and together the ruled the land of the living. Innana wanted to immortality and decided to overcome her sister, Ereshkigal—the goddess of Sheol and death. Upon entering the Palace of the Dead, the gatekeepers stripped her of her powers and her sister fixed the "look of death" upon her, killing Innana. Enlil had pity on Innana and sent two messengers to Ereshkigal to ask for Innana to be revived and returned to the land of the living. Before she could return, the Annunakis—the judges of Sheol demanded that she provide a replacement for her spirit. She agreed.

Upon returning to the lands of the living, she was angered to find that Dumuzi was happy to be the sole ruler of the lands and apparently had not mourned her death. She cursed him by "fixing the eye of death" upon him, uttering the "word of despair," and she uttered the "cry of damnation" upon him. He called upon his brother in law, Utu, to turn him into a snake so he could escape to the home of his sister, Geshtinanna. Demons from Sheol captured Dumuzi and dragged him back to Sheol and tortured him. Ereshkigal took pity on Dumuzi and halved his sentence in the underworld, by allowing Geshtinanna to serve the second half of his sentence of death. Later, the Akkadians and the Babylonians would add to the myth. They changed his name from Dumuzi to Tammuz and stated that he was not only Innana's lover, but also her son. Their mythos resurrected him after death and he became an important deity symbolizing the cycle of life in nature. The story also changed, stating that Innana entered the underworld to rescue Tammuz who had died, but failed to overcome death.

Innana is also known as the goddess of a thousand names, as her aspect has been copied by many civilizations throughout history. She has been called Ishtar, Nana, Nina, Anunit, Astarte, Ashtar, Athena, Aphrodite and Venus. Innana has been recognized as the goddess of battle and the queen of heaven. Her pet owls often accompany her.

She decided that she wanted to make her city of Uruk, the greatest city on the earth. She accomplished this by getting the god Enki drunk and stealing the arts of civilization from him. Enki was angered and sent many evil monsters and creatures after her, but she destroyed them and became the most powerful goddess in all of human history, influencing each of the great rulers of Sumeria, including Sargon I.

Her most famous dealings came with the hero Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh and his friend, Enkidu, had traveled to the forests of the cedars and killed the monster Huwawa. On their trek home to the city of Uruk, Innana saw the beauty of Gilgamesh and asked for him to marry her. He remembered what she had done to her previous husbands, especially Dumuzi and he replied, "Your lovers have found you like a brazier who smolders in the cold." He continues, "Which of your lovers did you ever love forever…And if you and I should be lovers, should not I be served in the same fashion as all these others whom you have once loved?"

Innana became angry and asked her father, An to kill Gilgamesh and to destroy the city of Uruk. She threatened to return the dead to life if An ignored her. The dead would have outnumbered the living and ate all of mankind. An agreed to help her, and created the Bull of Heaven. The beast was sent to destroy the city of Uruk. It killed men by the hundreds, but Enkidu finally caught its tail and the great beast was slain by Gilgamesh's sword. Ishtar sent her followers and demons to attack the city walls and pronounced curses upon Gilgamesh. Enkidu tore a thigh from the great Bull of Heaven and threw it to land at the goddess' feet while he hurled insults at her from the protection of the city walls. That night, Enkidu dreamed of his own death and the next day he grew ill and died, cursed by the angered goddess. His death prompted Gilgamesh to journey on his failed quest for immortality.

Life in a Sumerian City-State

Sumerian society was divided into various levels, with the kings and priests being the most powerful citizens of the city-states. These were followed by the nobles, merchants, scholars, farmers and slaves.

Farmers planted in the fertile valley following the sometimes-violent and very unpredictable flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The most common trade good in a Sumerian city-state was food with farmers planting dates, grains, vegetables, and raising domestic animals, mainly oxen and goats. Each city-state had its own laws and customs and some were much harsher than others. Law would finally become unified under Hammurabi, when Babylon conquered all of Mesopotamia.

Women had some basic rights in the earliest civilizations. They had property rights, could become merchants, traders or scribes (by the time of the Babylonian empire). Most of the men served in the city-state's army, but the first professional regular army did not develop until the rise of the Assyrians.

Cities were made of mud brick and typically were surrounded by large walls. The buildings were flat roofed and during the long, hot summers people would assemble on the roofs under awnings to enjoy the slight breeze and to remain cool, as the bricked homes were too hot inside during the summer daytime.

Each city contained a ziggurat dedicated to various gods, with the primary deity of a city living in the top most room, accessible only by the High Priest. The base of the ziggurat was an open market place with merchants selling everything from jewelry, bowls, cedar wood, various foods and spices, and slaves.

Plot Ideas and Threads

To tide you over until the next installment of The Cradle Campaign, here are a couple of plot ideas. Any creatures mentioned are detailed hereafter in a suitably Savaged form. Enjoy!

- ✓ **The Sword of Gilgamesh**: Some say it now rests upon the wandering island in the Persian Gulf. Will you seek it?
- ✓ **The Tribe of Enkidu**: These strange beings do not want to be discovered! Are they another race of man, or something more? Some say they were creatures created by the Goddess Innana to serve her in all things.
- ✓ **Attack of the Bull of Heaven**: The characters are in a city that is about to be destroyed by the Bull of Heaven.
- ✓ **Huwawa's Brother**: Yes, Huwawa had a brother, and he's pissed. He's looking for Gilgamesh and revenge.

Enkidu, Gilgamesh, and the Enkido

Enkidu was created by the Goddess Aruru as a great warrior and hunter. Fine hair covers his body, and his mane is long and luxurious. His head is large, with two horns, similar to a bull's, protruding from it. His legs are large and powerful with cloven hooves instead of feet. Enkidu lived among the animals as an animal, running with the gazelles, and living high in the mountains. A hunter spied him, and was so terrified of the wild man, that he went to the great King Gilgamesh and asked for help in overcoming the beast-man. Gilgamesh sent a harlot named Shalot, who found Enkidu next to a lake and seduced him. After a week of lovemaking, Enkidu found that he could no longer be with the animals as they now fled from him. He and Gilgamesh fought, but after a while, they became best friends. It was Enkidu who grabbed the Bull of Heaven by the tail and held it, so Gilgamesh could finally kill the beast, and he was cursed by Innana for this act. He died the next day. He was mourned by Gilgamesh, and caused the hero to quest for immortality.

Gilgamesh was the greatest hero of Mesopotamian lore. He was a mighty hunter and king of the great city of Urek. He befriended Enkidu, and together they traveled to far-away Phoenicia and the Forest of the Cedars. There they fought and defeated the construct known as Huwawa. On his trek home, the Goddess Innana fell in love with Gilgamesh and asked him to marry her. He refused. The Goddess was so angry that she asked her father to kill Gilgamesh and to destroy his city of Urek. Her father created the Bull of Heaven and sent it to destroy the city. The Bull killed hundreds of men, before Enkidu caught it by the tail and Gilgamesh killed it with his sun sword. Enkidu cursed the Goddess and in his animal frenzy ripped the Bull's thigh from its body and threw it at the Goddesses feet. Innana cursed him and he died the next day. Enkidu's death was greatly mourned by Gilgamesh, and he undertook a futile quest for immortality.

The Enkido, also known as "beastmen" or the Children of Enkidu, are a bit taller than the average human, with very dense and powerful muscles. Its body is covered by fine hair, similar to a short haired dog or cat, and is capped with a mane of long flowing locks. The head is larger than that of a human, but has definite human-like features, excepting for the foot-long, bull-like horns that protrude from the top of the skull. Its legs are built like a bulls hind quarters with cloven hooves instead of feet. The dark eyes portray anger and animalistic rage, but belie a basic intelligence. Enkidu Beast Men are strong bull-like/human creations of the Earth Goddess, Aruru. They typically live in the Zagros Mountains among the animals. They have the gift of speaking with any animal, but may lose this gift if they choose to live amongst men, or take on the trappings of men (such as using spears, wearing armor, or living in a civilized community for any length of time). Enkido are very territorial and often attack other humanoids that enter their territory. They speak their own language and that of the animals with which they live. Enkido stand 6 ½ feet tall and typically weigh over 300 pounds.

ENKIDU

Attributes: Agility d12+1, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d10, and Tracking d6
Pace: 7; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 9 (Includes Size bonus)

Edges: Berserk, Combat Reflexes, Common Bond (Gilgamesh), Improved Trademark Weapon (long spear), and Strong Willed. If encountered before consorting with Shalot, he will also have Beast Bond.
Hindrances: Enemy (Innana) and Loyal (Gilgamesh)
Special Abilities:
   Size +1
   Hoof Attack Str+2
   Horn Attack Str
   Gore Attack: If Enkidu successfully charges an opponent and attacks with his horns he may add +4 to the damage roll

Gear: Long spear (Str+2; Parry +1; Reach +1; Range: 3/6/12)

GILGAMESH

Attributes: Agility d12+1, Smarts d12+1, Spirit d12+1, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12+1
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d12, Guts d12, Healing d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10, Throwing d10, and Tracking d10
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 9 (Includes shield bonus); **Toughness**: 11 (Includes Brawny bonus and Armor +1)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Arcane Background: Magic (Power Points: 30; d*etect*/*conceal arcana*, g*reater healing*, h*ealing*, i*nvisibility*, and l*ight*), Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Common Bond (Enkidu), Improved Trademark Weapon (Sun Sword), Quick, Strong Willed, and Trademark Weapon (short bow).
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Enemy (Innana), Heroic, and Loyal (Enkidu)

Gear: Leather armor (Armor +1); small shield, Sun Sword (Str+3); short bow (Damage: 2d6; Range: 12/24/48; ROF 1), and 50 arrows

ENKIDO

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12+1
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, and Tracking d6
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 7 (Includes Block bonus); **Toughness**: 9

Edges: Berserk and Block
Hindrances: Loyal (Enkido) and Outsider
Special Abilities:
   Hoof Attack Str+2
   Horn Attack Str
   Gore Attack: If an Enkido successfully charges an opponent and attacks with his horns, he may add +4 to the damage roll.

Bull of Heaven

This gargantuan creature is a bull of rainbow light, as the colors of his brightly colored coat constantly ripple and change as he moves. His massive eyes glow with an otherworldly red hue, and his thundering hooves shake the earth itself. This creature was created by Anu to destroy Gilgamesh and the city of Urek on behalf of the Goddess Innana. The Bull of Heaven is a colossal magical beast and is the most feared of all the God's creations.

Fortunately only one Bull of Heaven exists on this plane of existence at any one time, as they are creations of Anu and are only used, but rarely, to punish humanity. When sent to the earth the bull wreaks destruction and chaos everywhere, his sole purpose being to kill and destroy. The Bull of Heaven attacks with its massive body by slamming into its enemies and trampling them under its massive hooves.

Huwawa

Huwawa is a huge construct that guards the Forest of Cedar. It is humanoid in shape and is composed of various skins, woodcarvings, and metals. It stands over 50 feet tall and has two great clawed hands. It is surrounded by seven auras of power that are used to attack its enemies. It was defeated by Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

BULL OF HEAVEN

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2
Skills: Fighting d12
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 20 (Includes Armor bonus)

Edges: Mighty Blow
Special Abilities:
    Armor +2
    Fear –4
    Fearless
    Size +10
    Trampling Attack Str+6
    Huge: Opponents add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the Bull of Heaven due to its massive size.

HUWAWA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12+1
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d8
Pace: 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 17 (Includes Size and Armor bonus)

Edges: Arcane Background: Magic (Power Points: 20; *armor*, *blast*, *bolt*, *deflection*, *dispel*, *fear*, and *stun*) and Power Surge
Special Abilities:
    Armor +2
    Claw or Stomp Attack Str
    Construct
    Fear –2
    Fearless
    Size +8
    Huge: Opponents add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking Huwawa due to its massive size.

In our next installment: 15 Mesopotamian cultures are described, along with more plot ideas and threads! You'll also get a timeline that's full of ideas for adventure and political intrigue set in the ancient world!

Now Hear This!

What fanzine would be complete without a couple of product reviews?

Part of the attraction of a fanzine is getting to read reviews of products that can enhance your gaming experience. **Shark Bytes** is no different. In this issue, I review the latest Savage adventure from the guys at 12 to Midnight, Inc.—Innana's Kiss. I also review 100 Fantasy Adventure Seeds, an awesome GM aid from Postmortem Studios, and the Savage Worlds version of the Metacreator character generation software from AlterEgo Software.

INNANA'S KISS

♦♦♦♦♦

Type: *Savage Worlds* adventure
Publisher: 12 to Midnight, Inc.
Author: Ed Wetterman
Retail Price: $6.00
Format: 2.2MB PDF Download
Availability: RPGNow
Demo Version: Available from both the publisher's website and the download site
Pros: Awesome adventure; great graphics; affordable price; several new creatures, vehicles, pieces of gear; a bunch of pre-generated characters.
Cons: Minor editing and grammatical errors and a couple of graphic design faux-pas.

Product Overview: *Innana's Kiss*, the latest Savage offering from the guys at 12 to Midnight, Inc. is one awesome adventure! The author, Ed Wetterman, who also happens to be the President of 12 to Midnight, Inc., scores a direct hit with this one! Not only is the price right on target, but for $6 you get both a screen version (33 pages) and a printer-friendly version (20 pages). The latter removes many of the graphical elements and is in black and white. To top it off, the screen version is fully bookmarked, making navigation a breeze—especially for you GMs who use a computer during your gaming sessions. Especially cool is Sergeant Major Charles Baker, an iconic figure much like Smilin' Jack, whose purpose is to guide you through the adventure.

Weighing in at 33-pages, *Innana's Kiss* breaks down as follows: 17 pages that detail the actual adventure, 4 pages of NPC and creature stats, a page covering a couple of new vehicles (the Humvee and the Bradley M2A2), 2 pages of player handouts, 3 pages of GM maps, and 6 pages worth of pre-generated characters, which can also be adapted as Professional Edges for any modern military campaign.

Other than a couple of minor graphic design faux-pas (underlined sectional headers and blurry header font) and some minor editing and grammatical errors, I could find nothing negative to say about this product! That's why I gave it 5 sharks…do yourself a favor, rush on over to RPGNow and add *Innana's Kiss* to your collection!

Product Details: In the author's own words, "This module is a killer." He's not lying. Ed truly achieved his design goal of creating a modern military game with the feel of the AD&D™ "killer module," *Tomb of Horrors*. Like all the official playtest groups, my own group succumbed to defeat.

For this reason, it's recommended that you treat *Innana's Kiss* as a one-shot adventure (it takes about 4-5 hours to run from start to finish) and use the pre-generated characters from Appendix 5. Give your regular characters the night off–if you try and run this as a campaign adventure, your players are going to kill you! For this reason alone, I've decided to make this review "spoiler free"—to give anything away would be to ruin a great adventure and I'm not about to do that!

Other Products of Interest: *Last Rites of the Black Guard*, *Weekend Warriors*, and *Bloodlines*–be sure to get the *Savage Worlds* version as all of these products are also available for the *D20 System*. A revised version of this product is on the way. This review is based on the revised product. According to Ed, anyone buying the original product will receive a free update once the revised version is available. Check 'em out: http://www.12tomidnight.com and http://www.rpgnow.com.

"Excellent. A well put together scenario ideal for a one nighter throwaway game. Good presentation, and well equipped with character sheets, maps and handouts, leaving only reading and minimal prep for a short notice game."

"Great one-shot game I'll reuse at Conventions I'll attend. … Another great product from 12 to Midnight."
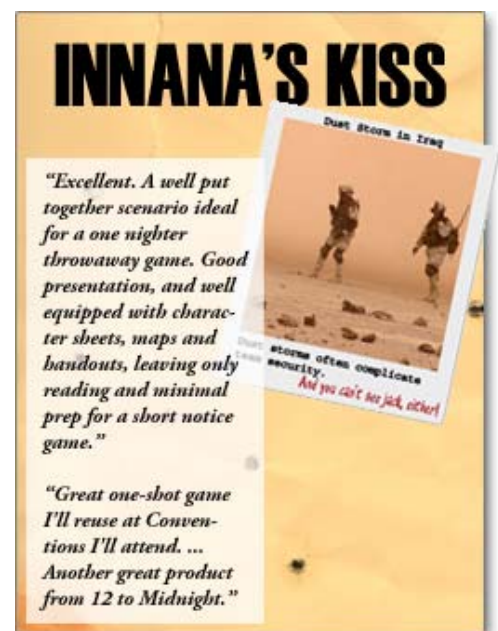
100 FANTASY ADVENTURE SEEDS

Type: *Generic GM aid*
Publisher: Postmortem Studios
Author: James "Grim" Desborough
Retail Price: $6.50
Format: 2.7MB PDF Download
Availability: RPGNow
Demo Version: Available from the download site
Pros: Great timesaver; great price; clean layout; the cover art is quite cool!
Cons: Can't cut-and-paste from the PDF and the file isn't bookmarked!

Product Overview: At first glance, this product seems to be just another "book of plots." Move along, nothing new to see here. Not! In actuality, *100 Fantasy Adventure Seeds* presents over 900 interesting and entertaining plot twists just waiting to be fleshed out by you overworked GMs out there. The layout is minimalist—just the way I like my GM aids–and I didn't notice any glaring errors or design errors. Other than the cover and an odd graphic or two, this product is done in breathtaking black-and-white; the only other graphical element is a Celtic knot page border.

I would have given this product 5 sharks, because it didn't waste my time trying to be anything other than what it says it is and it's simply the most useful adventure seed book I have come across in a long time. However, I could only award four sharks because you can't cut-and-paste from the PDF and the file is not bookmarked! While this is annoying, it doesn't diminish the overall value of the product that much. If you're a GM, you'll eventually suffer from writer's block at some point. This product can carry you through the slump. I highly recommend you pick a copy up. Today!

Product Details: There's not much else I can say about this product than what I've already said. It's a slick release that delivers on all counts, and other than the inability to cut-and-paste and its lack of bookmarks, it's a great buy.

Each adventure seed description is preceded by a name and number (for easy reference), which is all the more important since the file isn't bookmarked. So far, this is pretty standard stuff. Where this product shines is in the "twists" that are included after the description. Each provides subtle, or in some cases not so subtle, ways in which to alter the basic premise of the seed. In effect, rather than 100 adventure seeds, you're getting close to 900 when you figure all the twists in. The author has also included an epilogue to help you tie things up, as well as a couple of extra ideas to get those creative juices flowing.

Other Products of Interest: *100 Sci-Fi Adventure Seeds* and *100 Horror Adventure Seeds* (forthcoming). Give these guys a look online at: http://www.postmort.demon.co.uk and http://www.rpgnow.com

METACREATOR SOFTWARE 3.6.0

Type: *Software*
Publisher: AlterEgo Software
Retail Price: $24.95*
Format: 8.2MB Download*
Availability: RPGNow
System Requirements: Windows 98 or better, 64MB RAM, 15MB of free hard disk space, 200MHz+ Pentium or equivalent, CD ROM drive (only if you order the CD), Screen resolution: 640x480 minimum (800x600 or greater recommended)
Demo Version: Available from both the publisher's website and the download site
Pros: Very easy to get up and running, well-documented, updates for templates are free, available for multiple RPGs, expandable.
Cons: Documentation could be a bit more "user friendly."

*If you already own the Metacreator software for another RPG system, you may purchase the *Savage Worlds* template (2.9MB download) for $14.95. You can order either product on CD if you have a slow Internet connection.

Product Overview: Simply put, Metacreator allows you to create characters for any gaming system you choose. AlterEgo has released several "templates" that customize the software for particular systems. Metacreator (*Savage Worlds* Template) is one such template. It allows you to quickly and easily create characters for the *Savage Worlds* gaming system. Information from the core rulebook, as well as the *Evernight* and *50 Fathoms* sourcebooks, is included in this release. As Pinnacle publishes new products, the template will be upgraded and made available to those that have

purchased the *Savage Worlds* Template. You can also easily create army cards for the *Showdown* rules!

The version I reviewed was the full version—it includes the Metacreator software and the *Savage Worlds* template. The current version of the software is 3.6.0. As noted above, individual templates can be purchased at a reduced price if you already own the Metacreator software. Please note that templates do not include the Metacreator software! To get the actual software, you must purchase the actual software (version 2.0 or higher) or a bundled package that includes both the software and a template.

Product Details: The program is a breeze to use. When you first open the program you should click on the "Game System Tutorial" link in the menu on the left side of the screen. Just follow this tutorial, step-by-step, and you'll be creating characters in no time flat. You are also given the option to print out both the Metacreator and the *Savage Worlds* Template manuals—I suggest you print both out and put them in a binder for easy reference.

When you create a new file (i.e., character or army list), a dialog box appears on the desktop. You may choose the game system you wish to use (unless you own additional templates, *Savage Worlds* is the only choice available). You then choose the file type—character sheet, template, data sheet, etc. and the setting (straight *Savage Worlds*, *50 Fathoms*, or *Evernight*). Once you've made these choices, another dialog box opens. You must choose a race, historical era, rank, and whether or not the new creation is a Wild Card. Once you've done all that, the character editing dialogs are visible. Most of the information you require is in the main window; however, skills, Edges, and Hindrances each have their own windows. You can navigate through and activate the various windows either by using the menu on the left side of the screen or by clicking the window's title bar and pressing the INSERT key.

There are several controls that let you know if your character is legal or not (depending on the setting or parameters you specify). Once done, you can save and print a full blown character sheet. There are options to let you print additional information on the sheets as well.

The best part about Metacreator is the fact that you can customize it to suit your own needs. Adding skills, Edges, and Hindrances is relatively easy, as is changing the basic parameters such as starting attribute points, allowed races, etc. The documentation can be a bit dense at points; however, a careful read and using through the Game System Tutorial should be enough to get most users up and running. This is a great product and the price is right. Even though it may take a bit of work for gamers who are lacking in the computer skills department, once you're up and running, you'll wonder how you ever survived without it! If you like to tinker with software and your *Savage Worlds* games are a bit outside the norm (like me!), you're going to love the flexibility that Metacreator offers in allowing you to tweak things to reflect your gaming preferences. I highly recommend it and give it five sharks!

Other Products of Interest: Currently, this is the only *Savage Worlds* product offered by AlterEgo; however, they produce versions of the Metacreator software for a bunch of other RPGs, including: *FUDGE*, *Ars Magica*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *CORPS*, and the *D20 3.5 SRD*. Stop by their homepage: http://www.alteregosoftware.com. You can purchase their software through http://www.rpgnow.com.

GAMING ON A BUDGET…

Please note that all of the following products are available on RPGNow. To locate them, simply do a search on the publisher's name. At the time of this writing, all of these products were offered at the discounted prices listed.

Dungeon Crawl Classics: Aerie of the Crow God
$2.99 – Goodman Games – *Fantasy Adventure*

Worldworks: Castleworks
$5.00 – Worldworks – *Paper Scenery*

Worldworks: Caveworks
$12.00 – Worldworks – *Paper Scenery*

101 Spellbooks, Tomes of Knowledge, and Forbidden Grimoires
$2.95 – Ronin Arts – *D20 Supplement*

Atomik Magick and Atomik Grimoire
$9.95 – Atomik Vortex Studio – *Generic RPG Supplement*

Fractal Mapper
$31.45 – NBOS – *Mapping Software*

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

Savaging the Giants of Legend™ miniatures set from Wizards of the Coast™

Ahoy, mateys! Welcome aboard for the maiden voyage of The Ones That Got Away, where I—your humble Savage Beastmaster—will help you fill out your roster of horrible nasties. In other words, I have an excuse to write up some new monsters, as if I needed one! Those of you who've picked up some of the very nifty pre-painted miniatures from, ahem, 'the sorcerers of the seashore company,' may have found yourselves jonesing to put them to use in your favorite game and mine, Savage Worlds! Even if you don't have the minis, you're still in for a treat with this fearsome foursome. If there's a monster (or monsters) you'd like to see Savaged, be sure to let me know over on the Pinnacle Forums!

Juggernaut

A bizarre fusion of flesh and machine, juggernauts are created by combining a hellish, steam-powered engine of destruction with the head of a freshly decapitated troll. If the head can be attached to the metal body quickly enough, and the proper spells used to aid the process, the head will graft itself onto the body using the troll's natural regenerative abilities. Once created, they're often employed as walking siege engines!

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d4
Pace: 4; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 20
Edges: Improved Sweep
Gear:
> **Armor +5:** Juggernauts are encased in massive plates of steel. This is treated as Heavy Armor.
> **Axe and Hammer:** What the juggernaut loses in fine manipulation it more than makes up for in destructive power. These two weapons each do Str+5 damage and are considered Heavy Weapons.

Special Abilities:
> **Construct:** Juggernauts gain the following benefits: +2 to recover from Shaken; no extra damage from called shots (except for Weak Spot); arrows, bullets, and piercing attacks do half damage (except for Weak Spot); ignore all Wound penalties; immune to disease and poison.
> **Hardy:** When Shaken, another Shaken result will not wound a juggernaut.
> **Large:** Opponents get a +2 to all attack rolls against a juggernaut, unless targeting its Weak Spot.
> **Noisy:** Between the massive steam engine driving them and the grinding of metal against metal, all but the completely deaf can hear a juggernaut approaching from a mile away, literally!
> **Regeneration:** Any damage that a juggernaut takes to its troll head (see Weak Spot) can be regenerated, though not easily. Much of the trolls regenerative capacity is taken up in simply keeping the head alive and grafted to the juggernaut body. The juggernaut can make a Vigor roll at –4 once every hour to recover any damage.
> **Size +7:** While roughly the same size as most Size +6 creatures, the juggernaut is considerably heavier due to its construction.
> **Slow:** Juggernauts have only a Pace 4, and they cannot run.
> **Weak Spot:** The only weakness a juggernaut has is its troll head, which has only a Toughness 10. Its head is armored to a large degree, but a part of the face is left exposed. Striking the head requires a called shot at –6. The bad news is that any damage done to it can be regenerated! Area effect attacks can never target the head; they'll always be considered as attacking the body.

Claw Demon

These horrendous beasts are used by the demon lords when strength, rather than usual guile, is called for.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d4
Pace: 8; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 16
Edges: Ambidextrous, Improved Sweep, Nerves of Steel
Gear:
> **Manacles of Servitude:** Worn on the demon's smaller, lower arms, these manacles ensure total loyalty from the otherwise unpredictable claw demons. While wearing them, the claw demon gets the benefits of the Improved Arcane Resistance Edge (+4 Armor and +4 to all Trait rolls when resisting magic) against its foes. Against someone bearing a Rod of Authority (granted to demon lordlings upon their coronation), the claw demon subtracts –6 to all rolls, and the bearer can attempt to use the *puppet* power on the demon as a free action once per round.

Special Abilities:
> **Armor +2**: Thick hide.
> **Bite:** Str +3.
> **Fear –2**
> **Fearless:** Claw demons are immune to Fear and Intimidation, save from someone bearing a Rod of Authority.
> **Four Arms**: Claw demons have two large pincer-arms (Str+2 damage). Below these are two smaller, normal arms (Str damage). Claw demons can attack twice per round (once with each set) with no multi-action penalty. Normal penalties apply for any additional attacks after that.
> **Grab:** If the claw demon gets a raise on one of its claw attacks when attacking opponents Size +1 or smaller, it snatches and lifts the victim over its head. Every round until the victim is dropped or dead, it will continue to do Strength damage against the grabbed character automatically on its initiative card.
> **Large:** Opponents get a +2 to all attack rolls against a claw demon.
> **Size +6**
> **Unholy:** Claw demons are unholy creatures and they cannot willfully set foot on holy ground; blessed weapons inflict double damage.

Landshark

These enormous brutes "swim" beneath the plains, feeding on cattle and making their homes in massive burrows deep in the earth. Their scales are prized by armorers, who can fashion them into strong but surprisingly light shields and armor.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+15, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d4, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 5; **Toughness**: 20
Special Abilities:
   Armor +5: Landsharks are covered in thick, dense armor.
   Burrowing 10": Landsharks can burrow underground at impressive speeds, though it takes them some time to get started; the landshark takes 3 rounds to become completely buried, during which time it can take no other actions and opponents gain an additional +2 to hit it. While underground, they can rise up and attack a target with their bite; make an opposed Stealth vs. Notice roll. If the landshark wins, it gets a +2 to attack and damage that round, or a +4 on a raise.
   Bad Eyesight: Landsharks are extremely nearsighted; they're effectively blind past 12" distance, and they can't see creatures Size –1 or smaller at all.
   Bite/Claw: Str+3.
   Huge: Opponents get a +4 to all attack rolls against a landshark.
   Infravision: Landsharks halve all lighting penalties.
   Size +8: While no taller than many giants, landsharks are incredibly massive.
   Swallow Whole: If a landshark gets a raise on its attack roll while attacking from underground (see Burrowing), it swallows the victim whole. Victims will take a Wound each round until dead, unless they have significant protection (such as being inside a sealed metal container when swallowed). Landsharks can swallow creatures of Size +3 or smaller.

The Starlost

The Starlost are wanderers from the outer darkness, creatures who dwell in the spaces between the stars. Judged solely by their actions, they are irredeemably evil. In point of fact, they have no concept of good and evil; their thought patterns are as bizarre to humans as those of humans are to an ant. They're usually accompanied by a number of cultists, who worship them as dark gods.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12+5, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d12+2, Notice d10, Psionics d12, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 13
Edges: Improved Arcane Resistance, Level Headed, Soul Drain
Special Abilities:
   Alien Intellect: The Starlost can't make Common Knowledge rolls for most things we'd consider to be common knowledge.
   Ethereal: By expending 5 Power Points from their psionic pool, a starlost can become ethereal and invisible. They can still be attacked by magic and other supernatural attacks, while they in turn can use their psionic abilities on physical creatures. Maintaining this effect costs 1 Power Point/round after 3 rounds.
   Fear and Awe: The Starlost can, at will, create a Fear effect at –2 within a 12" range. Anyone who fails 3 Fear checks against the starlost in a 24 hour period must immediately make an opposed Spirit roll against the starlost, or fall under the effects of the *puppet* power.
   Fearless: The Starlost are immune to Fear and Intimidation effects.
   Large: Opponents get a +2 to all attack rolls when fighting a Starlost.
   Nightvision: The Starlost ignore all lighting penalties, no matter what the source.
   Psionics: The Starlost are powerful psychics. Consider them to have 40 Power Points and the following powers: *barrier*, *blast*, *bolt*, *dispel*,

invisibility, *stun*, and *telekinesis* (able to lift double the weight listed).
   Size +6: The Starlost are roughly 20' tall, though this can vary by as much as 5' up or down at any given moment.
   Smash: Strength damage. This is an attack of last resort; they prefer not to sully their hands with common melee.
   Speak in Tongues: After hearing any language spoken aloud for 3 rounds, a Starlost may "speak" that language. (They actually communicate telepathically.)

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The Arguments, For and Against, Courtesy of Gollum…

This was first posted on the WotC D&D™ Miniatures forum by Yukon Cornelius.

"New minis are good. We likes the new minis."

"No. New minis are stupid. We hates them!"

"But new minis are good! They're pre-painted and they're cheap."

"Ugh! Disgusting WotCs paint the minis! Give them to us raw…and metal…and shiny!"

"But WotCs are our friends. They helps to fill the needs of an underserved part of the market!"

"Paint jobs are sloppy. We could paints them better with our eyeses closed."

"But these minis not display pieces. We just wants them to play the game."

"New minis aren't for D&D™ players. They only wants us to play their new minis game. They made 3.5 just so they can sell more minis!"

"With the new minis, we can play both!"

" WotCs are tricksy. They stole the Chainmail! The Precious! And we wants it back!"

"No. No. WotCs want to help us. They use random packaging to reduce the number of unique sku numbers that local gaming stores need to order, streamlining the ordering process and reducing the risk of left over product that has to be taken as a write-off, thereby ensuring a lower cost to the consumer!"

"What?"

"Random minis are good!"

"No! We hates random minis! WotCs are just jumping on the bandwagon. They makes rare minis so people will by lots of boxes! They just wants to make money! They make us buy boxes and boxes just to find the one mini we wants."

"If you wants just one mini, you can gets it from the aftermarket."

"Then we pays through our noses for it!"

"Not listening! Not listening!"

"We told you they was tricksy! We told you they was false!"

" WotCs are good to us. If WotCs make money, then we keep getting new products!"

"Stupid fat WotCs! They don't care about you! They're just a faceless corporation that only wants your money to put in their filthy pocketses!"

"Well, if you don't likes it, then don't buys it!"

"What did you say?"

"I said…if you don't likes it, then don't buys it!"
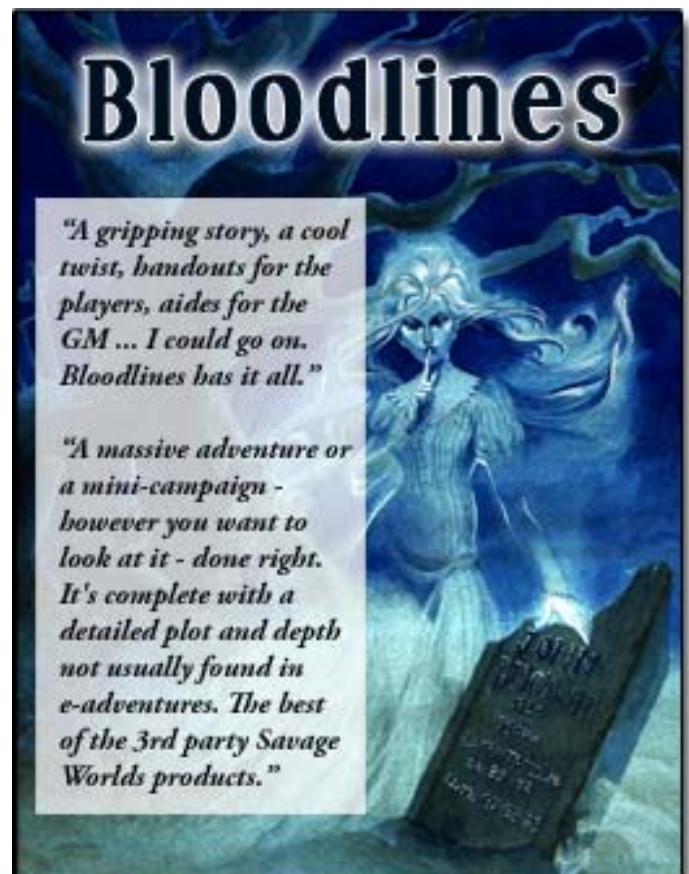
Hook, Line, and Sinker

25 OGL fantasy adventure seeds from Expeditious Retreat Press.

Let's face it—all GMs get a case of "writer's block" every once and awhile. That's why I've decided to include this column. Since at the time of this writing my time was at a premium, I decided to start things off with a neat little freebie available from RPGNow. Fantasy Adventure Seeds is an OGL product available from Expeditious Retreat Press—the same guys that gave us A Magical Medieval Society: Western Europe, A Magical Medieval City Guide, and A Magical Society: Ecology and Culture. Since the entire product is designated as OGL content, it can be reprinted here without permission. A copy of the current OGL is provided at the end of this issue. Enjoy, and if you like what you read, consider taking a look at their other products—Seeds: Fantasy 2, Horror, Modern, Pulp, and Supers!

1. During a nautical adventure, the characters catch sight of a clutch of small, but very dangerous creatures sunning themselves on a coral reef. The characters are in no immediate danger, as the creatures are more concerned with catching enough sea gulls to feed their brood than with them. However, the creatures make valuable familiars or are worth something as spell components. Does greed win out over common sense, as the treacherous currents make the reef more dangerous than the creatures that call it home?

2. Despite mounting evidence that he's growing senile in his old age, a once great paladin is gathering troops for a crusade to a distant, savage land to fight a rising threat that no one is sure actually exists.

3. The successful conquest of a neighboring kingdom pushes all the monsters and bandits from that land directly into the characters path as they struggle to complete their mission.

4. A kingdom's laws change overnight, allowing duels to the death to settle matters of honor. Long simmering rivalries burst to the surface, and duel and counter duel lead to bloody feuds, and eventually to civil war, unless the characters can calm the situation.

5. The party finds itself in the middle of a generations-old war between two pixie clans.

6. Philosopher's Flies begin plaguing local temples and universities. These tiny fairies feed on ambient wisdom and their swarms multiply in the presence of great thinkers. They're harmless, but annoying, constantly chattering to each other, misquoting great truths, and making any secretive movements impossible. Also, they're very hard to get rid of, as your most intellectual characters are just about to discover.

7. Random, but necessary pieces of the characters' mundane gear (minor spell components, sharpening stones, quill pens, etc) disappear while they camp. Investigating, the characters discover that the thieves are "adventuring heroes" from a microscopic demi-plane, and their quest for trinkets is as important to their world as the characters' own quests in their world.

8. It's revealed that the dominant, church in the characters' region has a vault filled with many evil and dangerous artifacts under the largest cathedral in the area. Whenever possible, these evil artifacts are destroyed, but those too dangerous or durable are stored here for safekeeping. In the name of security, the church is willing to kill even members of the faithful who discover the existence of the vault.

9. During their manhood ceremonies, the boys of a certain tribe prove their toughness with a series of brutal stick fights. Fights are to unconsciousness, and the scars gained are considered badges of honor. While passing through, the characters are invited to watch (or if they really impress the tribe) to participate.

10. The players come to a small village only to find everyone in a panic. The townsfolk are in an uproar because their prized possession, the Gem of Azaria has been broken. The gem gave the town access to mysterious and wondrous powers, thereby providing the town with protection from general evils.

11. A seemingly worthless trinket that the characters find is actually the key to a massive gate to an infernal plane. Agents of both good and evil forces hunt the party for the key but determining who is what is not a simple affair.

12. During a common underground dungeon crawl, an earthquake rattles the surrounding region. The party is not seriously injured, but the way back is hopelessly caved in, making any mapping done to this point utterly useless. The characters must now travel deeper into the caverns, hoping to find another passage leading to the outside world. Due to the earthquake, creature activity has increased in the cavern system, increasing the chance for wandering encounters. Pit traps and other pressure-sensitive traps may be set off or exposed; leading characters to believe formerly dangerous areas are now safe. However, structural damage may cause collapsing floors, walls, and/or ceilings at any point along the way, if the characters do not progress carefully. And there is always the chance of aftershocks…

13. A minor artifact has been removed from its hiding place, where it has remained for many years. One of the player characters is instantly aware of this fact, as the item was once in the possession of an ancestor of his (a fact not immediately known to the character) who hid it to keep it from falling into the wrong hands. The character feels compelled to find the item and hide it again. During the journey to locate the item, the character encounters other distant relatives, some he may know, some he may not, who are also under the same compulsion. No one knows exactly what the item is, but they will know in what direction it lies and when they are getting close to it and will be able to identify it instantly on sight. If the item is now in the hands of someone who will use it for just reasons, the characters may have to find an alternative solution if they wish to take away the item and hide it again. The item has a powerful curse on it that affects those who keep it in their possession or use it for an extended period.

14. While traveling through a seldom-traveled part of the country, the characters come across the remains of a caravan. The caravan appears to have come under siege by some unknown force and succumbed to their attackers. The caravan bares the markings of a rather well known band of explorers. The attack has recently happened and there is evidence that the attackers took prisoners. There are tracks leading away from the attack in the direction of nearby hills.

15. As the characters approach a small village along the way to their next stop, they notice that there are not the normal sounds that should be coming from the village. No dogs barking, no children playing loudly, no sounds of machinery not even insects in the background. Once inside the village, the characters find the townsfolk dead from an illness. Every one shows varying signs of sickness, and makeshift labs have been assembled with local fauna and other chemicals. Whatever has caused the town's sickness has not dissipated and is still highly contagious. Each hour the party stays in the village, a Vigor roll is required. Failure means that the party member has caught the illness as well.

16. The party awakens (this includes the whole party, even if there was a nightly watch as they mysteriously fell asleep) to find the campfire going and an old man sitting next to it. The old man is a powerful arch mage sent to warn the party about a growing evil in the mountains. An evil so old, nothing remains from the time of its creation. However, there is an artifact that might be able to force the evil back into slumber. The old man is familiar to one of the party members. However, they are supposed to be the same age. After proving to the party who he really is, the old man tells them of a cave not far from here where he went into the cave a man, but emerged a frail, shadow of his former self.

17. Deep in the heart of the Blisterwood Forest lies the Blood Fountain. Drinking of the fount's enchanted blood confers great strength and fortitude, but abuse of the fountain leads to a corrupting disease that inexorably turns one to evil. Many years ago, the Uisel, an order of elf paladins, destroyed the evil cult that protected the Blood Fountain, but were unable to destroy the artifact itself. Instead, they placed a permanent garrison there and destroyed all record of the fount, or so they hoped. The party discovers the sole remaining reference to the Blood Fountain, a map, a message or simply a reference in a large codex of arcane knowledge. Further investigation reveals a suspicious lack of any other information about the Blood Fountain and raises the ire of the Uisel. Confronting the order is only the first hurdle: over the years, the garrison posted at the Blood Fountain has fallen under its evil sway and have come under the control of Pavest, a lich and former member of the evil cult that protected the fount. Pavest has great plans, the first stage of which involves creating an evil army fueled by the Blood Fountain. He is cunning, powerful, and not about to let the characters get in the way of his vengeance against the Uisel or his domination of the kingdom.

18. Dower is a simple priest of a good-aligned god. He is the spiritual leader of a small community in the highlands, an area ruled by the towering Castle Calier and the debauched Lady Luxana Porine. Recently, trouble has come to Dower and his people. Strange beasts roam the roads at night: pitch black horses that race like the wind, huge swarms of bats and packs of sleek, white wolves. Dower himself has fallen ill. His nights are restless and he can be heard crying out in his sleep, but no one can wake him until dawn. His waking hours are spent in a haggard state and he often lapses into incoherent mumbling. Meanwhile, raucous debaucheries in Castle Calier continue unabated. Lady Porine is a powerful vampire who delights in corrupting moral men like Dower. She has dominated him for some weeks now and at night uses an enhanced nightmare spell to trouble his soul further. In his nightmares, Dower is a powerful noble in a distant land where he lives a decadent life of evil with his lover, a disguised Luxana.

19. A terrible beast is killing commoners and peasants in the city of Erinton. For some time the attacks went unnoticed, but one month ago the mayor's daughter, Isa Horun, was slain while visiting the ill in the Low Quarters. Now, the entire city lives in fear, and the beast continues to elude the Silver Palm, the city s guards. There are only a handful of survivors, and their reports are vague or conflicting, but it is apparent that the beast is some kind of wolf. The beast is actually a fiendish dire wolf, but it is only a tool. A powerful summoner, Yarl Colum, controls the dire wolf. Yarl leads a cult opposed to the mayor s rule of Erinton. The Bloody Maw seeks to use the wolf in order to spread fear and dissension amongst the people of Erinton and eventually to overthrow Mayor Horun and the Silver Palm. Their ranks include a number of evil clerics and rogues along with several nobles, the Mayor's sister Kalyne and Gerar Fost, the Silver Palm's second-in-command.

20. King Alcair is dying. The disease appears to be magical, but not even the most powerful casters in the realm can cure him. The King s steward, the cleric Kyle Waln, has received an oracular vision from his deity that the King can only be cured by the Tears of Twilight. The message is vague, but Waln has not hesitated to send out scores of the King's best men to search for these Tears, whatever they may be. In the meantime, the kingdom's defenses are greatly weakened, and the neighboring nation of Palurn quietly prepares for war. They expect a swift victory, for Kyle Waln is their own agent. Long years of careful planning, espionage and magical research have placed the Waln family in good standing with the Alcair dynasty, unquestioningly under the evil sway of Palurn, and in possession of an artifact which is slowly killing King Alcair. This is the seed for a series of adventures. The party is one of those sent out by Kyle Waln. Their quest is harrowing but fruitless. Along the kingdom s border, they witness the forming Palurian army, and must escape with this intelligence. The news is reported to Kyle Waln, of course, and he attempts to have the characters assassinated. The characters must expose the traitor and avert the coming war.

21. A ravening dire bear, usually a creature of the deep forest, attacks the hamlet of Japic. A corrupted wound found on its corpse explains the bear's unusual behavior. Only the dwarves that live in the mountains beyond the forest have such weapons as to cause the wound. The characters traverse the forest to find the dwarves expanding their territory at a furious pace, clear-cutting the forest below their mountain in order to fuel their expansion. The dwarves have found a particularly rich vein of mithral and are excited about the discovery. But precious ore is not the only thing they have found. Their furious mining has awoken dire creatures in the depths of the mountain; murderous beasts that begin to attack the dwarves. Worse, the stubborn dwarves are unwilling to admit their troubles and under the sway of a vengeful aranea sorcerer, the dwarf council rebuffs the party. However, there is a small resistance, which entreats the characters to help them. These insurgents are willing to bargain: they will slow their destruction of the forest if the party will rid their hearth of its corruption.

22. Dissidents in the Gagash, a goblin tribe, want to leave and start their own clan, following a charismatic and non-violent seer. Their tyrannical chieftain, Wapak Spiderskewer, refuses their entreaties and punishes the dissidents incessantly. One cult member, Suza, manages to escape and entreats the party to liberate her fellows. Faced with the party's prowess and internal dissention, Wapak allows the dissidents to leave. However, months ago, he planted a spy amongst the cultists. While the characters escort the cultists to a new home, the spy helps scouts from the Gagash track the party's movements. Wapak leads a war party to the cult's new home and attacks when he's certain the party has left. Again, Suza manages to escape the carnage and finds the characters once more. Wapak, not content merely with punishing the dissidents, is now bent on vengeance and is creating alliances with several goblin tribes to hunt down the party.

23. In the mountain valley of Harcor, a flight of harpies are corralling entire herds of gorgons. The flight is led by the harpy Ranger known simply as Piercing. Piercing has been a threat to the area for years, but has recently subjugated a flight of her own and now begins to further her ambitions to control the entire mountain range. There are few civilized settlements anywhere near Harcor, but a small tribe of unusually intelligent hill giants calls the mountain valley home. The hill giants, once their trust is earned by the characters, are powerful allies. However, Piercing's flight is becoming a true menace, especially now that she has found an ally in Turnoi, a juvenile red dragon. Together, Piercing and Turnoi have managed to create a few half-dragon gorgons and have mated themselves to produce a clutch of half-dragon harpies.

24. An evil druid is corrupting the treants of the forest. Olar is a disgruntled half-elf, denigrated by both of his parents' communities and finally cast out of his village for killing his brother. He spent long years in the depths of the forest, barely surviving. When a kindly druid took Olar under his care, things seemed to turn around for the half-elf. However, evil had planted an undeniable seed in him, making Olar a difficult student. His druid patron finally sent Olar away. Now, alone again and burning with anger, Olar uses his druidic abilities to wreak havoc on those who have wronged him. He has created a special salve that twists treants into wrathful machines of evil and has already directed his minions to destroy the grove of his former master. Now, Olar marches which his treants to the village that had exiled him. There will be no ransom or mercy.

25. A single centaur, wounded and confused, stumbles from the forest, mumbling only something about the living shadows and the cold flame. Even when his wounds are healed, he remains incoherent until his wisdom is restored. Gerick's tribe lived peacefully alongside a tribe of wild elves for centuries. A month ago, the elf tribe suddenly disappeared with hardly a trace. Gerick led a small band of warriors to search for their long-time allies, and managed to track them to a ruined village at the forest's edge. But the elves were different: twisted by a foul enchantress, they captured and tortured Gerick and his companions.

If you're a fan of adventure hooks, be sure to check out my review of *100 Fantasy Adventure Seeds* from Postmortem Studios in the Now Hear This column!

I'd buy that for a dollar!

A fast, furious, and fun way to handle wealth in Savage Worlds.

If you're like me, then you prefer that anything detracting from the story you're attempting to tell should fade into the background—that includes such things purchasing equipment and gear. What follows is a fast, furious, and fun method of handling such things within the Savage Worlds system.

Rather than starting the game with $500 as described in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook (p.18), all characters have an additional attribute—Wealth, which is initially set to d6.

If you use this system, you must also modify the Poverty Hindrance and both the Rich and Filthy Rich Edges. Characters with the Poverty Hindrance start with a Wealth of d4 and apply a –2 modifier to all Wealth rolls. Those with the Rich Edge start with a d8 and a modifier of +2, whereas those with the Filthy Rich Edge start with a d10 and a modifier of +4. After character generation, you may raise Wealth like any other attribute.

During game play, instead of using money to purchase most gear and equipment, you make a Wealth roll. This roll is treated like any other attribute roll (i.e., the TN is 4, Wild Cards get their Wild Die, and you may reroll failed attempts by spending a Benny). If you succeed, you are able to purchase the item. If you fail, then purchasing the item is beyond your current means. If you roll a one on any die, although you may still succeed in purchasing the item, you accrue one point of Debt (more on this later). Snake eyes results in the accrual of two points of Debt. All Wealth rolls are modified by the purchase cost of the desired item as follows*:

+4	Item costs $5 or less
+2	Item costs up to $50
+0	Item costs up to $500
–2	Item costs up to $5,000
–4	Item costs up to $50,000
–6	Item costs more $50,000

*Note that these values, and those of the tables found hereafter, are based on the assumption that most campaigns will allow a character to start the game with $500 in assets. If your campaign assumes otherwise, you'll need to adjust these figures accordingly. I suggest the GM pencil these modifiers in the rulebook (or add them to their own equipment lists) for easy reference.

To keep things fast and furious, I recommend that a character with a total bonus of +2 or more for any item be allowed to purchase that item without having to resort to a Wealth roll. Thus, a character with the Poverty Hindrance could buy items costing less than $5 without having to make a Wealth roll, while a Filthy Rich character could buy an item costing $5,000 or less.

In order to prevent characters from making all kinds of crazy purchases, I suggest limiting the number of major purchases that can be made per session to Wealth/2.

Items that require no Wealth roll, as mentioned above, do not count towards this limit. Of course, it is left to the GM to decide what constitutes a "major" purchase. The maximum amount of any single purchase is based on the character's Wealth die type:

d4	$50
d6	$500
d8	$5,000
d10	$50,000
d12+	More than $50,000

Of course, a character can combine his allowed "purchase slots" in order to make a larger purchase. For example, a character with a d8 Wealth would normally be limited to four purchases, each of $5,000 or less per session; however, he could combine his allowed purchases to buy a single item that cost $20,000 (like a car).

If a character happens across money or other financial sources in the course of the game, his Wealth may gain a temporary benefit. This benefit takes the form of a Wealth roll bonus which we refer to as a Windfall:

+1	Monetary value of up to $500
+2	Monetary value of up to $5,000
+4	Monetary value of up to $50,000
+6	Monetary value of more than $50,000

This bonus may be split up or used as a single modifier to buy a large item. So, a character finding a briefcase with $5,000 inside may use the +2 Windfall bonus on a subsequent Wealth roll or he may choose to spread it out over two rolls—applying a +1 bonus to each. In either case, once used the bonus is gone. Windfall bonuses are carried over from session to session by all characters except those possessing the Poverty Hindrance.

Finally, we must account for the possibility of a character going into debt. As mentioned before, a result of 1 on any die when making a Wealth roll results in the accrual of one point of Debt. Snake eyes sticks you with two points. Each point of Debt results in a –1 modifier being applied to your Wealth rolls. Debt points carry over across sessions. In order to remove Debt, you must go an entire session without making a major purchase. At the end of the session, make a normal Wealth roll and apply the modifier appropriate to your level of Debt. Each success and raise removes one point of Debt. The only other way to remove Debt is through

Windfall. Windfall cancels out Debt on a 1:1 basis, so a +3 Windfall could be used to cancel out a –3 Debt.

One last thing; during character generation, this system can be a bit clunky. I generally follow the normal rules for purchasing items during character generation (i.e., use the normal starting funds given in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook and allow the characters to buy their gear). Of course, the characters may attempt to buy additional gear once their starting funds have been exhausted. In such cases, count each purchase as "major" and require a Wealth roll for everything, regardless of its actual monetary value.

ROLL CALL!

You didn't think this stuff wrote itself, did you?

William Littlefield *(Jblittlefield)*
Besides being the moron who started this little venture, William is an avid roleplayer and wargamer with over 26 years dedicated to his "craft". Having played over 70 different systems in his illustrious career, he is now totally dedicated to *Savage Worlds*—don't even bother trying to get him to play anything else! He is a contributing author to the upcoming Sticks & Stones and has a few Savage Tales he's thinking about submitting as well. William hails from Boston, but is currently trapped in North Carolina. His wife, Jennifer, their seven-year-old son, Patrick, and their pets (two cats and a dog) can't wait until he finally finishes school and they can move to the beach! William wrote pretty much anything that the guys below didn't!

Paul Kasper *(Ohoh7pak)*
Paul has been roleplaying since the early 80's. He started, as have so many others, with *Basic D&D*™, but he's since abandoned his 20-year *D&D*™ relationship to embrace *Savage Worlds*. He is in the process of converting all of his friends to the Savage side. Paul lives in Minnesota with his wife, Holly, and his baby daughter, Ella Rose. He enjoys gaming, watching movies (he's really into James Bond and Westerns), working on computers (especially his Powerbook), cheering on the Green Bay Packers, and trying not to grow up. He really works hard on the last one. Even though he hasn't yet contributed any articles, he did undertake the monumental task of doing all the "real" editing for this issue—he actually volunteered to undertake the thankless task of making sure that the editorial style of this issue was both professional and consistent.

Daniel Wood *(SavageInOz)*
Daniel has spent far too much time gaming. Since the early 80's he has played nearly every system at least once! He is an avid collector of CDs, DVDs and of course RPGs. When he's not gaming, you can usually find him working on short films with his friends. Daniel lives with his partner, Bernice and an evil spawn of a cat in the lovely seaside community of Redcliffe, Australia. His contributions to this issue include some of the new Adventure Cards and the photographic gear in "We're Going to Need a Bigger Boat." Daniel holds the distinction of being **Shark Bytes'** first official contributor!

Clint Black *(Clint)*
Clint Black burst onto the country music scene in 1989 with his platinum album, "Killin' Time." Since his awesome beginning, Clint has had several chart-topping songs and a triple-platinum album, "Put Yourself in my Shoes." Clint is well-known for his work and dedication to our country's soldiers. In 1991, Clint married actress, Lisa Hartman, and they currently live at their home in Texas. Clint Black, country music sensation, also happens to share the same name with the columnist of Feeding Frenzy and the co-author of "It's a Paranormal World After All," who just happens to have a much more interesting bio.

David Goecke *(Pure Evil Model: D)*
David has been interested in gaming for a long time but has only been a serious gamer for the past few years. The agreement of his mother and priest that RPG's were not satanic allowed the 16-year old David to purchase *AD&D*™. Years later, with only two sessions played; David's girlfriend bought *Deadlands* for his birthday. That girlfriend is now his wife and *Deadlands* is still his favorite RPG setting. David is currently going to school, waiting tables, and working on many Savage settings with dreams of one day being published. David wrote two articles to this issue – "What Can You Do With a Drunken Sailor" and "Just Give Me One of Each".

Matthew Mather *(MadTinkerer)*
A friend introduced Matthew to roleplaying games and miniatures war gaming in 1993 when he lived in London, England. Since then, he's played many different RPGs and moved to New Jersey. (He does not know Buckaroo Banzai personally, but is rumored to have met him once.) Matthew is owner of the *Savage Worlds* Yahoo Group, along with Gary, and possibly the biggest *Savage Worlds* fan, at least in New Jersey. In the past he has been employed in several professions including bookseller, computer games tester and construction worker. More recently, he has been working on some writing projects that people may actually pay him money for. Matthew contributed the "OK, how bad is my character hurt?" article.

William Reger *(Bill)*
Bill has been gaming 30+ years, roleplaying since January 1975, and has used more systems than he can possibly count. He dabbles in war gaming, preferring either skirmish styles or epic sweeping games. Roleplaying interests are varied, (read—there are few systems he has not at least looked at) but has long outgrown complex systems (the fact that his brain is just not ready for another massive download of rules is probably why). He has a SF Savage Tale being edited and a go ahead for a possible SF setting. Bill lives in Kansas, with his non-gaming wife (Linda) of 25 years, a gaming son (Greg) of 18 years and a socialite daughter (Laura) of 15 years. His contributions to this issue include his GenCon 2004 *Savage Worlds* demo adventure: "Asteroid Zero-4" and a new piece of gear – night vision goggles. Look for more of William's adventures in future issues of **Shark Bytes**.

Ed Wetterman
Ed read The Sword of Shannara and became a fantasy junkie at the ripe old age of 10. Soon afterwards he discovered *Dungeons & Dragons*™ and has played RPGs ever since. In 2003, Ed joined with several friends to start a *d20 Modern*™ Horror company called 12 to Midnight. Shane Hensely introduced Ed to the *Savage Worlds* system, and Ed became a true convert. Ed has been teaching History since 1993, and is a proud and obnoxious Texan. Ed, along with Clint Black, contributed the "It's a Paranormal World After All…" article. He also wrote "The Cradle Campaign".

Theron Seckington *(SlasherEpoch)*
Theron is an amateur writer with professional ambitions (which is to say, he hopes to get paid for it someday) for silver screen, his college's newspaper, and the tabletop roleplaying scene. When not writing, playing Wizardry 8, or being his 50 Fathoms group's GM, he's usually piddling his time away in a meaningless but enjoyable fashion. Theron authored two of the three NPCs in "Bucket o' Chum".

Butch Curry *(Palehorse)*
Butch is a staff writer for GamingReport.com, and doesn't like to talk about himself, particularly in the third person. 'Nuff said, I guess!

Rich Finder and **Lee Reynoldson** were washed overboard shortly after submitting their articles and have not been seen since. Rich contributed to the "We're Going to Need a Bigger Boat" article. Lee contributed a few new adventure cards.

STRIKE A POSE
How's this for a war face!

Play on your hero as they attempt to Taunt or Intimidate an opponent. You may add +2 to the roll.

BODY COUNT
That still only counts as ONE!

Play at the start of any combat. At the end of the encounter, the hero with the highest body count earns an automatic Benny.

FLASHBACK
I remember this one time in Borneo ...

Tell a tale related to the task your attempting. You may add +2 to the roll.

GOTTA KEEP MOVING ...
I think I can, I think I can...

Play on your hero to immediately remove all Fatigue levels.

IT'S A WORK OF ART
It's almost too beautiful to use ... BLAM ... almost.

Play this card when you acquire an item during play. The item is exceptional in every way and is valued at 30% more than normal.

DON'T DO IT!
The lights are out and the stairs are a little creaky, but it should be OK ...

Play this card to force an NPC to do something just downright dumb, dangerous, or both.

FILL 'ER UP!
Don't forget to check the oil too!

Play this card to increase the fuel level of any vehicle by one.

HEY GUYS!
Hey guys - don't look at me like that! It didn't break the skin!

Play this card to stop from turning if a zombie bites you.

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